Inverted Audiences: Transatlantic Readers
and International Bestsellers, 1851-1891

Dissertation

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Sharon Lynn Estes, M.A.

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Dissertation Committee:

Professor Clare Simmons, Advisor

Professor Susan Williams

Professor Steven Fink

Professor Amanpal Garcha
Abstract

This dissertation challenges traditional author-based chronologies of British and American literatures by examining the international readerships for nineteenth-century bestsellers. The project spans the decades between 1851, when a series of legal cases undermined the copyrights of American books in Britain, and 1891, when the Chace Act in the United States provided full international copyright protection. In this period, international copyright laws (or lack thereof), publishing practices, and circulation patterns allowed bestsellers to circulate even more widely outside their countries of national origin, a pattern I call an inverted audience. Situated at the intersection of current work in book history and transatlantic studies, this dissertation constructs a phenomenology of the bestseller that accounts for these trends in publishing and reading within an international context. I argue that tracing and analyzing the international circulation of bestsellers not only re-nationalizes particular books by focusing on readers, but also creates a newly global map of the book trade that emphasizes reciprocal influences among nations. Constructed as a series of case studies, the dissertation brings together nineteenth-century publishers’ records, book trade periodicals, reviews, and international reprint editions to form a comprehensive view of how international audiences responded to particular books’ content, context, and circumstances of publication. In Chapter 1, I examine how widespread British reprints of Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World* (1851) and *Queechy* (1852) variously reshaped these sentimental
novels and connected them with a religious readership in England. Chapter 2 compares the international circulation and reception of “The American Tennyson” and “The British Longfellow” and shows how the popular reprint market on both sides of the Atlantic enabled readers at all levels to imagine close relationships between themselves and their favorite poets. The third chapter discusses how American reprints of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* crossed lines drawn in Civil War publishing and copyright law, inflected localized marriage laws, and sparked theatrical adaptations that would come to define the succeeding decades in American repertory theater. The final chapter of this dissertation extends the map of reciprocal relationships and inverted audiences to the colonial market and book trade, examining how the Australian bestseller *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* became a London sensation in 1886, subsequently dominating American reprint markets as well. This triangulated geographical reading pattern revises accounts of imperial literary identities and the emerging detective genre. In proposing the categories of readerships and bestsellers to bring attention to new ways of mapping literary chronology and national relations, this dissertation contributes to literary recovery efforts while suggesting new strategies for literary interpretation suggested by new local reading contexts. Bestsellers tell stories of a book’s transnational circulation that are simultaneously material and intellectual, and looking at the period’s most popular books provides a unique opportunity to trace currents in transatlantic reading.
Dedication

For Joel and Owen
Acknowledgments

I want to express my deep gratitude to each member of my committee, Clare Simmons, Susan Williams, Amanpal Garcha, and Steve Fink. Without their insight, support, and encouragement, there is absolutely no way I could have completed a task that has, so many times, seemed more than insurmountable. I am grateful to Marlene Longenecker for everything she has taught me about the classroom, the hospital and spaces in between. Kathleen Griffin’s kindness, thoughtfulness, and attention to detail (as well as her continued support and residence in Columbus), have enabled me not just to finish this summer, but to finish at all.

The 2008 “Transatlantic Women” conference in Oxford remains my most rewarding and stimulating conference experience and was a key source of inspiration for me as I began formulating and writing this dissertation. An early version of Chapter 1 was published under the title "In its English Dress": Reading Susan Warner's Wide, Wide World as a Transatlantic Religious Bestseller” in the collection of proceedings from this conference: Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and Great Britain (Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2012.) I want to thank those who led the conference, edited the volume, and remain valued friends and conversation partners.
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Vita

2005..........................M.A. English, The Ohio State University

2003 to 2009 ........................Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of English, The Ohio State University

2009 to present....................Assistant Professor, Department of Language and Literature, Bucks County Community College

Publications

“From the Periodical Archives: Susan Warner’s ‘How May an American Woman Best Show her Patriotism?’ in the Ladies’ Wreath.” American Periodicals. 18.2 (Fall 2009).


Fields of Study

Major Field: English
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Introduction: Transatlantic Readers

In 1842, the *North American Review* offered an ironic response to Sydney Smith’s infamous query, “In the four corners of the globe, who reads an American book?”¹

Originally printed in 1820 in the *Edinburgh Review* as part of a review that denigrated American cultural and achievements more generally, Smith’s rhetorical question would become a cultural touchstone, provoking many anxious responses over succeeding decades. Nineteenth-century American literary nationalists saw it as a challenge to produce new and better literature, as represented by Emerson’s call in “The American Scholar” for the end to “our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands” and Melville’s contention that “it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation” (“Hawthorne and his Mosses” 147). Though the *North American Review* remained deeply involved in the project of fostering new literary output, this article instead specifically counters Smith’s taunt by cleverly shifting the conversation from intellectual influence to

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¹ This quotation was originally published in Smith’s 1820 review of Adam Seybert’s *Statistical Annals of the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1818). Though he allows Seybert to be correct in the factual sections of the study (population, trade, military), he eviscerates him for assuming American cultural achievements to be worth noting. The query mentioned above comes in the context of broader cultural criticism: “Confining ourselves to our own country, and to the period that has elapsed since they had an independent existence, we would ask, Where are their Foxes, their Burkes, their Sheridans, their Windhams, their Horners, their Wilberforces?...their Scotts, Rogers’s, Campbells, Byrons, Moores, or Crabbes?... In so far as we know, there is no such parallel to be produced from the whole annals of this self-adulating race. In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play or looks at an American picture or statue? What does the world yet owe to American physicians or surgeons? What new substances have their chemists discovered? Or what old ones have they analysed? What new constellations have been discovered by the telescopes of Americans? What have they done in the mathematics?” (800).
print culture. Providing a meticulously-documented list of its own original pieces that had been reprinted, adapted, or retitled by London’s *Monthly Review*, the American monthly periodical points out that numerous “lieges of her Britannic majesty” had been longtime readers of American books, whether they knew it or not. The *North American* concludes with a long quotation, taken directly from its English imitator, but interspersed with its own “proposed emendations”:

We cannot avoid alluding to those harpies of literature, the republishers [read, reviewers] of the United States [read, England] who defile the banquet prepared by the writers of England [America], as well as rob them of their property… Any American [Englishman] has the liberty of republishing, abridging, altering, and adding to a foreign book at his pleasure, without any reference to the author. This liberty affords great advantages to their publishers. Within thirty days’ sail of us there is a great country, where our language prevails. …The copyright costs him nothing, and he therefore enjoys without risk, as its success has been tested abundantly in this country, the double profits of author and publisher… An American [Englishman] would not be so foolish as to pay a native writer a fair price for his copyright of a work which he is not sure of selling when printed, if he can obtain for nothing the work of some English [American] author, of such well-known popularity, that the sale of an edition is certain. It is in this way that it injures American [English] as well as English [American] writers!” (“Who Reads and American Book?” 376-77)

Here the copyright laws, defrauded authors, publishing opportunities, and literary property of England and America become literally interchangeable. Because of the common language, readers on both sides of the Atlantic could read literature in English and the market offered inadvertent incentives for publishers to print books from overseas. Uniting periodical and book reprinting, the American reviewer hurls self-righteous rage on behalf of its defrauded authors directly back at hypocritical London accusers. Drawing a map in which the publishing, reprinting, and reading contexts of England and America mirror each other, the *North American Review* reframes and duplicates Smith’s
query. “Who reads an American book?” begs the corresponding question, “Who is reading English books?” Increasingly, the answer to both questions was, “everybody.”

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the transatlantic material contexts for book production and reading were becoming symmetrical. In 1820, Smith had been right that few American texts were printed and circulated in Britain. Alexis Weedon’s work on Victorian publishing notes, however, that circulation of books between the United States and Britain reached its peak between 1840 and 1900. British audiences had wide access to reprintings of new American texts long before new British texts emerged from small-circulation, high-priced editions. The most widely read poet and novelist in Britain in the 1850s, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Harriet Beecher Stowe, were Americans. Meanwhile, in America, the novels of Sir Walter Scott and Charles Dickens were staples of the middle-class home, and Tennyson was hailed as “the people’s poet” (Eidson 147).

By 1846, Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal noted that, in America, British books are “distributed throughout every village in the union…the bar-room and shanty of the ‘far West… [and more copies of British authors’ works are] to be found in a single city there than in the whole country where they were produced” (N.S. 198). In 1864, in the Edinburgh Review, Nassau Senior describes a reading pattern that is not just symmetrical, but reciprocal: “A remarkable result of this state of the law in both countries is, that the popular literature of America is English, and the popular literature of England is American” (449). For the decades before the Chace Act (1891) established mutual international copyright protection in both Britain and the United States, the books being most widely read and distributed through each nation were originally from the other, a
reading formation I here call an “inverted audience.” Although evidence from historical studies of reading and publishing substantiates this inverted reading pattern, no one has yet conducted a systematic study of this trend or followed its implications. In this dissertation, I trace the confluence of circumstances that created this pattern by examining the international reading audiences for several bestsellers in English. Who were these readers? Why did they love the books so much? How were their interpretations and responses embedded in their unique cultural, historical, and material contexts? And how do those responses change the way we read particular texts as well as the way we think about nineteenth-century economies of reading?

In this inverted international market for reading, publishers were the clear beneficiaries, and this study reveals the ways in which they not only took advantage of these circumstances, but actively worked to protect and shape the reception of their reprints. As the North American and the Monthly Review simultaneously note, contemporary copyright law and publishing practice conferred “great advantages” on publishers of both nations, who could freely reprint any foreign title that seemed promising. By mid-century, London publishers regularly reprinted American titles at a breakneck pace, giving rise to metaphors of piracy, speculation, and prospecting. In a letter to American publisher William Ticknor in 1853, Charles Lyell claimed, “So now everyone is speculating in American reprints, good, bad, and indifferent. They are pour’d in upon us like gold from Australia” (187). Setting Ticknor’s own literary publications in a more decorous category, Lyell presents the reprints as a colonial phenomenon, a regression from American nationhood. In 1885, Brander Matthews, writing on behalf of
the American Copyright League, published *American Authors and British Pirates*, in which he noted the overwhelming presence of American titles on cheap lists of fiction by British publishers, describing practices including retitling, revising, and adapting American works. The American publishing context gradually developed a system of self-policing, but was nevertheless similarly dominated by the availability of reprints, which depressed prices for native and foreign works alike (Charvat 70). Harper and Brothers reprinted on a particularly large scale, publishing 2 million volumes a year. In its first catalogue, 90 percent of the titles were British reprints (Sutherland 71). By creating, advertising, and at times defending their reprints, both British and American publishers shaped and widened the inverted audiences for nineteenth-century books.

Authors themselves tell much more conflicted stories about their international audiences. If publishers were the beneficiaries of this state of international copyright law and business practice, authors on both sides of the Atlantic were consistently framed as victims, robbed, defrauded, injured, or impressed by publishers and lawmakers alike. In the *North American Review* article cited above outlines the common argument identifying British and American authors as mutual losers in these arrangements. Charles Dickens and Washington Irving were both engaged in recruiting other authors to advocate for international copyright legislation. By the 1880s, the cause was taken up by the Author’s Society (Walter Besant, chaired by Tennyson, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy) and the American Copyright League (James Russell Lowell and Mark Twain). In the model of intellectual property defended by the American Congress through the nineteenth century, the rights of readers to have democratic access to shared knowledge superseded
the rights of authors, foreign or domestic. For individual readers and publishers, any book in English could be easily reprinted and easily read, and the market in this period evolved to ensure that readers in any nation and at any level of the market had access to current, popular titles, if only those from overseas. While authors bemoaned their financial losses, this study also reveals that some authors made repeated attempts to appeal to their overseas readers and to extract some value from their literary reputations abroad, though these attempts often reshaped the authors’ reputations.

Smith’s question and the American literary nationalist response rest on a traditional assumption about literary chronology: that a book inherently embodies the national identity of its author. Leonard Tennenhouse cautions scholars not to assume “different national governments mean different national literatures…the separation of American from British literatures is still at issue and [is] nothing like the clean break we tend to project backward onto it…” (11). Defining a book’s nationality solely in terms of an uncomplicated identification of its author’s origin does not reflect the discourse of nineteenth century critics, who alternated among patriotically defending of authors’ rights and defining literary national traditions, and wider discussions that brought books together regardless of nationality. It also does not account for the widely-dispersed experience of readers, who re-locate the books within wider networks of circulation and reception. Senior’s distinction that it is the “popular” literature of each nation that originates in the other suggests the degree to which reading formations have the potential to complicate nationalist chronologies of literary development and literary importance. As I follow books on their journeys through the nineteenth-century worlds of publishing
and reading, I uncover a series of reading moments and communities that were shaped not just by copyright law and publishing practice, but by locally-embedded debates over genre, morality, marriage, education, and complicated definitions of national identity. This study finds that nineteenth century readers were aware of both a book’s content and the circumstances by which it reached their hands, and my survey of inverted audiences in the nineteenth century reinflects our studies of authors while plotting a newly detailed global map for the circulation and reading of popular books.

Transatlantic Literary Studies

The reciprocal asymmetry of British and American late-nineteenth-century economies of reading, which I will be exploring here, brings together recent work in transatlantic literary studies and print culture and suggests new models of literary chronology and interpretation that move beyond simple models of influence or oppositional discourse. In *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, book historian William St. Clair sketches three models for conceptualizing literary history. He describes the first as “a parade of great names” (2). Early academic literary histories follow this model by dissociating and opposing American and British “parades,” and function as important pre-histories or anti-histories of today’s transatlantic field. Indeed, the two American literary nationalist texts I mention above, Emerson’s “The American Scholar” (1837) and Melville’s “Hawthorne and his Mosses” (1850), were far more widely read after the 1920s than they were in their own time and became part of a critical narrative that emerged as American literature was beginning to be considered acceptable material for academic study. F.O. Matthiessen may seem to complicate this national
literary essentialism by identifying British figures such as Shakespeare, Browne, and Coleridge as “influences” on his American Renaissance (1941) authors. However, the fact that he links them to historical and not contemporary British sources conveniently erases earlier American work and supports his assertion that American literature truly began in the 1850s. St. Clair’s second metaphor of a conversation among texts, “debating and negotiating with one another in a kind of open parliament” (3), reflects the efforts of more recent scholars of transatlantic studies to recapture the “transatlantic imaginary.” Considering when, how, and in what combinations texts were actually read, however, leads to St. Clair’s own preferred model that he calls a “political economy of texts,” which uses economic and material data to reconstruct a history of reading and the “mentalities,” or the cognitive and cultural structures reading generates (3). Each of these models involves specific criteria for selecting which texts are important and asking critical questions about literary influence (parade), discursive structures (parliament), or the material contexts of reading (political economy). Following Lawrence Buell’s 2003 prediction of a “boom” in transatlantic literary studies, scholars have remained invested in dismantling what Paul Giles calls the “radical dehistoricization” committed in “great names” studies that look backwards for influences on the minds of authors and reconstruct narratives that ignore contemporary contexts. In the introduction to their recent anthology Transatlantic Studies: a Reader, Susan Manning and Andrew Taylor note that a “…focus on reciprocal cultural exchange opens up the assumptions upon which national identity, and the critical paradigms it has fostered, are founded” (4). My project is situated within current work in transatlantic studies that takes into account not
just transatlantic discursive patterns, but also the material circumstances of texts’
circulation and encounters with readers.

While moving away from a parade model of literary influence among canonical
authors, much recent work in transatlantic studies remains focused on the circumstances
that shaped texts’ pre-production, proposing authors as active agents within imagined
discourse networks. We see this methodology clearly in early projects like Robert
Weisbach’s *Atlantic Double-Cross: American Literature and British Influence in the Age
of Emerson* (1986). Weisbach employs the debate model quite literally, offering a series
of case studies in which he sees an American writer engaging in a “basic pattern of
aggressive, parodic response” to a British writer (15). In his reading, “Bartleby, the
Scrivener” becomes part of Melville’s comprehensive project of “revenge” on Charles
Dickens for his widespread American popularity, for “imitating” Hawthorne in *Bleak
House* (1852), and (less directly) for his scathing portrayal of America in *American Notes
for General Circulation* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844). Though his approach of
assuming that transatlantic relations are oppositional and hostile does capture Dickens’s
negative portrayals of America, it can obscure other kinds of interactions, including those
that originated not with the author himself, but with his widespread American readership.
Dickens was widely reprinted by American publishers and loved by American readers,
but this study obscures the reciprocity of their responses. Departing from Weisbach’s
model of author-centered anxiety and Buell’s own work on postcolonial theory and
transatlantic relations, Paul Giles proposes a “transatlantic imaginary” as a space of
projection or free play for authors to enter and use. Giles’s *Transatlantic Insurrections*
looks for “contortions and reversals that emerge within both national traditions when they are brought into dialogue with each other” (2). One of the most innovative aspects of Giles’s work is that he moves beyond simplistic narratives of opposition and considers literary form and discourse as entities that can respond to transatlantic pressures and influences. Weisbach and Giles represent approaches that, while revising nationalist parades of literary chronology, continue to emphasize the agency and authority of the author. I do not seek to undo authorship as an organizing principle for literary study. Nineteenth-century readers themselves elevated authors to the point of celebrity and this dissertation reveals a series of powerful and intimate relationships that readers imagined between themselves and their favorite transatlantic authors. However, I do suggest that if an author’s influences and dialogues shape a text’s composition, readers subsequently encounter that text through another set of circumstances that affects how they (and we) can, interpret, and respond.

My dissertation is located at this site where intellectual history meets book history, where theorizations of the transatlantic discursive spaces for authors meet larger constructs of reading audiences. Many of the most prominent book historians who document the material networks that enable transatlantic circulation and reading pass over literary interpretation (searching for St. Clair’s “mentalities”), including work by Richard Altick, James Barnes, Simon Nouvell-Smith, and Michael Winship. Though St. Clair sets out to recover not only economic patterns governing circulation and reading but also the “mentalities” such texts and patterns generate, his study—though not his model—has been criticized for being too bibliographic (not surprising, considering the
breadth of his project and the fact that even in its current state it exceeds 450 pages with another 300 in appendices). Meredith McGill’s *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting* more successfully does both, conceptualizing the literary marketplace as a “culture of reprinting” while situating texts within it and generating new kinds of transatlantic readings, such as her section tracing Dickens’s 1842 American tour, his advocacy in support of copyright legislation, and the cultural resonances of his pirated reprints. For McGill, *American Notes for General Circulation* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* become complex responses to the “contours and consequences of the decentralized literary marketplace” (110). As a whole, her book is a model for the kind of scholarship that I seek to offer here, combining close attention to material culture with what essentially is close reading.

This project connects most strongly with recent studies that have proposed more developed ways to relocate texts within transnational networks that involve not just authorial production, but material circulation and readers’ reception. Transatlanticism, for these scholars, becomes a discursive formation generated when nationally-identified texts meet up with audiences identified with other nations. Noting that approaches like those of Weisbach and Giles tend to “emphasize British cultural authority…or minimize the importance of cultural authority at all,” Amanda Claybaugh theorizes what she calls a “new transatlanticism” that can be reader-centered rather than author-centered (16).  

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2 More recent studies to follow this approach have traced the movement of various tropes or concepts through material and discursive networks of exchange. Examples include Kate Flint’s *The Transatlantic Indian* (2009) and the Kimberly Manganelli’s work on the figure she calls the “tragic mulatta” (2012), tracing these ideas not only through literature, but art and culture as well. Susan Manning and Eve Tavor Bannett’s collection *Transatlantic Literary Studies 1660-1830* (2012) focuses on genre because, “genres
Bringing together print culture with an Anglo-American view of literature in English, Claybaugh emphasizes the importance of located, material networks of reception, and her own study situates texts within nineteenth-century transatlantic travel and reform movements. Sarah Meer, near the end of her study of the transatlantic cultural products of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, offers a similar view of transatlantic texts that emphasizes the importance of readers and material culture: “*Uncle Tom’s* celebrity abroad both evoked and inspired what I shall call transatlantic literature: books produced in Britain and America that were written for or about the other country and that assumed and sometimes created transatlantic connections” (197). Ironically, Meer’s definition, with its language of authorial intent (“written for or about”), seems initially to disqualify *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* itself, but her claim helpfully suggests that texts can become transatlantic through the process of circulating among readers. She continues, it is the “reader’s sense of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as a transatlantic text […] in turn produced self-consciously transatlantic literature” (197). Claybaugh’s model and Meer’s definition offer a newly coherent way of structuring the “debates” of other transatlantic projects and a possible strategy for linking “myths” and “mentalities” with actual minds.

The work of these critics underscores the importance of readers themselves for transatlantic works that seek to move beyond nationalist, influence-based, or authority-based models of literary studies. Within a nineteenth-century world of publishing and reading where texts were even more widely read across the Atlantic than at home, the reader-centered model that I utilize here pays particular attention to texts for which the travel” (3). In works like these, material networks of exchange provide shifting national identifications that travel with the books themselves.
inverted audience pattern is particularly pronounced and seeks to follow the links among texts that readers themselves made. In considering texts’ relative popularity and breadth of circulation in both Britain and America, we can avoid creating projects structured uncritically around traditionally canonical works, even when paired innovatively, or projects that assume nationalist oppositions even as they cross them. A reader-centered economy further reframes Smith’s question: Who reads an American book? What is an American book anyway? What happens when English readers read American books? Do the books become less American? Do the readers become less English? When an English book is reprinted, adapted, and embraced by even more American readers than English ones, does it still retain its Englishness? Can these patterns give rise to new ways of reading? In this project, I take these questions as no longer rhetorical. To answer them, I focus on a series of bestsellers, books for which the inverted audience pattern is amplified at the initial moment of reception, that each offer their own configurations of books, readers, and contexts.

**Bestsellers and Inverted Audiences**

Bestsellers tell stories of a book’s transnational circulation that are simultaneously material and intellectual, and examining a period’s most popular books offers a unique opportunity to trace currents in transatlantic reading. ³ Like readers themselves, bestsellers bring together books’ outsides and their insides. Andrew Bennett, in *Readers and Reading*, asks, “Is reading determined by the text, by the reader’s subjective

³ The earliest use of the term “best-seller” is in 1902 when the American *Publisher’s Weekly* began issuing a weekly list. Ken Gelder (*The Logics and Practice of a Literary Field*), however, prefers “popular fiction” to “bestseller” because it focuses on authorial intention (literary vs. popular fiction). I am retaining the term bestseller here, even if it did not emerge until after the end of the period I am examining, because I prefer its emphasis on readers.
responses, by social, cultural and economic factors, by conventions of reading, or by a combination of these?’(2). For the bestseller, the answer invariably involves all of these facets. On the one hand, sales of a particular book are enabled and enhanced by the legal, fiscal, and material conditions of its market. On the other, the book’s content is meaningful and desirable to individual readers at the moment they encounter it. When Mrs. Humphrey Ward published *Robert Elsmere* in 1883, within a year it sold 3,500 expensive 3-volume copies and 60,000 in moderately priced (6s) editions in London, but a million in America (3 million in three years). Was this inverted reading sensation created by the state of international copyright law or publishing practices that priced the flood of American reprints at twenty-five cents or less? Or is it more indicative of the evangelical fervor of the American readers who enthusiastically embraced this deeply pious story, even passing out tracts for free with bars of soap? (Sutherland, *Bestsellers* 7-8). While books with nationally inverted audiences existed at every level of the nineteenth-century literary market, for highly popular books the pattern becomes exponentially more pronounced and takes on new forms. Nineteenth-century inverted audiences are deeply embedded in such moments when material and cultural conditions came together with books’ content to allow for these kinds of sales. In this project, I will show that the pattern of reciprocal reading not only highlights certain reading formations, but is tied to particular moments, when highly popular books generate unique their own reading formations through collaborations among all the players in the book market.

Organized into case studies, this dissertation draws a map of the literary world in the nineteenth century based on readers and moments in literary fashion when they
connected with particular books. The project spans the decades between 1851, the year when a series of legal cases removed copyright status for American books in Britain, and 1891, when the United States passed the Chace Act, granting full international copyright protection. In the 1850s, it was becoming newly possible to publish a bestseller with runaway sales on both sides of the Atlantic. The robust American system for churning out cheap reprints solidified in this decade, while John Sutherland also notes that, “...the great Victorian reading public and the mass market that went with it were formed in the early 1850s” (Novelists and Publishers 62).

Uncle Tom’s Cabin has been widely noted as the first book to exploit the full potential of this market in Britain. Stowe’s novel sold 300,000 copies in America and nearly 1 million in Britain in its first year (Barnes 154).4 Using telling language, John Sutherland notes the “million-or-so purchasers revealed by the Uncle Tom’s Cabin bonanza of 1852” (Novelists and Publishers 72) and Richard Altick suggests that if any British publishers had seized this opportunity to print mass market editions of books by British authors, they could have rewritten literary history (“English Publishing” 18-19).

Widely cited as the beginning of the modern bestseller, Uncle Tom’s Cabin is also one of the only examples to have received sustained treatment in its transatlantic context, in Sarah Meer’s 2005 study Uncle Tom Mania. Meer brings together a discussion of the book’s outside and its inside, tracing its engagement with widespread reprinting, anti-slavery discourse, and the minstrelsy tradition in British theater. To use Sutherland’s

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4 Amanda Claybaugh: “…Uncle Tom’s Cabin heralded the beginning of a new era in which the literary marketplaces of the United States and Britain were more or less symmetrical, with publishers on both sides of the Atlantic printing works by authors from their own nation and reprinting works by authors from the other” (19).
description of bestsellers, this was a “hand-in-glove” moment for British readers and publishers alike, and Meer’s multi-faceted approach offers a nuanced portrait of transatlantic culture and reception and also forms a pattern for the case studies I present here (Bestsellers 3). Stowe’s novel and those by Dickens, alongside recent work situating both in their transatlantic contexts, mark the beginning of the period examined in this project. Both were part of the formation of market conditions that would shape transatlantic publishing and reading over succeeding decades. The case studies selected here echo these early transatlantic bestsellers, while generating new and idiosyncratic reception histories of their own.

Drawing together Franco Moretti’s work on imagined geographies together with critics like Simon Joyce who note actual geographies, these examples map different reciprocal voyages taken by popular books across the nineteenth-century literary world, showing the gradual movement from transatlantic to global literary exchange. In each case study, I survey nineteenth-century publishers’ records, book trade periodicals, reviews, and the many international editions of the bestsellers themselves to form a comprehensive view of key texts’ circulation and reception and to consider how the global audiences that made these texts bestsellers have been constructed. Like the wider category of bestsellers, each case study is simultaneously representative and highly unusual, instructive about the current state of the market and international readerships while often revealing surprising, new, and highly-contextualized literary patterns that would go on to generate frequent imitation. In examining how these texts’ publishing histories map on to their thematic content, I seek new ways of reading and a more
nuanced understanding of transatlantic relations. I argue that tracing and analyzing the international circulation of bestsellers not only re-nationalizes particular books by situating them outside of their countries of origin, but fills in a newly global map of the book trade that emphasizes reciprocal influences among nations.

In Chapter 1, I examine the path that Susan Warner’s *Wide, Wide World* takes from New York to London, encountering a variety of pirate publishers and an enthusiastic British readership that variously reshaped her sentimental novel and embraced it. Published at the moment when *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was demonstrating the new possibilities for bestsellers, *The Wide, Wide World* has been largely interpreted through its connection with American audiences, though within months of its American publication in 1851 it had appeared in twelve separate publishers’ editions in Britain and sold far more copies than it had in the United States. Warner’s novel appeared between the first and final appeals of the case *Boosey vs. Jeffreys* in 1851 and 1854, a window of uncertainty in British international copyright legislation and practice that created a focused and unique moment in the history of British publishing and reading. In this chapter, I trace the novel’s British circulation and use reviews, prefaces to new editions, textual analysis of the novel itself, and periodical and anecdotal evidence to sketch the transatlantic discussion about national identity initiated by this British reception. I reinterpret the narratives that have been told and re-told of the novel’s initial journey to print and the interactions between Warner herself and various publishers and prospective publishers, which hold the key to her complex views on nationality which appear in *Wide, Wide World* and her subsequent novel *Queechy* (1852). While this case study
reveals the author’s own simultaneous awareness and powerlessness in the face of her British reprints, it recovers a corresponding story of the British publishers and readers of the text that compellingly reveals a religious reading community that self-consciously transcended national identification.

Chapter 2 traces the transatlantic reciprocity of in publishing poetry (in legitimate and pirate editions) and reputations, comparing the international circulation and reception of “The American Tennyson” and “The British Longfellow.” By contextualizing the work of Tennyson and Longfellow abroad, this chapter allows for a series of comparisons (many made by readers themselves) that complicate the concept of inverted audiences and the model for international publication that I establish in the first chapter, while also taking a wider view by tracing the pattern across both poets’ careers. While the trend of inverted audiences is evident for both poets in both Britain and America, these audiences do not function in exactly the same way on both sides of the Atlantic. Longfellow and Tennyson had the same American publisher, Ticknor and Fields, which generally protected Tennyson’s financial interest in America, though Longfellow’s British sales were more widely dispersed across the London market. In considering the various national terms in which these two poets’ work was circulated internationally, this chapter compares the publishing climates of the two contexts and explores how international bestsellers were created differently in these two literary markets. In suggesting the inverted audience as a new way to plot an author’s career, this study draws new focus to the depiction of a wandering, lost husband in Tennyson’s *Enoch Arden* (1865), which generated particularly wide sales and devoted responses from American readers. The
comparison between Tennyson and Longfellow compellingly shows the degree to which the popular reprint market on both sides of the Atlantic enabled readers at all levels to imagine close relationships between themselves and their favorite poets, reinforcing readings of Longfellow’s American content as well as of Tennyson’s nationalist reputation.

Mirroring the trajectory of Warner’s novel, Chapter 3 examines two British bigamy novels, Ellen Wood’s *East Lynne* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*, that take the opposite journey in the 1860s, becoming embedded in the American book industry, periodical conversations, and dramatic adaptations. The reprint market for these novels suggests useful new connections between books and cultural contexts, as both texts crossed lines drawn in Civil War publishing and copyright law, inflected localized marriage laws, and sparked theatrical adaptations that would come to define the succeeding decades in American repertory theater. For all my focus on readers, another pattern revealed in this study is that bestsellers provide a way to re-read authors’ careers. For each of the novelists discussed here, a single text provided a moment of literary sensation that established their brand for subsequent works and for international readerships. In the cases of Wood and Braddon, this chapter reveals the degree to which their American reception was anchored in a series of narratives told by publishers to surround and legitimize unsavory publishing practices and to imagine a relationship between the authors and their American readers based on devoted mutual affection. The connection between text and context becomes stronger here, with the bigamy or adultery
metaphor repeatedly conditioning these novels’ reception in the United States in a way that allows us to reinterpret transatlantic conversations about the sensation genre itself.

The final chapter of this dissertation extends the map of reciprocal relationships and inverted audiences to the colonial market and book trade, which was gradually growing through this period. Though many British and American texts sold widely in Australia, in 1886, Fergus Hume, a Melbourne barrister and aspiring playwright, produced the first Australian text to make the reverse trip. *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* not only sold widely in its original Melbourne edition (of which there is only one known extant copy), but became a London sensation, subsequently dominating American reprint markets as well. In this chapter, I trace the conversations about national identity contained in the book itself, through its adaptation of the emerging detective genre, as it moves through the different markets in which it was read, discussed, and parodied.

While Anglo-American relations are the focus of the first three case studies and remain the strongest circuit in the nineteenth-century circulation of books, scholars have shown interest wider transnational contexts, with a spread of scholarly interest into wider fields of Atlantic history and geography (Gilroy), and Hemispheric and Global literary studies. The growing Canadian and Australian markets for books and reading enter the earlier case studies, primarily as stages for direct competition between British copyright editions and cheap American copies of a variety of titles, but this chapter emphasizes the growth of the category of “literature in English” in this period. The triangulated geographical reading pattern generated by *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* moves beyond an inverted
audience to map a book market that shows important parallels with aspects of imperial identity politics.

In proposing the categories of readerships and bestsellers to drawing attention to new ways of mapping literary chronology and national relations, this dissertation brings texts and reading audiences into the stories of nineteenth century reading. Given the previous focus on nationalist literary chronologies and canons, Susan Manning and Eve Tavor Bannett note that in the area of transatlantic exchange, “so much primary recovery work of sources and contacts remains to be done” (1). My focus in this project was on texts whose international audiences tell new stories. Stowe and Dickens represent prominent and well-documented examples of the inverted audience pattern, which this dissertation takes to new places, to texts that generated wide readerships but whose stories have not yet been told. I am interested in showing the degree to which this pattern extends to more reading formations, and each case study reveals new connections with other titles and authors based on proximity, genre, or particular comparisons made by readers themselves.

The texts I study in this project all required some degree of new primary research and recovery work. Tennyson and Longfellow have received bibliographic attention (Ghodes, Eidson), but much of it was decades ago, when scholars were highly invested in narratives of national literary rivalries. This research takes on new significance within the context of this project. Working with texts like East Lynne or Mystery of a Hansom Cab required me to compile initial bibliographic information, retrieving and confirming what remains of nineteenth century publishing records and advertisements in order to

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establish the inverted audience pattern and uncover its connections to other arenas of readers’ reception and response. It is my hope that in seeking to document as precisely and completely as possible the size and spread of transatlantic readerships for particular texts, this project will correct the frequent critical tendency to over-focus on authors or to be imprecise in citations of readers. For bestsellers in particular, critics are often happy to refer to loosely to their popularity or to cite a figure of copies sold, but such numbers are rarely transatlantic in scope and do not identify readers with any kind of specificity.

Situated at the intersection between current work in publishing history and histories of reading, this study constructs a phenomenology of the bestseller that accounts for the above-outlined trends in publishing and reading within an international context. International bestsellers generate reading audiences that were perhaps neither anticipated by a book’s author nor particularly “hailed” by the text itself: reading audiences that leave imprints of themselves in internationally diffuse publishing and circulation records. Readers in this period were aware both of a book’s content and the transatlantic circuit by which it reached their hands, and these case studies reveal readers’ various ways of embracing, reimagining, and legitimizing their relationships with authors across the ocean. While Warner’s readers developed a language of shared religious purpose and fraternity, transnational readers of Longfellow and Tennyson offered laurels and built nationalized memorials. Generations of American actresses used the role of Lady Isabel from East Lynne to build and establish their national brands and reputations with far-flung audiences, while complicated imaginings of colonial identities emerge from the multi-national circulation of Mystery of a Hansom Cab.
In the variety of responses, international readers show their power to revise popular narratives of cultural rivalries and influences. In 1855, a reviewer for Tait’s *Edinburgh Magazine* in 1855 refused to lament the diversion of “millions of half-crowns and shillings, disbursed by our wives and daughters for the small printed, flimsy duodecimo” reprints of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Wide, Wide World*, from “the sorely-needed encouragement of native talent” or the fact that “Macaulay’s ‘History’ [can] be purchased at New York, in two monstrous sheets of broadside, for six cents” (387). Despite the “grievous injury” to individual authors, the author argues that their suffering serve a greater purpose, linking reading English books to British cultural dominance: “It is a grand thing, for an English writer at the present time to reflect upon, that, with the United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand, inhabited as they are, his language will probably never become obsolete, and may be understood, in his time, by a hundred millions of human minds…As the tree is known by its fruit, English books will show the English” (“The Claims of the English” 387, 390). In this grand colonialist vision, English books convert readers across the globe to an uncomplicated allegiance to British cultural authority. This dissertation suggests, though, that while nineteenth-century readers became every bit as dispersed and numerous as he imagines, those readers’ identifications are endlessly complex. Across the global market for books in English, local readers enthusiastically read, rewrote, and acted in ways that made beloved texts their own.
Chapter 1: “In Its English Dress:” Susan Warner and Transatlantic Religious Reading Audiences

Near the end of Susan Warner’s bestseller *The Wide, Wide World*, the orphaned young heroine Ellen Montgomery is forced to leave the care of loving friends in America for the home of relations in Edinburgh, whom she has never met. Ellen’s uncle tests her obedience by insisting that she address him as “father” and even forcing her to introduce herself to company by his last name, as Ellen Lindsay rather than Ellen Montgomery. He commands her, “Forget that you were American”(510). Though her native stubbornness and republicanism assert themselves occasionally, the final chapters of Warner’s novel focus on Ellen’s efforts to remain submissive while she is compelled to suppress her American identity and self-identify as British.

This tale of transatlantic migration, of sometimes-reluctant refashioning, and of identity-formation tinged with national politics is not just confined Warner’s novel, but are is embodied in the history of its publication and circulation. Following its initial publication in 1851, *The Wide, Wide World* was enthusiastically embraced by readers outside America, generating a British reading audience that was proportionally larger than its readership in America. This reading pattern challenges the terms in which

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5 All citations to the text of *Wide, Wide World* are to the 1987 Feminist Press edition, edited by Jane Tompkins. Citations of *Queechy* use the 1852 Putnam’s (first) edition.
Warner’s novel has been nationalized, both by American and British reviewers and readers, as well as the place it has long been given in literary history. Though The Wide, Wide World was widely embraced as an American national novel, Nassau Senior’s claim in 1864 that “the popular literature of England is American” (446) and the size and enthusiasm of the book’s British audiences create a strong case that we actually consider it to be British. In examining Warner’s novel’s British reception, I outline the debates over national identities that take place in reviews, prefaces and letters, as well as in the book itself, which place British and American identities in opposition to each other but also offer other terms, such as family relationship or religious fraternity, through which readers on both sides of the Atlantic could imagine themselves as part of a single community. The transatlantic dynamic in the history of reading The Wide, Wide World demonstrates both the way national identity continues to be used to define nineteenth century reading audiences and creates the potential for other readerly identities, transatlantic communities of readers that transcend national or geographical boundaries.6

The Emergence of “the first American Bestseller”: The Wide, Wide World as a National Novel

Acts of reading retain an important place in narratives of The Wide, Wide World’s early history and literary significance. In both contemporary and scholarly narratives about its publication or readership, The Wide, Wide World is consistently identified as a book that is particularly tied to its American readers. A frequently retold tale of its pre-

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6 An earlier version of this project appeared under the title “In its English Dress”: Reading Susan Warner’s Wide, Wide World as a Transatlantic Religious Bestseller” in the collection Transatlantic Women: Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers and Great Britain (Lebanon, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2012. 208-231.)
publication history locates it securely within New York publishing circles. During the early months of 1850, Anna Warner recollects, Susan Warner’s manuscript “was refused by almost all the leading book firms in New York” (Anna Warner, Susan Warner 282). Finally, though, Henry Warner, Susan’s and Anna’s father and their often-inept literary agent, sent it to the New York firm of George Putnam, where, instead of languishing “for weeks in the smoky den of some ‘reader,’ […] it went gaily sailing down to Staten Island, where Mr. Putnam then had his summer home” (283). In a moment that has been frequently referenced, George Putnam then passed the manuscript to his mother “for her amusement,” and when she returned it to him, she exhorted him, “If you never publish another book, publish this” (283).

This often-cited anecdote explaining the novel’s transition to print suggests a convenient connection between Wide, Wide World and its audience that is both inevitable and mutually defining: the manuscript was recognized as the bestseller it would become only by a member of the American, evangelical, female cohort who would go on to embrace it decisively. In Anna Warner’s version of the story, it seems to be only through a kind of divine coincidence (she attributes it to “the blessed truth” of the Lord’s provision) that the manuscript did not languish in yet another “smoky” publishing office, a space clearly coded as masculine and professional in which Susan’s text seems not to have been welcome, and instead made its happy way into the more friendly domestic space of the Putnam’s family home. There the feminine authority of the family matriarch transcended previous rejections and made possible the book’s ultimate success. George Haven Putnam, the son of the publisher and a child at the time, recalls the exchange
between his grandmother and his father in even more dramatic terms than those offered by Anna Warner. In his account, his grandmother Mrs. Putnam tells her son, “George, if you never publish another book, you must make ‘The Wide, Wide World’ available for your fellow men” (qtd. in “The Warner Sisters” 23-24). George Haven’s version of Mrs. Putnam’s words underscores not only the intimate connection between a single reader and the text, but phrases her exhortation to publish the novel in the more religious terms of a publisher’s moral responsibility to his future audience.

Though, according to Anna Warner, “Such words from such a source settled the question” of whether or not the novel would be published (Susan Warner 283), even the sacred love of a son for his mother could not persuade George Putnam to advertise or invest heavily in the book, at least initially. In December of 1850, Putnam’s released The Wide, Wide World with an inauspicious first printing of just 750 copies. George Putnam told a colleague at the time, “I am not sure whether or not I have made a mistake in accepting it” (qtd. in Stokes 7). After two months, though, the edition sold out and Warner’s novel went on to become the best seller on Putnam’s list, eventually also topping records of American book sales for 1851. To reach the American market as fully as possible, Putnam went on to print a variety of editions: one and two volume, small and large, cheap and expensive. Putnam’s original edition sold at a dollar and a half, and though he would continue to keep cheap editions in print, he even released a deluxe six-dollar edition in 1854 (Mott, Golden Multitudes 124). The Wide, Wide World has been
widely identified since then as “the first American best-seller,” and though the claim is debatable, as there were certainly other books before this that sold widely, the scale of its widespread acceptance and availability in America were impressive, and Warner’s novel would remain continuously in print for the next eighty years (Weiss 1).8

Just as the favored narrative of The Wide, Wide World’s emergence in print originates in a private moment of identification and mutual recognition between a book and a reader, discussions of its subsequent reception often focus on its value for its readers as well. Widely reviewed and nearly as universally applauded in the weeks and months after its publication, the book was particularly valued for its unique appeal to family audiences and its American content. Immediately after the novel’s publication, The Literary World ran a long excerpt as well as a favorable review. The Commercial Advisor welcomed The Wide, Wide World as “[a]n American novel in two volumes...[with] sentiments and teachings, pure and healthy” (qtd. in Mabel Baker 51). By January 6, 1851, a letter from a Cincinnati reader appeared in the “Correspondence” section of Littell’s Living Age, “earnestly” recommending The Wide, Wide World to any reader (192).

In keeping with these periodicals’ collective project of forming, recognizing, and defining a unique national literature, American reviewers tended to view The Wide, Wide World...
World’s widespread success in national terms as well. Later, *Littell’s Living Age* would go on to hail Warner’s novels, without irony, as “wholly unsentimental and truly national” (“Review” 63). In her survey of nineteenth-century literary reviews, Nina Baym identifies the “national novel,” or novels that particularly represented “national character and culture,” as a category within which novels were identified and evaluated by contemporary reviewers (*Novels, Readers, and Reviewers* 245). She explains that during this period, such domestic novels were valued for their particular aptitude for representing American life, and that, “in the early 1850s the two ‘national’ novels were seen to be *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *The Wide, Wide World*; and the addition of Susan Warner’s *Queechy* to the list enabled the *North American*, in January 1853, to write, ‘lo and behold, an American literature!’” (245-6).9 Later in the lengthy essay on Warner from which Baym draws this quotation, Caroline Kirkland becomes even more effusive about the novels’ literary value, and goes on to situate nationality as the key to understanding their importance:

> Where, then, let us ask, in conclusion, shall we class these American novels of ours? [...] May we not, then, consider them as having a character of their own—humane, religious, *piquant*, natural, national? [...] Such a spontaneous popularity is interesting as an index of national character [...] When a story of real life—American rural life, of the homeliest—[...] springs at once to a currency which few books ever reach [...] we cannot help feeling the verdict to be significant. (121-122)

By claiming Warner’s books as “an index of national character,” Kirkland illustrates the contemporary desire of American audiences to see themselves reflected in the stories of Ellen Montgomery and of Fleda Ringgan, the heroine of *Queechy*. The “verdict” that she

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9 Though neither Baym nor the issue of the *North American Review* itself name the author of the review in question, Frank Luther Mott identifies her as Caroline Kirkland (*History of American Magazines, II* 171).
draws from the unprecedented national circulation of Warner’s novels is a validation that
the version of American character they embodied was, indeed, the true definition of
American nationality. Calling the books’ popularity an “index” of national character
suggests a kind of reciprocity between the novels and their readers: that the American
audiences who embrace the novels share their “humane, religious, piquant, natural”
qualities, aligning the books with a particular definition of American identity, while at the
same time suggesting that every aspect of the books that makes them popular stems from
their national origin. American readers liked the version of themselves they saw in
Warner’s books. It seems, then, that it is both these sentimental bestsellers’ national
content and their widespread acceptance that qualified them for the category of bestseller,
bringing together their inherent narrative qualities with their circulation histories.

This association with popular reading both partially explains Warner’s novels’
eventual demise in critical favor and becomes important for re-situating them fully within
contemporary conversations about literary value. Both the above definition of American
national literature (as simultaneously intrinsic and extrinsic to a book) and The Wide, Wide
World itself are conspicuously absent in twentieth-century critical histories of
American literature. Popular through the end of the nineteenth century, The Wide, Wide
World gradually fell from favor and eventually went out of print (and, indeed, Queechy
remains out of print). Warner’s novels were, almost without exception, left out of
twentieth-century histories of American literature before being recovered in accounts of
nineteenth century women’s writing. Nina Baym’s Women’s Fiction (1978), Mary
Kelley’s Private Woman, Public Stage (1984), and Sharon Harris’s Nineteenth-Century
Women's Novels: Interpretive Strategies (1990), as well as Jane Tompkins’s Sentimental Designs (1985) and her subsequent edition of The Wide, Wide World (1987) were all important texts for retrieving Warner’s first two novels, if not her subsequent work, and situating them within the history of American women’s writing. Harris’s study in particular emphasizes the importance of histories of reading in allowing for the construction of new textual interpretations and for retrieving these texts as objects for close study. Tompkins, in the Afterword to her modern edition of The Wide, Wide World, restores it to its place at the center of discussions of national literature, calling it the “Ur-text of the nineteenth-century United States” (585), a claim very much in keeping with antebellum discussions of national literature.

These narratives of widespread acceptance, nationalized reading, and the growth of a national American literature, however, are complicated by the fact that the nineteenth-century readers of The Wide, Wide World and Queechy, as well as their discussions about national literatures, were not confined to America. In fact, as I will suggest below, British reprints and readers were actually more numerous. Though there is growing interest in re-situating American writers in their international contexts, only recently has any critical attention been paid to Warner’s novel in Britain. In her 2004 dissertation entitled “‘Who Reads an American Book?’: British reprints and popular reading in America, 1848-1858,” Cree LeFavour recognizes the importance of transatlantic circulation for understanding the 1850s literary marketplace. She reads

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10 Some examples include Paul Giles’ work, including Transatlantic Insurrections (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), Sarah Meer’s Uncle Tom Mania (University of Georgia Press, 2005), and even the 2008 “Transatlantic Women Writers” conference at the Rothemere American Institute, Oxford University, where an early version of this paper was presented.
Warner’s novel as a representative of a particular brand of American literature, which, she argues, was forged within a transatlantic exchange about femininity and sentiment with popular British writers and novels. She recognizes the extent to which nineteenth-century audiences looked to publishing and reading patterns to substantiate claims to national literary importance, as I note above, explaining “that the stakes for claiming a national literature were in their height in the pre-war 1850s, and that it was during this decade that authors such as Warner, Cummins, and Stowe filled this national expectation by successfully competing with British reprints” (251). However, LeFavour does not take the opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which these transatlantic discussions and exchanges were reciprocal, how *The Wide, Wide World* was not just forged within an already transatlantic tradition of American women writers reading British books, but the novel itself traveled back to Britain, provoking renewed discussion of transatlantic literary identities. Even the review in *Littell’s Living Age* cited above, which calls Warner’s novels “truly national,” was a reprint from the *North British Review*. *Harper’s New Monthly*, in 1852, ran a review in which it collected and responded to British reviews of *Queechy*. In 1853, an article on religious fiction in the London magazine *The Christian Teacher* cites “an American review” as its source for identifying the author of *The Wide, Wide World* and the author of *Glen Luna* as sisters, the two Miss Warners (315). I will emphasize the reciprocity of this transatlantic exchange, how reviewers and readers on both sides of the Atlantic were talking to one another, sometimes oppositionally, in their negotiations of national identity, but also with the potential for developing a sense of shared literary and religious values. More recently, Jessica
DeSpain, whose research reaches conclusions similar to my own, has noted *Wide, Wide World*’s transatlantic reprints more directly.\(^{11}\) She reads Warner’s novel as a primer for the reading practices of American evangelicalism, shaped by transatlantic reprinting in the American marketplace, and considers the ways in which the novel’s national content was variously reshaped for reprinting in Britain. She focuses her attention on six early British editions of the novel and argues that, through their individual illustrations and paratexts, they refashion the novel’s nationalistic elements to make it more palatable to British readers. Building on her discussions of some of the same editions here, my focus in this chapter will be more wide-ranging and documentary as I attempt to explore not just the way that the transnational context reshaped the material copies of Warner’s novel, but to trace the actual size of her British public. In accounting for the scope of Warner’s British reception and by bringing in specific details related to contemporary British copyright legislation, publishing practice, critical reception, and Warner’s own relations with her various publishers, this chapter situates DeSpain’s discussion of selected editions of *Wide, Wide World* within a wider view of the British marketplace and the transatlantic audience for not just *Wide, Wide World* but also Warner’s subsequent work.

\(^{11}\) DeSpain considers *Wide, Wide World* and its transatlantic connections first in a chapter of her 2008 dissertation “Steaming Across the Pond: Travel, transatlantic literary culture, and the nineteenth-century book,” and then offers a revised version in *Symbiosis*, “Ellen’s English Dress: American Religious Practice and the British Reprints of Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World*” (April 2012), where she reads the novel as an embodiment of American Evangelicalism that was variously reshaped by publishers of its British editions. DeSpain is currently working on an online edition of the novel that will unite the various paratexts, editions, and illustrations that she has collected and promises to be a fantastic resource for students and scholars of Susan Warner and transatlantic studies.
In the rest of this chapter, I join the recent movement to complicate the way Susan Warner’s literary output has been nationalized by examining the process by which Warner’s American bestseller became an even larger international one, interacting particularly with British publishers, critics, and readers who were conspicuously unable to identify with every aspect of the book and forcing a complex transatlantic negotiation of national identity and literary value. I examine various publishers’ records and estimates to establish the extent of the novels’ British circulation, situating the books within a discussion of the state of copyright law and publishing practice between 1851 and 1854, which created a unique opportunity for Warner’s novels to circulate particularly widely. Through its process of publication and circulation, *Wide, Wide World* provoked a many-sided conversation about national identity-formation, with voices in this conversation that included publishers, reviewers, editors, and also Susan Warner herself, in *The Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy*, and new prefaces and letters. Studying this process has the potential to affect not only the way we categorize Warner’s work nationally, but the way we consider grouping reading audiences for this text and many others within the Anglophone publishing and reading world. While nationality is perhaps the most obvious complicating factor in mapping Warner’s novel and its audience, I propose that considering the national distribution of reading audiences as well as recovering the British side of conversations provoked by Warner’s novels’ international circulation will ultimately lead us to look at the many categories of readers whose narratives, experiences, and commercial power shaped the development and circulation of nineteenth-century literary texts.
“Wide World fever:” The British Publication and Circulation of *The Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy*

Though it has traditionally been nationalized as an American book, the publication of *The Wide, Wide World* in 1851 coincided with developments in the state of British international copyright law that allowed the book to circulate particularly widely in London and beyond. These trends shaped publishing practices so significantly that the novel’s British audience actually exceeded the American, an important point given the strong links between readership and historical and critical discussions of the book’s significance.

In her memoir, speaking of the winter of 1852, Anna Warner observes, “just at first there was some Lord Chancellor’s decision which (for a time) gave us a sort of copyright in England,” though she admits that Susan never did receive more than nominal compensation from British publishers, and complains that even her American publisher George Putnam publicly exaggerated the amount he paid her (351). The “decision” that Anna refers to vaguely is the series of verdicts handed down in the legal case of *Boosey vs. Jeffreys*, which had come to serve as a kind of test case for international copyright and publishing in London in this period. A suit between two publishers over Jeffrey’s unauthorized reprints of Bellini’s Italian opera *La Sonnambula* (1831), the case was tried, appealed, and re-tried throughout the early 1850s. The original Chancery verdict

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12 For a full discussion of this case and its implications for literary publishing, see Chapter 8 (“The British Law Courts: A Possible Remedy for the Absence of International Copyright”) of John Barnes’s *Authors, Publishers, and Politicians: The Quest for an Anglo-American Copyright Agreement, 1815-1854* (The Ohio State University Press, 1974). For a more extensive analysis of the London book trade at this period, including a discussion of the various kinds of publishing firms (“undersellers” and discounters vs. literary publishers), see Chapters 4–7 of Barnes’s *Free Trade in Books: A Study of the London Book Trade since*
found against the rights of foreign authors, but in the May 1851 appeal Lord Campbell reversed the decision, supporting the copyright-holder Boosey and ruling that a foreign author could receive copyright protection in Britain, the only provision being that a text’s first publication must take place in the United Kingdom. According to John Barnes, “When this decision was announced most authors and publishers assumed that the issue was settled” (Authors, Publishers and Politicians 167). A contemporary law textbook, published in 1852, entitled The Law of Copyright between England and France in Literature, the Drama, Music, and the Fine Arts, Analyzed and Explained, with the Orders in Council, and the Recent Acts of Parliament on the Subject, lauds the “clear understanding” that had been restored to British copyright law by the decision (Burke 56, cited in Nowell-Smith 39). More recent accounts of copyright legislation and theory also view this period as a high point in the quest for international copyright.

The state of legal clarity, however, was not to remain unchallenged, and Jeffreys went on, supported financially by a group of literary publishers who had invested heavily in the reprint market, to appeal his case to the House of Lords. The appeal process, though, was a long one, and a decision would not be handed down until 1854. During this period between the first appeal in 1851 and the final decision in 1854, publishers waited

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1800 (Oxford, 1964). For a contemporary discussion of the case until 1852, see Peter Burke’s book, cited above. For a comparison of copyright, book import, and publishing practices in America and Britain between 1828 and 1868, see Michael Winship, “The Transatlantic Book Trade and Anglo-American Literary Culture in the Nineteenth Century,” in Reciprocal Influences: Literary Production, Distribution, and Consumption in America (Ohio State University Press, 1999) 98-122. Finally, for a survey of the developments in copyright law and practice in both Britain and America through the mid-nineteenth century, with a focus on relevant debates among America authors, publishers, and legislators, see Meredith McGill’s American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting 1834-1853 (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) as well as her more recent article on “Copyright” in A History of the Book in America, Volume 3: The Industrial Book 1840-1880 (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press and The American Antiquarian Society, 2007) 159-178.
for a final verdict and other copyright cases stalled, including a suit involving Washington Irving’s copyrights between the publishing firms of Murray, Bentley, and Bohn, in which the various parties decided to settle (Barnes, Authors, Publishers, and Politicians). As Michael Winship points out, discussions of the relationship between copyright legislation and publishing practice are always complicated by the “distinction between de jure and de facto copyright, between copyright as established by law and copyright as actually practiced by publishers and booksellers” (“The Transatlantic Book Trade” 101). The period of legal uncertainty over the ultimate result of Boosey vs. Jeffreys, then, created a corresponding sense of practical uncertainty in the publishing market in the early 1850s. In practice, during this period, publishing firms were essentially betting on how the case would ultimately unfold, putting out unauthorized reprints if they thought they might quickly benefit from them, and negotiating contracts with the knowledge that the law could easily change again.

The final decision in Boosey vs. Jeffreys again reversed the previous one, denying the rights of nonresident foreign authors to copyright protection, even for texts first published in the United Kingdom. The immediate results of this legal shift included the renegotiation of contracts between American authors and British publishers who had followed the law as defined by the 1851 decision (Barnes Authors, Publishers, and Politicians 172-73), a spike in transatlantic travel on the part of American authors anxious to secure copyright protection for new works, and the emergence of large new pirated editions of popular American books (including a new wave of reprints of
Warner’s books, Maria Cummins’s *The Lamplighter*,\(^{13}\) and many other popular American titles). Anna Warner records the implications for herself and her sister: “the Lord Chancellor’s decision was revoked, and no more copyright dues would come from England; we could have only what English publishers saw fit to give us” (376).

Even under the 1851 decision, *The Wide, Wide World* would not have been eligible for copyright protection in Britain. Susan Warner herself never traveled to Britain, and because the book was never expected to do particularly well, George Putnam had not thought it worth finding a British publisher or distributor to arrange for simultaneous transatlantic publication of her first novel, just as he had not thought it worth printing even a normal sized first print run in America. Despite, or perhaps because of, this initial absence of any arrangement with an authorized publisher, the novel would become one of the most widely circulated and read books in Britain in the 1850s, reaching and sustaining an international circulation that easily outnumbered even its enthusiastic American readership.\(^{14}\) Indeed, in 1892, over four decades after its original publication, the *Critic* cites *The Wide, Wide World* as, alongside the Bible, “one of the four books most widely read in England” (cited in Foster 49).\(^{15}\)


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\(^{13}\) Routledge records printing eight editions (8vo. foolscap) of 5,000 copies each of *The Lamplighter* in early 1854, followed by two additional printings of 10,000 copies each. He also published 20,000 copies of a higher-quality copy in cloth binding with gilt printing on the cover in May of 1854, adding another 8,000 copies on July 2 (*Archives of Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.*).

\(^{14}\) *The Bookman* and *Book News* (1888, p. 458) cite steady demand for the title through the end of the nineteenth-century, and Routledge’s publishing books display a pattern of regular publication of British editions of *The Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy* from their initial release in the 1850s through the 1890s.

\(^{15}\) F.S.D., “Tears, Idle Tears,” *The Critic*, XXI (October 29, 1892), 236.
World appeared in British editions put out by at least ten different publishers. Two London firms, Sampson Low & Co. and James Nisbet & Co., both released editions in 1851 that claimed to be the “First English Edition.” Nisbet’s contained a new “Preface to the English Edition” by Anna Warner, and was listed in the Athenaeum in August of that year. The London firm of Sampson Low prominently advertised its own “First English Edition” in the Publisher’s Circular, hinting that, as well as being of great utility and interest, it was “well adapted for presents” for the 1851 Christmas season. At least four other publishing firms also advertised their own editions before 1852. By 1853, the Publisher’s Circular reported, “cheap editions of Miss Warner’s popular and characteristic American Tale are making their appearance in all directions, outvying one another in price and appearance, but entirely regardless of the interests of the author, or those with whom she had entered into arrangements” (qtd. in Greenspan, George Palmer Putnam 259).

Many of these editions were focused at the bottom of the price scale. The “cheap” Clarke & Beeton edition lists its price on the cover as one shilling and sixpence and the London Catalogue of Books Published in Great Britain, 1831-1855 records several other editions with similar prices. The success of The Wide, Wide World was also particularly suited to a trend in popular publishing: the cheap series, which included house editions of a variety of reprints. The novel appeared in several of the earliest and most successful of the cheap series, including Bohn’s Standard Library (by 1853), Milner and Sowerby’s Cottage Library Series, and Routledge’s Cheap Series and Railway

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16 The advertisement is repeated in larger type in the December 15 number. In both, the book is listed as being “in the press” (December 4, 1851, p.415).
Library in 1855. According to Neuberg, when it was started in 1837, “The Cottage Library proved so successful that other series were started [by Milner]. There were the New Novelist’s Library, costing 1s. 6d. a cloth-bound volume, and the Wide, Wide World Library, costing 1s. 3d. or 1s. 6d., according to binding and containing both fiction and non-fiction” (178). The Wide, Wide World, then, even gave its name to one of these collections, creating a kind of brand identity based on sentimental novels.

From the time The Wide, Wide World entered the British market, its British circulation was clearly in advance of the American. While hard evidence for circulation figures is often difficult to come by, detailed publication books kept by the firm of George Routledge and Sons put its own editions of Wide, Wide World at 84,000 copies by 1853. In addition to rushing several early editions to press and reissuing them as soon as they sold out, Routledge had the distinction of becoming the first to produce an illustrated edition, released in 1853, though throughout that year, several other publishers would join him with illustrated editions, including Nelson, Bohn, and Clarke & Beeton. The above figure is for just one British publisher of Warner’s novel. It doesn’t even count the multiple editions put out by Sampson Low, Nisbet, Clarke and Beeton, Hamilton, Adams & Co., the Nelsons, Bohn, Farrington, Wilson, Milner and Sowerby, Eginton, and others, for which specific archival records no longer exist. Several of these firms released multiple editions of the novel. For example, Nelson & Son, a firm based in London and Edinburgh, released a regular edition in late 1852, following that with a cheap edition in early 1853, then an illustrated edition in mid-1853.

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17. See Jessica DeSpain for an excellent survey and analysis of these illustrations themselves (Steaming Across the Pond 104-130).
Routledge novel published in 1852 claims, “300,000 of this extremely popular book has [sic] been sold throughout the United Kingdom in nine months,” and the above sketch suggests that this may well have been a conservative estimate.

The copyrighted Putnam editions in America, though undeniably popular and profitable, could not match the British editions in terms of sheer numbers. Though Putnam claims, in the Norton Literary Gazette and Publisher’s Circular in late 1852, to have sold an impressive 70,000 copies (quoted in Greenspan, George Palmer Putnam 339), Ezra Greenspan still estimates the circulation figures for the copyright-protected Putnam editions at “tens of thousands” in America during the early 1850s (Greenspan, House of Putnam 172), a time when British publishers were collectively putting out hundreds of thousands of copies. Even in the absence of definite figures, then, there were easily more copies in circulation in Britain in the early 1850s than in America, and an even larger proportional readership when considering the relative populations of the two countries. According to Clarence Ghodes’s study on American Literature in Nineteenth-Century Britain, “So far as the quantity of books sold is concerned, the readers of the United States were, for the century as a whole, more numerous than those of the British Isles” (141), which makes the fact that Warner’s novels sold more copies in Britain all the more notable.

Susan Warner was, herself, aware of the probable extent of her British readership and its implications for her own career and finances. One item currently in the Warner

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18 An advertisement for Routledge books and series, in The Star Chamber: An Historical Romance by William Harrison Ainsworth (1854).
19 The 1850 census determines the resident population of the United States (including slaves) to be 23,191,876. The 1851 UK census estimates a population of 16,769,400.
family archive is a questionnaire that had been sent by the Publisher’s Circular as part of its 1853 article on literary piracy. The questionnaire has been filled-in but never returned and in it, Warner answers several questions, including, “Do you favor International Copyright? What plan seems to you most practical in view of all interests concerned?” And, “Can you estimate sales of your works abroad and your loss for want of International Copyright?” In answer to the last question, Warner writes: “[The loss] is in my case utterly inestimable; for years the English sale was so enormously in advance of the American. I saw one estimate that within a few years after its publication The Wide, Wide World had been sold in Great Britain to the amount of a quarter of a million. Ten thousand of Queechy were sold at a single railway station” (qtd. in Mabel Baker 90). Anna Warner records this same estimate for Queechy in her memoir, and, though she doesn’t cite its source, it is likely it came from Susan Warner’s correspondence with various representatives of British publishers (Susan Warner 359). These estimates are certainly in keeping with both the evidence I mentioned already and with surveys of early editions of The Wide, Wide World, and they further underscore the degree to which Warner’s novels permeated the British publishing market.

Counting the number of physical copies of a book in circulation is only one way of estimating the size of its readership, and the many anecdotal narratives of British reading of The Wide, Wide World suggest that even as these estimates likely fall far short of the number of actual readers, the readers themselves were particularly devoted. There are numerous accounts of reading these novels, including some by well-known British authors. Elizabeth Barrett Browning in a letter to her friend, Miss Mitford, asked, “Tell
me if you have read Queechy? I think it very clever and characteristic. Mrs. Beecher Stowe scarcely exceeds it after all her trumpets” (qtd. Dobson 37). Queechy was also found in the collection of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes, and William Baker suggests that it is “possibly an influence upon some of George Eliot’s early novels” (William Baker 35). In Kate Flint’s study of female readers, she also cites multiple autobiographies or letters by more ordinary readers who recall reading The Wide, Wide World and Queechy. One of these readers, Florence White, describes reading both books as a child and says, “I tried to imitate their heroines” (qtd. Flint 207). Susan Williams cites examples from the extant collection of Warner’s fan mail that also refer to British readers. For example, “J.P. Morgan’s wife Frances wrote to tell of Lord Esher’s comment at a London dinner party that he ‘read through Queechy once a year, I find so much pleasure in it’” (“Widening the World” 573-4). Jessica DeSpain also notes several letters from English admirers in Warner’s family archive (Steaming 132-133).

These individual examples, though, only hint at the wide variety of contexts within which Warner’s books were being read outside America. In July of 1853, J.W. Hengiston published an account of his recent transatlantic travels in the New Monthly Magazine, a London publication. In describing Boston, he notes, “Book-stores abound; […] I see just now in every shop-window “Uncle Tom” and “Queechy,” “Wide, Wide World” and “Forest Trees,” little dreaming I should come home to find them also in possession of all our book-shops, circulating libraries, and railway stations.” Similarly, an essay in Blackwood’s in 1856 comments: “Every railway library presents a row of [‘Wide, Wide World’ and ‘Queechy’] on sale, and wherever there are schoolroom book-
shelves or a parish library to be referred to, we shall be surprised if these tales, well-thumbed, and with every trace of favor, are not forthcoming.” Both of these citations mention a variety of sites for the circulation and re-circulation of these texts, structures that allowed each copy to reach multiple readers through educational and social contexts, as well as other popular locations for reading, such as public transportation. They also point to the seeming ubiquity of Warner’s books, comparable to only a few others, in the British popular market in the early to mid-1850s.

In the *Edinburgh Review* around the same time, Nassau Senior directly attributes Warner’s widely diffused British readership to the contemporary lack of international copyright, explaining:

A remarkable result of this state of the law in both countries is, that the popular literature of America is English, and the popular literature of England is American. Reprints of American works of fiction, in which the matter of a large volume is compressed into 400 duodecimo pages of small print on bad, thin paper, cover the railway book stalls, and filter from thence into the farmhouses and the back rooms of the village shops. ‘Uncle Tom,’ ‘The Wide Wide World,’ ‘Queechy,’ and ‘The White Slave,’ form now the staple of the reading of the middle classes. (450)

Senior’s image of the books “filtering” through locations common in middle-class life echoes the earlier quotations that situate them in railway stations, schoolrooms, and parishes. In these various sites, we see the book’s ability to cross among different demographics. They appealed not only to schoolchildren, but also to the crowds who passed through railway stations and churches. In the 1853 review in the *North American* cited above, Kirkland describes a similar widening circulation among different kinds of readers in homes and neighborhoods: “As far as we know the early history of *The Wide, Wide World*, it was, for some time, bought to be presented to nice little girls…Elder
sisters were soon found poring over the volumes, and it was very natural that mothers
next should try the spell...After this, papas were not very difficult to convert. …We are
much mistaken if *The Wide, Wide World*, and *Queechy* have not been found under the
pillows of sober bachelors…They were found on everybody’s table, and lent from house
to house” (113). In Nassau Senior’s discussion, we see the extent of the text’s
transatlantic adoption through its connection with so many contexts of British life. In
Senior’s estimation, then, despite their American origins, *The Wide, Wide World* and
*Queechy* came to define a certain kind of British national literature, exemplifying “the
popular literature of England.”

Though there was not a way to secure international copyright protection for *The
Wide, Wide World*, its success demonstrated that Susan Warner was a highly marketable
author, and in the climate of optimism created by the 1851 copyright decision, both the
firms of Sampson Low & Son and James Nisbet tried to secure the British rights to her
future publications. In the fall of 1852, during his tour of the United States, Sampson
Low, Jr. paid a visit to Warner at her home on Constitution Island. He came Friday,
October 15, writing from New York two weeks before to arrange a visit, and enclosing a
letter from Charles Tayler, a writer of religious books in Britain and a Sampson Low
house author. This letter appears to have been Warner’s first point of contact with Tayler
and she was seemingly unimpressed, identifying him in her journal as “an author, but
really I am not quite certain of what” (364). Tayler would subsequently go on to seek a
larger role in facilitating Warner’s British circulation, and later in this chapter, I will
explore more fully Tayler’s own literary work and his connection with Warner’s various
British publishers.

Following this unimpressive letter of introduction, Susan Warner’s description of
Low’s visit suggests that she was alternately put off by her English visitor’s behavior and
self-conscious about what she seems to imagine might appear as her own lack of
sophistication. In receiving Low, Warner describes herself as wearing working clothes,
and recollects:

Was n’t much pleased with his Englishship. Thought he did not appreciate his
privileges—at first, especially; and I suppose it might puzzle him to know what to
make of us. The rug had been turned upside down for fear of fire; one desk on the
table, another on the ‘luxury’; and we, A[nn]a and I, carrying candles in and out
of the tea room. An under-bred man. But he is willing to engage, nay he did
engage, to take, if I would write it, a volume from me and pay me for each edition
of 3000 the sum of £50,—the books to be sold at half a crown. He promised to
take it, without seeing it. But I don’t think I’ll give it him. Paid me £20 for that
first little edition of the W.W.W. He only stayed to tea. (qtd. in Anna Warner,
Susan Warner 367)

The twenty pounds was clearly a courtesy payment for an edition (and hardly a “little”
one) that had already gone to press in December of 1851, though the preface to that
edition had already somewhat disingenuously offered its British readers the “minor
recommendations, that the authoress has an interest in the sale of this work, and that it
has already acquired an extensive popularity in America” (v). Sampson Low’s clear
intention to compensate Susan Warner (however modestly), his negotiations for a future
volume, and indeed his trip itself, during which he attempted to make several similar
transactions (Greenspan, George Palmer Putnam, 281), reflect the firm’s deliberate
investment in providing American authors with access to the British market during the
period from 1851 to 1854, when many British publishers optimistically believed such investments could be protected.

The negotiations between Sampson Low, Jr. and Susan Warner themselves seem to have involved further mutual mis-reading; as Susan records in her journal a week later, “Had to write a note to Mr. Low, from whom I received an extraordinary letter, taking for granted my acceptance of his propositions, and saying my work (unwritten and unagreed for) should be announced in England for early publication! He sent me Mr. Tayler’s ‘Thankfulness’—which is—a little thing with not much in it” (368). Though Warner may have thought her resistance to Mr. Low’s business proposals was clear, it was not clear enough. While she never became a house author, the firm of Sampson Low maintained its stake in reprinting her books, continuing to produce new editions of Wide, Wide World, advertising them in every number of The Publisher’s Circular beginning in November of 1851 and extending for several years afterwards.

Around the time of this attempt by Sampson Low to secure Warner’s future productions, the firm of James Nisbet, & Co., well known as a publishing house specializing in religious and educational texts, was more successful in persuading Warner to make them her British representatives. Warner’s second novel Queechy and its publication history should be seen as a professional response to the unexpected British popularity of The Wide, Wide World. Putnam and Warner took the precaution of securing a British publisher (Nisbet), who seems to have been relatively successful at protecting this novel from the kind of wide circulation that characterized its predecessor. Though the novel was under tentative copyright protection, since Boosey vs. Jeffreys had not yet
been resolved and *Queechy* was published simultaneously in Britain and America, Nisbet still seems to have taken precautions to ensure that his authorized edition would be the first available in Britain, publishing it quickly in 1852 without taking the time to commission illustrations (Quayle 167). As the ostensible holder of the novel’s British copyright, Nisbet also granted permission to one other publisher to come out with an edition of the title. For both his 1852 edition and the July 1853 reprint, Routledge paid Nisbet a small per-volume fee to publish an edition of *Queechy* that was smaller (8vo.) and cheaper than either of the Nisbet editions, and which was advertised throughout this period as a “copyright volume.” The *London Catalogue of Books* lists Nisbet and Routledge as the only publishers of the novel through the end of 1854 (557). F. A. Mumby records that Routledge’s edition of *Queechy*,

was rushed through the press in another of Routledge’s bursts of energy. The copy for his edition was placed in the printer’s hands one Monday morning; the sheets were at the binders on Thursday; and by the following Monday 20,000 copies had been sold to the trade. ‘Queechy’ was first published over here by Nisbet. ‘We made an arrangement with them,’ to quote George Routledge’s own words, ‘to publish a two-shilling edition. We paid them a royalty of twopence a copy on 66,000 copies, amounting to £550. A decision in the Law Courts soon after this enabled us to dispense with the payment of this royalty, and we have now sold 114,000 copies.’ That was at his retirement many years later. (56-57)

Once the final appeal of the *Boosey vs. Jeffreys* case reached a decision in 1854, not only was Routledge released from the obligation to pay Nisbet for the copyright, but also multiple other cheap editions of *Queechy* began to appear.

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20 Nisbet published a one-volume and a two-volume edition of *Queechy* in 1852, both 12vo. and both at a price of 3s 6d. Routledge’s edition was in two volumes, 8vo., and sold for 2s. (*Loudon Catalogue of Books*, 557).

21 *The Archives of Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.*, microfilm ed., The British Library. There is no recorded payment to Nisbet for this or subsequent editions of *Queechy*. 
James Nisbet & Co. went on to publish authorized editions of many of Susan and Anna Warner’s subsequent works in Britain, but the firm continued to try to gain an advantage in the huge unauthorized market for *Wide, Wide World*. Susan’s journal frequently mentions letters from James Watson, Nisbet’s manager, called “our kind correspondent” by Anna. Describing to her the current state of the British publishing market, Watson wrote to Susan Warner in 1852,

> I think I may say we have now got up a ‘Wide World’ fever, and it is amusing to stand quietly by and watch its fearful heaving. Albeit you get little good from it. I see the book placarded about in all directions and its pretty face exhibited in every window; while the literary pirates Bohn, Routledge, Wilson, and Clarke are cutting away at each other, and we are keeping a dignified watch over Queechy. I am told by a correspondent in the country that the trade in Manchester and Liverpool is literally inundated with W.W.W., and strongly advising me to bring Queechy down to the same level. (Anna Warner, *Susan Warner* 358)

Later in 1852, Susan’s journal records another letter from Watson, suggesting that she allow the firm to publish a revised “author’s” edition of *Wide, Wide World* because so many were already coming out, for which, he repeats, she was receiving no profit (Anna Warner, *Susan Warner* 371). Watson’s characterization of the unauthorized reprint market a vicious sea battle inspired by a “pretty face,” and of his own gentlemanly firm’s “dignified refusal” to enter the fray, is an analogy often used by the higher-class publication houses at the time as a way to distance themselves from the aspects of the reprint market that were of dubious legality. It allowed them to display a righteous indignation towards publishers who would bend moral laws and pander to masses of readers. Warner seems to have obliged the firm with a revision, and by August 5, 1853,

22 Including Susan and Anna’s Bible handbook *The Law and the Testimony*, and the volumes in “Ellen Montgomery’s Bookcase” such as *Mr. Rutherford’s Children* and *My Brother’s Keeper* (discussed below), which Routledge also reprinted (*London Catalogue of Books*, 557, Archives of Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd.).
they advertised in the *Athenaeum* a new edition “carefully revised” and with additional material, joining the throng of the many, many British editions appearing in the early 1850s.

Though the primary focus of this study is on the transatlantic dynamics of Warner’s novels’ circulation and reception, it is worth noting that as a direct result of *Wide, Wide World*’s popularity in London, it came to circulate widely outside of the United States and England. The 1854 continental-European edition put out by Tauchnitz includes *Wide, Wide World* as No. 308 in its “British Authors” series (*Queechy*, in two volumes, is Nos. 311-312), which circulated in English among readers in Europe.\(^{23}\) English members of colonial governments or settler colonies also record reading the books, passing copies among acquaintances.\(^{24}\) Anna Warner mentions a letter of appreciation being sent to Susan Warner from South Wales (*Susan Warner* 354). Susan Williams references fan mail that Warner received from missionaries in China, “who wrote gratefully about using *The Wide, Wide World* in their schools,” and from Austrian parents who sent her a picture of their daughter who had recently died (“Widening the World” 574).

Outside the Anglophone world, the novels also circulated widely in translation. In an article for the *Mercersburg Quarterly Review* in 1855, Philip Schapf observes, “How


\(^{24}\) In her journal entry for July 23rd, 1853, Eliza Wigham Fielden (*My African Home: or Bush Life in Natal*, Sampson Low, 1887) describes lending *Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy* to a neighbor and then discussing them.
often already in these days have I seen the “Wide, Wide, World,” and “Queechy” lying upon tables at Berlin” (55). Similarly, a traveler in Denmark, pleased to find “the best English and American literature” available in libraries there, mentions Wide, Wide World and Queechy, after Stowe, as the volumes most read in Danish translations in Danish libraries (Brace 306). Susanne Opferman has recently discussed an 1853 German translation of The Wide, Wide World, in which she points out both the radical abbreviation (the translation is less than half the length of the original) and the transculturation (Ellen becomes Helene and various foods and social patterns are “germanized”) inherent in the translation process. Yvonne Wellink studied Dutch translations of The Wide, Wide World, pointing out that the publishers’ introductions tended to market them to children. Wellink analyzes the phenomenon of American sentimental classics circulating widely in Europe, pointing out,

> The popularity of sentimental domestic fiction in the Netherlands was undoubtedly due to its success in other European countries, especially in Great Britain. […] The fact that most Dutch translations […] were based on English editions shows even more clearly that the popularity of sentimental fiction in the Netherlands resulted from its success in England and other European countries (274).

England, here, is situated as a center for the re-circulation and re-deployment of Warner’s text within an even larger global context, an imperial reading formation that situates London as a center of global publishing and literary circulation, which I will discuss further in Chapter 4.

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This sketch of Wide, Wide World’s and Queechy’s circulation outside America, particularly in Britain, provokes a number of intriguing suggestions about how we can talk about the relationship between national identity and readerships. Compared with the tens of thousands of American editions being sold at the same time, these estimates of hundreds of thousands of copies and possibly exponentially more readers demonstrate what I have called an “inverted audience,” in which a text has a significantly larger reading audience abroad than in its country of national origin, and a reading formation that potentially affects how we classify these books. Nassau Senior’s statement, in particular, that “the popular literature of England is American” underscores this pattern. Depending on what we decide makes a book “American” or “British” the pattern also has the potential to upset our national categorizations. Though Wide, Wide World and Queechy were written by an American author, initially published in America, and widely considered to be prominent examples of a distinct and “characteristic” national literature, they were even more widely read in Britain. In the remainder of this chapter, I will attempt to reconstruct the transatlantic discussion of national identity sparked by Warner’s novels in order to consider the question, does this reading formation suggest that American nationalism was widely embraced in Britain, or does it have the potential to undermine the idea that the books’ “humane, religious, piquant, [and] natural” qualities are necessarily an “index” of its national origins?

“A Want of Patriotism”: National Identities in The Wide, Wide World and Queechy

Though it was the state of international copyright law and publishing practice at the time that certainly enabled the creation of Warner’s large British audience, it was her
books themselves that appealed to British readers. As *The Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy* (widely read as a companion novel) re-located from American to British audiences, though, readers had to consider the extent to which the books take nationalism as a primary term for narrating the young heroines’ private processes of identity-formation. An article in the *Church of England Quarterly Review* admits the books to be “deeply imbued with nationality” (“Notices of Books” 227).

In both novels, the young heroines repeatedly engage in straightforward dialogues about the respective merits of America and England, and Ellen Montgomery and Fleda Ringgan defend their country’s honor with arguments that rarely fail to leave their hearers impressed, if not won over. Soon after relocating to Scotland, Ellen discusses nationality with her uncle, Mr. Lindsay, and his sister, Lady Keith, who admits to “not lik[ing]” Americans, and tells Ellen that she “must learn to have no nationality” except that of her uncle, her adopted father (505). He teases Ellen that the prejudice arises because Americans are “a parcel of rebels who have broken loose from all loyalty and fealty, that no good Briton has any business to like” (506). To Ellen’s reasoning that the Americans had the moral right on their side, because King George and the English had “forfeited their characters first” and thus waived any right to loyalty on the part of their subjects, her uncle responds, “If your sword had been as stout as your tongue, I don’t know how I might have come off in that encounter” (506). Ellen’s assertion of American identity and defense of American history arise, here, from direct criticism on the part of her British relatives. In the next chapter, while sight-seeing in Edinburgh, Ellen displays an enthusiasm for and knowledge of Scottish history, including the episodes of Robert the
Bruce and Mary, Queen of Scots, and, in a conversation with her uncle, professes, “I like the Scots people. […] because they would not be conquered by the English […] I like them because they would be free” (515). He responds, “You have an extraordinary taste for freedom! And pray, are all the American children as strong republicans as yourself?” (515). In this scene, historicized Scotland becomes a way of re-imagining and resituating republican values in a British context, allowing Ellen to negotiate the novel’s theme of submitting to authority in nationalized terms. When her authoritarian relatives test her twin loyalties to God and country, she submits in everything but her commitment to read her Bible every morning and her internal conviction that she remains, herself, American.

In Queechy, Fleda is involved in similarly direct articulations of American patriotism. Unlike Ellen, who is half-Scottish, Fleda’s family is, itself, integrated into the narratives of early American nationhood, through the memories of her grandfather. Early in the novel, Mr. Ringgan discusses American history with Mr. Carleton, an Englishman:

“Yes, Sir! when I first set myself down here, or a little further that way, my first house was, – a pretty rough house too, – there wa'n't two settlers beside within something like ten miles round. – I've seen the whole of it cleared, from the cutting of the first forest trees till this day.” “You have seen the nation itself spring up within that time,” remarked his guest. “Not exactly – that question of our nationality was settled a little before I came here. […] wasn't a man of the name that wa'n't on the right side. I was in the army myself when I was fifteen. I

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27 In The Story of A: The Alphabetization of America from The New England Primer to The Scarlet Letter, Patricia Cain discusses Ellen’s own national background. She reads The Wide, Wide World as an allegory of alphabetic literacy. She highlights the mother-daughter relationship as a textual one, and interprets Ellen’s mother’s history as a reinterpretation of the Charlotte Temple narrative: “Ellen’s mother, against her own mother’s wishes, married an American and moved to New York, following the trajectory of that earlier bestseller Charlotte Temple, whose heroine ran off with the similarly named Montraville. Mrs. Montgomery hates her husband; though she shares his bed, his only heavy breathing is slumberous, a sign of his maddening insensitivity. The woman who ran away with the Yankee soldier, thwarting her family, leaving her country, has been transformed into an invalid, whose still fiery passions are parcelled out between her small daughter and Jesus Christ” (257-258).
was nothing but a fifer – but I tell you, Sir! there wasn't a general officer in the country that played his part with a prouder heart than I did mine!” (85).

Mr. Ringgan here is involved in both the narrative of American independence and the settler ideal. At Fleda’s prompting, he relates a story of stealing pies from a British garrison, and, when questioned about these “lawless proceedings,” Fleda patriotically replies, “You liked those pies all the better, didn't you, grandpa, because you had got them from the tories?” (86). She enters fully into Mr. Ringgan’s long discourse, in which he identifies the English as “rascals” and the struggle as being about “the right against the wrong.”

Even as children, Ellen and Fleda do not come to these patriotic positions unaided, and the novels align specific religious and educational reading practices with their personal identification with national or political stances. When asked where she got “these strange notions about the Americans,” Ellen responds, “In reading” (506). In Queechy, reading is perhaps emphasized even more than in its predecessor. In one scene, Fleda spends several pages detailing her extensive reading list for an entire year, and she, herself, eventually becomes a published author, submitting pieces to periodicals under the pen name “Hugh.”

The novels repeatedly encourage simultaneous reading of multiple texts, arguing for a complete feminine education, in which religious and patriotic texts are highly privileged.28 Alongside their daily reading of their Bibles, Ellen and Fleda read multiple

28 Jessica DeSpain interprets Ellen’s education in Wide, Wide World as a conversion story imbued with contemporary American evangelicalism (Steaming Across the Pond 82-89).
biographies of George Washington,\textsuperscript{29} books that are identified specifically by author, allowing readers to go look up these books for themselves. As she recites her reading list from the past year, Fleda mentions a \textit{Life of Washington}, and, when asked, identifies it as “Marshall’s.” Ellen says that she has read two lives of Washington, though only the first is mentioned in detail, when John Humphreys gives it to her as a gift. In his recent study of American biography, Scott Casper asserts the centrality of reading biographies to Ellen’s eventual views on the “legitimacy of the Revolution,” though he points out, “Weems was so familiar that readers would recognize him from Ellen’s mispronunciations—for Warner never does spell his name correctly” (76). Through patriotic narratives of American nationhood, Ellen and Fleda are taught to see Washington as both a moral and national symbol. One of Ellen’s acquaintances jokes that since she is such a “patriot” she should name her new pony George Washington, to which Ellen responds that the name is, “a great deal too good for a horse” (376). Fleda’s grandfather, Mr. Ringgan, relates his childhood memories of the Revolution, saying, “We trusted in God and in Washington […] Washington was the soul of the country, Sir!” (89). Through participating in the nineteenth-century rhetoric of the cult of Washington, the novels use the historical figure of the revolutionary hero to represent a confluence of national and moral identities as well as a kind of permission to resist any authority that is unjustly or immorally applied.

\textsuperscript{29} Ellen reads the Mason Locke Weems (1814) biography, and though she says she reads two lives of Washington (506), the other is never identified. Fleda reads the one by John Marshall (1836). See also, Scott Casper’s \textit{Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America} (76).
Many scholars have linked *The Wide, Wide World’s* focus on religious and national reading with the tradition of women’s writing and feminism within which Warner’s novels were critically recovered. Elizabeth Trubey views the act of reading in *The Wide, Wide World* as one that “opens new imaginative doors for Ellen Montgomery that reveal an inner space where women can rebel against authority and assert their wills” (59), arguing that reading narratives like those of Washington give Ellen “access to the idea of freedom and rebellion if not actual freedom itself” (72). Suzanne Ashworth interprets Ellen’s reading within the nineteenth-century structure of feminine conduct, recognizing that it both enables and limits her resistance to her Scottish relatives. Another beloved text for Ellen is her copy of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, which Ashworth reads as “a dissenter’s book […], a seminal text in American culture, encompassing the religious beliefs and the reading practices of the Puritans who settled New England” (156), further underscoring the link between Ellen’s reading and national identity formation. She emphasizes that, in reading, Ellen “confronts the violence inherent in the woman reader’s deference to domestic obligations and her ready submission to the censor and surveillance of her reading habits” (157). Reading becomes an act of rebellion, an enactment of patriotism.

By focusing on Ellen’s reading practices, these critics highlight the importance of reading for national identity formation, something that remains important when considering the actual readers of *The Wide, Wide World* itself. By promoting a hermeneutic of identification between reader and text, Warner’s novel engages in discussions of nationalism and American history and constructs a model for republican
reading in which it proceeds to train its own readers. It works by assuming its readers are like those schooled in the book itself, who are familiar with textual strategies that promote discontinuous reading and emotional identification. I would argue, though, that these assertions of national identity, of allegiance to Washington and sympathy for rebellion, are significant not only in the context of the novels’ portrayal of gendered development, but within larger negotiations of the terms of national identity in a transatlantic critical, literary, and religious context.

Most previous critics focus on Wide, Wide World but it is in Queechy, viewed by many contemporary readers and by Warner herself as a more developed articulation of a similar narrative, that the results of this education are displayed. In Queechy, the grown-up Fleda, informed by her extensive reading, is able to enter into more sophisticated discussions comparing England and America than she or Ellen Montgomery had as children. Fleda retains her simplistic childhood allegiance to America, but deepens her arguments. After listening to a conversation about education for the lower classes, Fleda defends the right of “farmer’s daughters” to be educated and of the lower classes to “lift themselves out of [poverty]” (395). When Mr. Stackpole, an Englishman, states, “Things are very different on our side of the water […] because we know how to keep things in their places a little better,” Fleda replies, “I did not know […] that it was by design of the rulers of England that so many of her lower class are in the intellectual condition of our slaves” (396). In a subsequent conversation (which was omitted from James Nisbet’s 1853 English Edition), Fleda returns to the issue of slavery, when Mr. Stackpole goes on about his favorite subject: “The American government was a rickety experiment – go to
pieces presently; American institutions an alternative between fallacy and absurdity, the fruit of raw minds and precocious theories; American liberty a contradiction; American character a compound of quackery and pretension.” He comes at last to the problem of American slavery, but Fleda counters him with the argument that it was under the “auspices and fostering care [of the British that] this curse of slavery [was] laid upon America,” and that Americans were still laboring diligently to right the wrong. She quotes Burke’s speech on Conciliation with America and reminds him, “Four times the government of Massachusetts abolished the slave-trade under their control, and four times the English government thrust it back upon them. […]Therefore] I think it becomes an Englishman to be very moderate in putting forth that charge [of condoning inequality].” Just as she and Ellen do as children, Fleda continues to speak in defense of America, resisting English criticism of, or at least interference with, even “the sore spot of American slavery.”

In her use of particular sources and nuanced argument, Fleda also represents what Susan Warner calls “well-educated patriotism” in her 1851 prize essay (and first published work) on “How May an American Woman Best Show her Patriotism?” where Warner argues simultaneously for women’s education but against their suffrage.

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30 It is probable that an early version of The Wide, Wide World contained a discussion of race and slavery in America as well, but that it was later excised. While she is visiting the Putnam’s for the purpose of correcting the proofs of The Wide, Wide World, Susan Warner records the following episode in her journal for September 28, 1850: “‘Mama,’ said Minny, ‘when are we going to have the story of Ellen?’ What is that? Thought I. ‘That is Miss Warner’s story,’ said Mrs. Putnam; and went on to say that they had read a chapter of it aloud in the family, ‘about the little black girl.’ I explained that that entire interesting relation had been expunged from the book” (qtd. in Anna Warner, Susan Warner 296). Warner later implies that this excision and others came about because of concerns about the book’s length.
The assertions of national allegiance in the novels are not always so straightforward, though, and despite their willingness to champion Warner’s books as examples of an American national literature, as discussed above, even American readers and reviewers sometime objected to the books’ portrayal of nationality. Anna Warner admits that her sister had been “gravely charged in America with a want of patriotism” (Preface to the English Edition). In a letter from their Aunt Fanny, the sisters were informed of some rumors floating around the community: “Mrs G. asked Ellen if she had heard of Sue’s having One Hundred Thousand Dollars from England,--not from her book, but bequeathed to her. I suppose for her want of patriotism. Fan does not exactly approve of Sue’s plan of making her best characters English” (Anna Warner, Susan Warner 356-57). In a more public example of such criticism, in an 1851 “Editor’s Table” in Godey’s Ladies Book, Sarah Josepha Hale asserts, “The Wide, Wide World appears to be an American book, with an American copyright; but it is as English in its tone as if it had been written by Mrs. Trollope herself” (185).31

Warner’s English tone certainly is not evident in the direct assertions of patriotism mentioned earlier, but it more subtly permeates many of the novel’s characterizations and narrative strands. Indeed, the transatlantic sentiments contained in the novels can be seen as existing on two levels: the level of historic myth and the level of contemporary life. It is important to note that, with the exception of Fleda’s discourse on the British responsibility for American slavery, which even Fleda admits is not an object of national pride, the direct professions of patriotism contained in the novels are always highly

31 Frances Trollope’s 1832 travelogue Domestic Manners of the Americans took on a famously mocking tone toward all things American.
historicized. The overtly patriotic recitations of American history or the emphasis on
textual and imaginative engagement with the cult of George Washington are the most
prominent repositories of patriotic feeling in the novel. Even the similarly-historicized
Robert the Bruce comes to function as a kind of Washington surrogate in his resistance to
the English. England is, thus, interpreted straightforwardly as the unjust, authoritarian
oppressor, while representatives of America follow their moral duty to resist.

The historical dimension in which these figures and ideas exist separates them
from the portrayals of contemporary life in the novels, in which English and American
tend to signify much differently and much less clearly. In both novels, in her depiction of
contemporary society, the characters of Warner’s young heroines are forged in
cosmopolitan communities of upper class immigrants, the finest elements of which
always seem to come from abroad, a group that Jessica DeSpain reads as “a symbol of
the transnational conversionary force of American evangelicalism” (Steaming 96).
Warner is quick to draw nation-based geographical boundaries and each individual or
family is identified by how long since their emigration to America. For example, Ellen is
surprised when Alice Humphreys identifies herself as English, saying she had come to
America just twelve years previously, along with her father and brother. In both novels,
though, everything American is not always depicted as necessarily superior, and ethnic
prejudice is willingly leveled against Americans like Aunt Fortune in The Wide, Wide
World or various lower-class members of the Queechy community who conform to a
backwoods stereotype. Edward Haley Foster reads Aunt Fortune as a representative of
the nineteenth century folk type: the Yankee (45). Aunt Fortune, whose gentility is
dubious, as she refuses to hire a servant, fails to value education, religion, or reflection, and repeatedly breaks genteel social codes, represents the kind of American identity that Warner would have her heroines, however idealistically patriotic, avoid.

Aunt Fortune, the contemporary American adult woman who appears most often in *The Wide, Wide World*, also excludes herself from the historically-based tradition of American patriotic feeling that the novel advocates. In one exchange, Aunt Fortune tells Ellen, “‘I wish Morgan [Ellen’s father] could have had the gumption to marry in his own country; but he must go running after a Scotch woman! A Yankee would have brought up his child to be worth something. Give me Yankees!’” To Ellen’s response, “‘You don’t know anything about my mother; You oughtn’t to speak so—it’s not right,’” Miss Fortune replies, “‘Why ain’t it right, I should like to know? […] this is a free country, I guess. Our tongues ain’t tied—we’re all free here’” (158). This is clearly a distortion of the view of freedom and republicanism that the novel advocates, as embodied in George Washington and his contemporary disciples. While Ellen invokes it to resist her authoritarian relatives’ dictum that she must forget her nationality and stop reading her Bible, Miss Fortune uses it to deliver vulgar insults. So while she is American by birth, unlike Alice Humphreys, Aunt Fortune is clearly represented as not sufficiently cultured or “American” in nature.

It is through speech that the *Wide, Wide World* most clearly distinguishes between the upper-class, cosmopolitan characters, whom Ellen emulates, and the “Yankees” against whom it levels prejudice. Aunt Fortune’s use of dialect, illustrated above, permeates her conversation. Alice and John Humphreys, however, both born in England
and raised by English parents, are held up as paragons of correct speech, and it is evidence of Ellen’s own good breeding that she can recognize the “pleasant way of speaking” of Margery, their English servant. Both Alice and John take care that Ellen also learns to speak this way, correcting her whenever she makes a mistake. For example, Alice chides Ellen for saying *ain’t*, saying, “my English ears don’t like it at all” (221). John also repeatedly corrects Ellen’s grammar, once prompting Ellen to offer the apology: “I am sorry that is Yankee, for I suppose one must speak English” (221). This careful attention to Ellen’s accent is recognized by her uncle and aunt, who congratulates her on her speech after she arrives in Scotland: “[I]t is extraordinary how after living among a parcel of thick-headed and thicker-tongued Yankees she could come out and speak pure English in a clear voice” (505). The distinction between “Yankee” and “English” seems to have been important to Susan Warner, who aligns her young heroines clearly with the kind of American identity that does not involve being confused with a “backwoods” Yankee.

Susan Warner’s mild ethnic prejudice is also, perhaps, at the heart of her above-mentioned account of her discomfort at meeting Sampson Low, Jr., one of the only instances in which she recorded meeting an Englishman.32 Warner’s comments are themselves revealing about her own complicated ideas on nationality and patriotism, as she is at once self-conscious enough to mention her “calico working dress, merino sacque, worsted cap, white handkerchief around [her] neck, clump shoes, and very old

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32 In a letter to Anna, Susan mentions meeting another Englishman, a Mr. MacLachlan, in company while visiting the Putnams. She is first struck by his pompous manner, but then enters into conversation with him, and “We presently struck up a conversation and went on quite swimmingly, I enjoying the kind of pleasure one has on breaking new soil to find it is not hard ground” (316).
“kid gloves” (underlining in the journal, in Weiss 295) and anxious to displace any discomfort onto her guest, reflecting, “I suppose it might puzzle him to know what to make of us” (Susan Warner, quoted in Anna Warner, Susan Warner 367). Having just come in from working in the garden, and still wearing her work clothes, she, perhaps unconsciously, resists being mistaken for an Aunt Fortune. Though she cites various pieces of evidence that show her own necessary display of poverty, it is Mr. Low whom she labels as “under-bred.” Anna echoes her sister, “How well I remember it all! […] Very strange it must have seemed to eyes fresh from England; where (we are told) everything is always in order and the correct thing is always on hand” (367). By assuming that “His Englishship” views her with a kind of arrogance that stems from his nationality, Warner at once asserts her American nationality and her own identification with the upper middle classes depicted in her novels, who retain ties to British origins and opportunities, and who move freely within a cosmopolitan society while feeling discomfort around representatives of rural America.

As suggested above, Queechy’s discussions of patriotism and politics are generally more nuanced than those in Wide, Wide World. While containing straightforward assertions of patriotism about American history and republican ideals, Warner’s second novel accesses more sophisticated terms in its assessment of contemporary life and transatlantic conversation. However, it displays the same internal prejudice against “backwoods” American characters and also contains a few well-placed depictions of the Irish-American community (depicted as similarly uncouth), but, unlike The Wide, Wide World, Queechy adds a critique of upper-class American vulgarity.
through the characters of the Evelyns, society beauties forever trying to manipulate their way to rich husbands.

*Queechy’s* American allegiance, though seemingly stronger than that of its predecessor, is most compromised by its ending, in which Fleda ultimately settles in England with her longtime friend and protector, the paragon Mr. Carleton. Though Fleda does not sacrifice her republican values, when she resettles abroad, she seems tired of America and American society, seeking relief and solitude in Mr. Carleton’s extensive English estate. In Nina Baym’s reading of this ending, “Removing to the fantasy world of the English gentry, Fleda withdraws altogether from the challenges and hardships of American life” (*Women’s Fiction* 155). Fleda leaves with the seeming intention of never returning to America, despite the fact that her fiancé has previously come to New York on a fairly regular basis and she has surviving family, important sentimental sites (graves), and longtime ties in America. This retreat of the debates and discussions the novel raises seems to reflect a troubling collapse on the part of her character. The consistently capable, resourceful, intelligent, and patriotic Fleda seems to have transformed, upon her marriage to an Englishman, into a tired, submissive doormat. Is this a failure not of Warner’s view of patriotism but of gender?

American reviewers and readers, while celebrating the books as national masterpieces, could not but notice these elements of seeming ambivalence towards America. They identified and valued the patriotic elements in the books, while questioning each “non-patriotic” piece. In the *North American Review* piece mentioned
above, which lauds *The Wide, Wide World* as the advent of a new national literature,

Caroline Kirkland acknowledges,

> There seems a slight lurking of prejudice, hardly consistent with the general patriotism of Miss Warner’s books, in this setting up of English people as models of virtue and good-breeding, and almost a solecism in sending across the water for an immensely wealthy English husband for the sturdy little American Fleda, whose breeding of hap and hazard certainly have fitted her so admirably for making some indigenous swain happy. (121-122)

Sarah Hale also objected to the seeming preference for the novels’ English or English-born characters. Though praising what they viewed as the novels’ best qualities as an “index” of their American origins, contemporary American reviewers retain the oppositional view of nationality as the primary terms in which to view the novels, objecting to any complication of this dichotomy.

**Transatlantic Dialogue about National Identity and the Religious Reading Audience**

Publishers, editors, reviewers and even some readers of the new early-1850s British editions of *Wide, Wide World* likewise take their cue from the novel itself in viewing “American” and “British” as primary terms with which to categorize the book and through which to understand it. Editors of individual editions themselves never seem to forget that *Wide, Wide World* is an American book. They assume that the book’s American-ness requires mediation, and often comment directly on national identity in editorial prefaces. As with the American complaints of “lack of patriotism” cited above, many of the British editions take a relatively simplistic, dichotomized view of national identity, assuming the terms American and British to be directly opposed.

Some editions try to enhance the book’s appeal to British audiences by making actual attempts to conceal or reverse the national identification of its author or even of the
text itself. In this vein, the original 1851 Sampson Low edition doesn’t mention the author (or her pen name, Elizabeth Wetherell) at all, but identifies the text on the title page as: *The Wide Wide World; Or, the early history of Ellen Montgomery; Edited by a Clergyman of the church of England*. In a move similar to the re-authorizing of American slave narratives by white abolitionists, this title page essentially re-authors, or re-authorizes, the text, offering it to a British audience from a familiar, respected British source.\(^{33}\)

There is substantial evidence for identifying this editor (and semi-author) of the 1851 Sampson Low edition of *The Wide, Wide World* as the Rev. Charles Tayler, a Cambridge-educated clergyman and widely published religious author.\(^{34}\) In his published work, he always prominently identified himself as a clergyman, publishing under his title “Rev.” or his Cambridge academic degree “M.A.” In the original 1851 edition of Warner’s novel, the back matter contains a list of other Sampson Low titles, headed by a list of Tayler’s works. Tayler was, himself, well-connected within the British religious

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\(^{33}\) The initial confusion about the author’s identity caused by the pen name functioned on both sides of the Atlantic. Various periodicals attempted to track down “Elizabeth Wetherell.” The *Evening Post* stated in its initial notice of the book, “This is a regular two-volume novel by a native author, but whether an old or a young hand, we are unable to say.” (Anna Warner, *Susan Warner* 336). Soon, the *Springfield Republican* identified her as an Elizabeth Warner, asking “Now where does she live?” (qtd. in Mabel Baker). We even see a similar nationalized re-authorizing, in one reviewer’s notice in the *Southern Literary Messenger*: “We were first tempted to read this work by an advertisement that stated it to be from the pen of Mrs. Browning, the elegant authoress of the “Drama of Exile” (“The Wide, Wide World,” March 1851, 189). In support of my earlier point about the reciprocity of transatlantic discussions, especially in periodicals, here Susan Warner is mistaken for a British author, and such a switch piques the interest of readers.

\(^{34}\) Though occasionally referred to as Charles Taylor, I retain the spelling of his name used by Sampson Low. Charles Benjamin Tayler (1797-1875) was educated at Guilford under the Rev. William Hodgson Cole, then at Trinity College, Cambridge, receiving his B.A. in 1819 and his M.A. in 1822. He was appointed to curacies in Hadleigh, Suffolk, then in Kent, Surrey, and Hampshire. In 1836, he received the living at St. Peters, Chester, and during this time he also gave evening lectures at St. Mary’s, Chester. In 1846, he began serving as Rector of Otley, Suffolk. He began publishing religious texts and works of religious fiction in 1822 and continued to do so throughout his career (“Charles Tayler,” *Dictionary of National Biography* and Tayler, *Facts in a Clergyman’s Life*, Seely’s, 1848).
publishing market, with a literary career that spanned from 1822 to 1872 and included several collections of sermons, a number of works of fiction, and other miscellaneous works. He edited several books and served as the editor for the monthly periodical *The Christian Beacon* between 1839 and 1841. He worked with many different publishers, but between 1848 and 1853, he was a Sampson Low house author, publishing regularly with them, while keeping up his other literary contacts, including frequent publications for the Religious Tract Society. His work was also widely reprinted by several American firms, particularly by Charles Hazard of Philadelphia and Stanford and Swords of New York, which issued a series of eight volumes of his works in 1853. In his preface to *Fool’s Pence* (1858), Tayler offers thanks for his tracts’ “wide circulation both at home and abroad,” citing a claim from the American Tract Society that 800,000 copies of *Fool’s Pence* have been distributed in America.

Though Susan Warner didn’t encounter Tayler or his work until October of 1852, when she read his letter of introduction brought by Sampson Low, Jr., Tayler seems already to have been involved in the process of forwarding her books to British audiences. By the time that Sampson Low, Jr. used Tayler as a literary ambassador to Susan Warner, sending first a letter of introduction and then a copy of Tayler’s book *Thankfulness*, Tayler had already semi-anonymously edited the above-mentioned British version of her text. Low’s choice of Tayler as a kind of literary ambassador reflects an

35 During this period, Tayler’s first published work with Sampson Low was the one that was given to Susan Warner along with Tayler’s letter: *Thankfulness, a Narrative; Comprising Pages from the Diary of the Rev. Allen Temple* (1848). In addition, he published the following works with Sampson Low: *The Angels’ Song: A Christmas Token* (1848), *Earnestness, of Incidents in the Life of an English Bishop, a Sequel to Thankfulness* (1850), *Sermons for All Seasons; Chiefly on the Subject of Tractarian Error* (1850), *Arthur and his Mother; or, the Child of the Church of England, A Book for Children* (1852), and *Truth: or, Persis Clareton, a Narrative of Church History in the Seventeenth Century* (1853).
attempt to appeal to Warner’s clear sense of religious purpose. A review in the London periodical the Eclectic Review describes him in terms that, perhaps, explain his interest in Warner’s work: “Charles Tayler is deservedly a favorite with the best part of the public. He must be classed with sentimental writers, but his style of sentiment, chaste, domestic, unaffected, and devout” (346). Though she did not respond to Sampson Low’s professional proposals and despite the negative review she gives to Tayler’s work in her journal, Susan Warner answered Tayler’s letter, mentioning in her journal two weeks after Low’s visit that she had written to “Mr. Tayler of England” (qtd. in Anna Warner, Susan Warner 368). Soon after, Tayler edited and provided a preface for another edition of The Wide, Wide World, mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, put out under the dual imprint of the London publisher Clarke & Beeton and a local Ipswich publisher, Burton & Co. Tayler composes a long preface, dated December 23rd, 1853 from his Rectory, in which he mentions his correspondence with Warner. In this preface, he also writes, “I am glad to be asked to write a preface to this book, to a cheap edition of it. I am glad it is a cheap edition. I wish it were even cheaper, simply because I should like the volume to have a wide wide world circulation” (v). Through a number of factors, from the current state of copyright law and publishing practice to qualities of the book itself that appealed to widely dispersed reading audiences to Tayler’s own literary efforts, he certainly seems to have gotten his wish.

In addition to re-authorizing The Wide, Wide World, it is Tayler’s 1851 Sampson Low edition that also most dramatically reshapes the text itself according to a dichotomized view of British and American identities. The editor begins his preface, “It
would be no easy task to define in a few words the characteristics of this work, now presented in an English dress and commended to English readers” (v). He, however, professes himself up to the task, admitting, “The Editor’s duty has not been of a very serious character: he has, in revising the work, carefully abstained from any alterations which in his opinion might interfere with the object and character of the work, and has contented himself with such trifling changes as would adapt it to English readers without trenching on the originality of the authoress” (iv). The most suggestive parts of this edition, though, are these allegedly “trifling” changes. For most of the book, the editor contents himself with (somewhat pedantically) altering words which he perceives to be American slang, revisions such as substituting “until” for “till” or “ought not” for “oughtn’t.” The only substantial changes come during the final chapters when Ellen is with her Scottish relatives. In this section, he omits not only several pages that contain Ellen’s relatively anti-Anglo view of Scottish history, but almost the entire scene in which these reflections, the subsequent discourse on patriotism, and Ellen’s assertion of her own love for freedom are inspired by the sites she visits in Edinburgh. He replaces this several-page scene with the relatively innocuous line, not present in the original, “Finding presently a history of Scotland [in her uncle’s library], she took it down, resolving to refresh her memory on a subject which had gained such new and strange interest for her” (415). In addition, he cuts the long conversation that Ellen has with M. Muller, a Swiss gentleman who tells her the story of the Austrian nationalist Andreas Hofer, during which, the text says, she “entered into the feelings of the patriots in their struggle, triumph, and downfall” (524). These passages comprise more than ten pages in
the original duodecimo volume, and represent the moments in the book in which American republicanism is explicitly defined as anti-English and anti-authoritarian. By eliminating these sections, the editor strips these terms of state-identity of their ideological content, retaining only their reference to geographical difference and effectively minimizing or rewriting the book’s American-ness.

Not all the strategies for transatlantic mediation relied on seeing the opposition between American and British as a liability for pleasing British audiences. As discussed above, Susan Warner’s novels underscore the importance of the connection between reading and national identity formation. When we transfer this act of sentimentalized, nationalized reading from Warner’s heroines to her actual reading audiences, we are left with a more complex formation. The fact that Susan Warner’s books were being more widely read in Britain than in America, a pattern of inverted audiences that extends to works by Stowe, Cummins, and others, has the potential to destabilize nation as a category for dichotomizing nineteenth-century reading audiences. Warner’s novels, despite the conflicting and often complex meditations on national identity that they sparked, appealed particularly to audiences based on qualities that are often represented as even more essential or inherent. In mediating the novels’ transition to their extensive British audiences, some voices tried to appeal to larger constructions of identity that transcended nationality, to the point of forming truly transatlantic reading audiences. On both sides of the Atlantic, readers, editors, and publishers engaged in dialogue over *The Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy* in order to negotiate the terms of their transatlantic circulation. However, in some cases, we find the formation of transatlantic patterns of
rhetoric or ideological formations that transcend nation, forging reading audiences that supersede national labels in defining literature and identity.

Just as Ellen Montgomery’s uncle tries to strengthen her connection to Britain and to himself by insisting that she become his “daughter,” some British editions tried to move beyond simply presuming an opposition between British and American by appealing directly to British audiences through metaphors of kinship. As with the Sampson Low edition mentioned above, prefaces play an important paratextual role in mediating these novels’ transition to the hands of British readers. In the 1853 Clarke & Beeton edition that I mentioned earlier, Charles Tayler inserts a portion of a letter that Susan Warner herself had written to him as evidence for the fact that her book is “full of interest to English readers.” In his quotation, she uses the language of family, writing, “It gives me particular pleasure to have an English friend. That little word, English, means a great deal of good, to my mind. But, indeed, the truth is, we half identify ourselves with the English; I don’t know why we should not. I know of no admixture of foreign blood in the English that flows in my veins, and a change of place is not change of family” (vi). Warner’s “half-identification” with the English is, as I discussed earlier, evident in the mixed and ambivalent portrayal of contemporary nationality in her books. Tayler, unsurprisingly, perhaps as delighted to be called Warner’s friend as she professes to be in offering the gesture, enthusiastically reciprocates her expression of transatlantic friendship. While Warner’s case for kinship seems quite literal, the metaphorical image of family, even of shared blood, is echoed frequently in British religious periodicals or reviews full of praise for “our American sister” or “our transatlantic sister.”
Kinship across generations is an image that Anna Warner echoes in her “Preface to an English Edition” in the 1852 Nisbet edition of *The Wide, Wide World*. She mentions American charges of a lack of patriotism, complaints that many of the book’s most admirable characters are recent emigrants from England. Anna responds to these accusations and appeals to British readers by inscribing both terms in the larger metaphor of family. She writes, “If ‘legitimate affections never clash,’ then may strong love for the Fatherland consist with all due respect for the Mother-country. […] Indeed, for an American to praise the English is, in many cases, but a little indirect compliment to his grandmother a few generations back;--family pride, if you please, but not a ‘want of patriotism.’” This statement actually involves a kind of re-definition of patriotism, even the patriotism that the books themselves seem to espouse. It moves beyond simple opposition between American and British, between American patriots and their British critics or authorities (and, correspondingly, Washington vs. England, Robert the Bruce vs. the English, Ellen vs. Mr. Lindsay, or Fleda vs. Mr. Stackpole). Instead, it appeals to common origins, or two countries united in a nationalized metaphor of marriage and family relationships. With the family metaphor, we find a rhetorical strategy used to transcend nation in mediating the novels’ transatlantic travel.

The direct assertion of kinship, though, leaves room for an explanation of the terms of such a metaphorical relation. The language of physical kinship, in some discussions, actually gives way to a larger metaphorical structure, undermining the nationalized divisions between the texts’ American author and British readers through a substantial, inherent relationship: religious kinship. *Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy* were
often “branded” as religious books in publishers’ advertisements and grouped in series
with other texts of devotional or educational interest. In the preface by Charles Tayler,
metaphors of blood relationship give way to the language of religious fraternity. He
refers to American religious writers as “brethren beloved, both in the flesh and in the
Lord” and whether in America or in England, [...] all one in Christ Jesus” (italics
present in the original). He articulates what is, for him, the strongest possible statement of
connection, re-interpreting transatlantic history and politics by taking Christianity itself
as his metaphor. He writes,

It was said by George Herbert, more than two hundred years ago, that—“Religion
stands on tiptoe in our land,/Ready to pass to the American strand.” [...] [P]roof,
however, has been from that time [...] afforded, that though religion did not pass
away from our own land, it did pass over to America, to sojourn and abide in
thousands of the distant homes of our self-exiled countrymen. But religion may
[…] be likened to the Holy Spirit Himself, who, […] is able at the same time to
spread His divine influence as an abiding blessing, upon the richly-
cultivated
fields of old England, and the wild and lovely savannahs, and primeval forests of
the New World, without weakening His influence or diminishing the effect of His
vital energies however widely diffused and circulated. (viii-xi)

Tayler’s statement positions Warner as the natural descendent or successor of British
religion, a long-lost daughter whose work returns to nourish religious sentiment in the
Fatherland. His claim maintains the nationalized differences in identity in order to
inscribe them within a theological metaphor for the circulation of the Holy Spirit, lending
a sense of divine impetus to the text’s transatlantic circulation. This rhetorical strand also
suggests a new way to view the audience for Warner’s novels, or causes us to look at an
older way with new eyes: a transatlantic religious audience.

36 A phrase quoted from Philemon 1:16, King James Bible.
In this understanding of the books as primarily religious, we can re-interpret the original Sampson Low edition, which announced on the title page that it was “edited by an English clergyman,” who professed that his changes would not “interfere with the object and character of the work.” In the context of viewing this text’s inherent “character” as religious, rather than national, we can see how Tayler would not consider the excised portions on Ellen’s national identity to be essential to the text’s religious “object.” By eliminating any portions that might give offense to English readers, he sees himself as removing distractions and facilitating the spread of the novel’s inherent moral message as widely as possible. By 1853, with the Clarke and Beeton edition, Tayler had seemingly realized that such national content did in no way impede the text’s British circulation and it did not require such editing.

Within this religious structure, Warner’s novels cease to be treated primarily as American books, but are evaluated for their greater moral and educational utility. There was some discussion, within the religious market, of the effect of all this reading of these American books on British readers, particularly on young people, still in the process of receiving their religious educations. The Dublin University Magazine asks, in 1854, “What young person has not read [Wide, Wide World]?” The editorial review section for the Church of England periodical The Church, anxiously stated in 1854, “We earnestly recommend our young men and women to lay aside their “Queechys,” and “Wide, Wide Worlds,” and other sentimental small-talk, and to give themselves heartily to the study of such works as [The Bible Hand-Book; or Introduction to the Study of Sacred Scripture. By Joseph Angus, D.D.]” (21). This advice echoes John Humphreys’s instructions to
Ellen about what she should read, which align the text with a long tradition of anti-novel discourse.

With these few exceptions, though, reviews in religious periodicals tend to be enthusiastic in their approval for the books and for the mass reading of them. In *The Christian Journal of the United Presbyterian Church*, a reviewer, while admitting a predisposition to disapprove of novels in general, states,

[T]here is in [*The Wide, Wide World*] a mass of good writing, a mass of evangelical sentiment, and a decidedly good influence remains upon the mind after we have closed it. We are bound to say, that from beginning to end, there is not a line, not a word, that can give offence to the most fastidious, while there is much to gratify the pious, to correct the impetuous, and to mould the character, especially of young persons, to what is scripturally exemplary. (53)

Of *Queechy*, it is even more effusive: “The religious vein that runs through *Queechy* is purer and more vigorous than that of its rival. We are almost tempted to say, that we wish *Queechy* had been an authentic biography, in which case, without one let or hinderance [sic], even the most timid, as to the propriety of the religious novels, could have awarded to it unqualified approbation” (53). The *Christian Teacher*’s 1853 review also barely mentions nationality, situating the novels firmly within a religious tradition: “We could wish nothing better for the rising generation than that it should possess a whole library of fictitious productions such as these” though the reviewer goes on to wish that they “savored less of bibliolatry and what is called evangelical Christianity” (315). Significantly, it is this strain in the reviews that is perhaps most truly transatlantic. Not only are they reprinted on both sides of the Atlantic, but they echo each other strongly.

An 1856 *Blackwood’s* article called “A Religious Novel” presents a more nuanced view than that of the *Christian Teacher* reviewer of the potential result of this
widespread reading on the part of British young people that furthers Tayler’s discussion of transatlantic religious influence. It returns in this new British context to the connection Warner’s novels draw between the national and the religious elements of reading and identity formation:

The [novels by Susan Warner] represent manners and a state of things very different from our experience but this has so far been an attraction. […] Things are different, we say, in America. Republicanism even affects the relation of parent and child. Precocity and independence, we all know, belong to the backwoods. […] We confess, however, to have fancied for some time that we could trace, in the young-ladyhood of a certain religious school, the influence of American religious fiction. We notice an independence of conventional restraints, a freedom of accost, an ease in asserting and enforcing opinion, a looseness from the old deference to elders, an aptitude to engrat flirtation on schemes of active good—not, as of old, timidly and evasively, but as a boldly-recognizing aid to zeal and consistency—and, finally, a courageous self-reliance, not without its attractions, where a pretty face and sprightly manners carry it off, but still reminding us that we live in days when woman’s rights are a “leading question,” and women are called upon from across the ocean to rouse from their passive dependence, and henceforth to walk in advance of man in the path of reform and spiritual progress. (277)

This view of Susan Warner as a transatlantic feminist pioneer and reformer is certainly not in keeping with how we tend to view Wide, Wide World now, but it inscribes for her an important place in the British cultural canon and suggests that her book may have played a far less conservative role abroad than even she, herself, intended. In this reviewer’s estimation, her books blend republicanism and religion, leading to the development of a new sensibility, a new “zeal and consistency,” on the part of the younger generation of British Christians. According to Charles Tayler’s divine metaphor, then, American religion is seen as returning to bolster British faith through transatlantic circulation and reading, providing materials that strengthen religious enterprises through reaching widespread reading audiences.
After the transatlantic publishing phenomenon generated by *Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy*, we can actually trace the emergence of a *Wide, Wide World* brand that focuses particularly on this religious audience. The Warner sisters’ eventual migration to Nisbet’s lists, and from Putnam’s to Robert Carter’s in America, demonstrates their deliberate and increasing attempts to target this market. In October of 1850, while she was still composing *Wide, Wide World*, Susan Warner had written in a letter to her sister, “My opinion of the value of good children’s stories is rather on the increase” (qtd. in Anna Warner, *Susan Warner* 311). Throughout the 1850s, Susan and Anna Warner’s subsequent literary output began to be much more specified, focusing on religious reading material for children but maintaining close ties to the widely-known titles of *The Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy*. Unsurprisingly, nearly all of Susan Warner’s succeeding productions (and indeed some of Anna’s) were listed as being “by the author of *The Wide, Wide World, Queechy*, etc.” A great deal of merchandising took place (including objects like boats, rifles, and stockings) as well as the creation of additional books and series based explicitly on the *Wide, Wide World* mode. In 1853, George Putnam released not only a book of music, in which hymns and “poetic gems” from *The Wide, Wide World* were set for piano and voice entitled *Lyrics from The Wide, Wide World*, but also a series of books under the title “Ellen Montgomery’s Bookcase,” called “Ellen Montgomery’s Bookshelf [or Book Shelf]” in subsequent Putnam volumes and in nearly all British versions, purporting to be books that Ellen had liked as a child, containing new books by Susan and Anna Warner. They linked their new writing endeavors with the earlier ones, then, by continuing with the images of reading that were so prevalent in the
books themselves. According to Ezra Greenspan, “Cleverly designed to capitalize in the success of The Wide, Wide World, [this juvenile series’] organizing logic was based on the transitive principle that a reading public that had identified with Ellen would also take an interest in her favorite books (George Palmer Putnam, 341). In Susan Warner’s brief fictional introduction to the series, these stories are distinguished from the other supplementary texts, such as Plutarch’s Lives and Cook’s Voyages, that Ellen is explicitly mentioned reading in The Wide, Wide World: “But it was not told in that history, as indeed no book can tell quite everything, that there were a few of Miss Alice’s early childish books, for which, in addition to the grander works mentioned above, Ellen Montgomery had a great liking; and not Ellen Montgomery alone, but Ellen Chauncey, also.” The idea of a “bookshelf” consisting of multiple titles is very much in keeping with the idea of simultaneous reading or collected reading encouraged by the various book lists contained in The Wide, Wide World and Queechy. Indeed, in Warner’s narrative, Alice and John Humphreys discuss the care with which Ellen keeps and organizes her most beloved books on her own shelf.

The series continued throughout the 1850s, as Susan promised her readers that she would continue producing them as long as they were being read (and purchased). Ellen Montgomery’s Bookshelf ultimately comprised the titles Mr. Rutherford’s Children, Vol. 1 (1853), Carl Krinken; or, The Christmas Stocking (1853), Mr. Rutherford’s Children, Vol. 2 (1854), Casper (1856), and Hard Maple (1859), a sequel to Mr. Rutherford also

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37 Greenspan attributes the end of the series to two factors: “By that time Putnam was no longer the Warners’ publisher nor were they writing the kind of domestic fiction that interested him, the sisters having turned their attention primarily to religion and given their works to the firm of Robert Carter, one of New York’s leading publishers of religious fiction and nonfiction” (George Palmer Putnam 341).
sometimes entitled *Happy Days*. In England, James Nisbet published copyright editions of all of these titles simultaneously until 1855, when he fell slightly behind, while Routledge followed closely in reprinting them. Generally, these volumes were printed uniform with each other, as with any series, though Warne would eventually collect them in one volume (1866). In this volume, we see the emphasis on children’s reading emphasized by the binding, in which an image of a girl reading is stamped on the cover in gold leaf.

With the *Ellen Montgomery’s Book Shelf* series, Anna Warner’s own literary career also became firmly situated within the *Wide, Wide World* brand. Susan Warner’s authorship was conspicuously merged with that of her sister, and indeed, though Susan Warner wrote the introduction and the fictional sketch that situates it in Ellen Montgomery’s fictional world, Anna was the one who wrote the first volume in the series (*Mr. Rutherford’s Children*). 38 Though there are frequent mis-attributions, the only volume in the series that Susan Warner did pen, *Carl Krinken*, was the most popular, perhaps because of its Christmas tie-in (Foster 74). According to the *Southern Literary Messenger*, “Miss Warner’s co-worker in this little series is a character in her last work: the readers of Queechy will doubtless remember ‘Hugh’ [Fleda’s pen name]; and we only take notice of this circumstance to say that we should have suspected that the writer was a lady: and even possibly related to herself” (“The New Literature” 215). The confusion of

38 In the *Bibliography of American Literature*, it is stated that the archive “has not been able to establish with certainty the exact contribution of each sister to the series, but Anna seems to have been responsible for much of it.” However, in *Susan and Anna Warner*, Edward Haley Foster attributes all of the volumes to Anna with the exception of *Carl Krinken*. This attribution is supported by evidence from Susan Warner’s journals, letters, and Anna Warner’s memoir *Susan Warner* (“Elizabeth Wetherell”) (G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1909).
Anna Warner’s authorship not only with that of her sister, but with that of the character of Fleda, further ties the series to the imaginative world created by Susan Warner’s first two books.

Throughout the remainder of the century, these books, along with *Wide, Wide World* and *Queechy*, would form a staple of the juvenile literary market and many British reprint publishers looked for ways to produce fiction for the particular market revealed, if not created by Warner. In 1866, Milner (Halifax), a pioneer of the cheap series with his previously-mentioned Cottage Library, followed the merchandising trend outlined above and created a series entitled the Wide, Wide World Library. The title of this series reflects the continued desire to “brand” literary merchandise according to both the conspicuous success and the particularized market niche of Warner’s text. In 1887, Warne’s Star Series offered a collection of highly illustrated texts with gilt stamped covers, dominated by Warner and other sentimental texts by American women writers. Though the eighteen texts by Susan Warner are the most of any author on the list, there are also multiple works by Anna Warner, Louisa May Alcott, Maria Cummins, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. The 1888 *Catalogue of Educational Works* lists the Ellen Montgomery’s *Book Shelf* titles and others by Warner in numerous editions, including, “coloured reward books with full colour plates,” two-shilling juveniles, and as members of multiple other series and lists, including the Wide, Wide World Series (Routledge), the Florin Series, and the Ruby Series. With their depictions and advocacy of childhood reading and their unexpected and extraordinary popularity, it is perhaps unsurprising that series like these were the result of the early publication history and wide circulation of
Susan Warner’s first two novels. Ultimately, then, the initial transatlantic negotiation and circulation sparked by the publishing phenomenon of *The Wide, Wide World* enabled the creation of a particular transatlantic brand of religious, pedagogical reading which became increasingly entrenched in the literary market throughout the rest of the nineteenth century.

Exploring the British context of Susan Warner’s early novels shows the transatlantic nature of the nineteenth century publishing market between 1851 and 1854 and reveals some of the discursive formations that both reflected and were reflected in popular texts from the period. Warner’s novels had particular religious and educational qualities that enhanced their appeal to readers on both sides of the Atlantic. These audiences and their interpretations of the novels were, simultaneously, shaped by current trends in publishing and copyright law that allowed for the formation of a nationally inverted audience. A literary-market-based reading of Susan Warner’s novels both places Warner’s novels at the center of contemporary discussions of national literature and literary value and offers the potential to see groups of nineteenth century readers such as religious ones as inherently transatlantic. Extraordinary British circulations are a trend also in evidence in the sales figures for other sentimental bestsellers like Cummins’ *The Lamplighter* and Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the British reception of which has recently been well-documented and discussed by Sarah Meer in *Uncle Tom Mania*. According to Clarence Ghodes’s study of American literature in Britain, “the sentimental school of authors like Mrs. Stowe, Susan Warner, E.P Rose, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, and Louisa Alcott probably accounted for more books sold in nineteenth-century England than any
other group of American writers” (71). Rather than using nationality as a necessary category for grouping and analyzing texts, then, my analysis not only allows us to understand assertions of national identity in American sentimental fiction within the multi-national contexts within which the books were being read, but also creates new categories for understanding nineteenth-century reading. This recovery of the actual extent of the texts’ British circulations and the process of literary re-fashioning that took place to facilitate their transatlantic movement allows us to return, then, to the question asked by *The North American Review*: “Where, then, let us ask, in conclusion, shall we class these American novels of ours? [...] May we not, then, consider them as having a character of their own—humane, religious, *piquant*, natural, national?” (121). While Caroline Kirkland interpreted the novels’ popularity as an index of their inherent qualities, “these American novels of ours” both shaped and were shaped by their transatlantic readers.

Through its process of publication and circulation, *Wide, Wide World* provoked a many-sided conversation about national identity-formation, with voices in this conversation that included publishers, reviewers, editors, and Susan Warner, herself, in *The Wide, Wide World* and new prefaces and letters. Studying this process has the potential to affect not only the way we categorize the novel nationally, but the way we consider grouping reading audiences within the Anglophone publishing and reading world. While nationality is perhaps the most obvious complicating factor in considering Warner’s novel and its audience, considering the national distribution of reading audiences as well as recovering the British side of conversations provoked by Warner’s
novels’ international circulation will ultimately lead us to look at the many categories of readers whose narratives, experiences, and commercial power shaped the development and circulation of nineteenth-century sentimental fiction.
Chapter 2: “The American Tennyson” and “The English Longfellow”: Inverted Audiences and Popular Poetry

In January of 1883, following the death of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a notice ran in the New York-based Frank Leslie’s Sunday Magazine: “The English Longfellow Memorial Committee now numbers nearly three hundred, and is strangely inclusive of distinguished Englishmen in all departments of intellectual activity. Those concerned in it believe that no similar response has ever been made to a public movement of this kind within the modern literary history of England” (Talmage 106). The English Longfellow Memorial Committee, with the Prince of Wales as its honorary chairman, was both a prominent and an ambitious enterprise. Through its efforts, a bust of Longfellow was placed in Westminster Abbey, a gesture of reverence that hints at the poet’s place in the hearts of his “English admirers.” Upon the news of Longfellow’s death, among the many obituaries and notices of acclaim, the London Times reprinted a sermon by Canon Fleming, given at Westminster, that reflects this feeling of connection: “In the death of Longfellow…we feel a touch of sorrow that bids us claim him…as one of the men of this century who lived and talked and laboured and wrote for us all” (London Times March 27, 1882). The Committee sent identical copies of the bust to Harvard University and to the Maine Historical Society, but, displaying the uniqueness of
this “claim” of international connection, Longfellow remains the only non-British resident of Poet’s Corner. 39

One of the many “distinguished” names listed by Frank Leslie’s, appearing between those of Lord Brassey and Mr. W. Spottiswoode, President of the Royal Society, is that of Mr. Alfred Tennyson, Britain’s longtime Poet Laureate. 40 By the time of his own death in 1894, Tennyson’s popularity and recognition in America was comparable to that which marked the death of Longfellow. Arthur Warren, a representative of the American Tennyson Memorial Committee, solicited widely for contributions to a memorial to be placed near Tennyson’s longtime home on the Isle of Wight, stating in a New York Times piece on May 10, 1894, “the undertaking is properly an international, not a national or a local, one… there are many Americans who will gladly welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Memorial Fund…as a loving tribute to the memory of a poet who belonged not to England only, but to mankind” (4). Though both memorial efforts self-consciously transcend nationality in celebrating each poet, indicating a loving audience not bounded by geography, this language of ownership, “claiming,” and “belonging” suggests that symbolic gestures remained necessary to assert that fact.

These retrospective testimonials of loving yet proprietary readerships demonstrate the immense transatlantic appeal of these two poets, while raising important questions

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40 While this chapter does not focus on the moments of direct personal contact between Longfellow and Tennyson, they were certainly acquaintances and readers of one another’s work. During Longfellow’s last visit to England, he and his family visited Tennyson on the Isle of Wight (July 16-17, 1868). See Robert Gale’s entry on Tennyson in his Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Companion for information about this visit (261-263).
about the actual audiences for their work. Should we rightly see their audiences as the unified transatlantic mass of readers imagined in the memorial announcements, or can we trace specific patterns in the audiences’ size and perceived relationship with the poets? By examining and comparing the transatlantic reception of Tennyson and Longfellow, the nineteenth century’s two most popular poets, this chapter seeks to extend the inverted audience model for international book sales that I outline in Chapter 1. This comparison will allow for a reconsideration of transatlantic literary piracy, copyright law, and publishing practices during the 1850s and 60s and the effects of these trends on the composition of international audiences for poetry on both sides of the Atlantic. In expanding beyond a single case study to look at the course of two poets’ careers, this chapter compares the publishing climates in London and Boston in particular and considers how the trends that shaped these contexts also functioned to extend Tennyson’s readership in America and Longfellow’s in Britain.

The way that nineteenth century readers talk about the differences between the two popular poets reveals much about the nature of the nineteenth-century book market and of the reading audiences shaped by those conditions. I focus on a period in the authors’ careers, the 1850s and 60s, when both were consistently producing volumes of poetry that were reliable international bestsellers, and I survey their reception and sales to demonstrate both the extent of the inverted audience pattern in the poetry book market and its implications for international readerships. Working from and supplementing previous excellent bibliographic work on both poets, by Clarence Ghodes and John Olin Eidson in particular, I will demonstrate not only that the inverted audience pattern
remains strong in the two very different publishing contexts of Britain and America, but also that it leads to important differences in the makeup of reading audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Inverted sales lead to inverted roles for the two poets and that the publishing climate ultimately generates audiences that are inverted not just nationally but demographically. The previous chapter discovered a readership bounded by religious and pedagogical self-identification. The international reading audiences for Longfellow and Tennyson, however, span elite taste-makers as well as mass consumers. In tracing key differences between readers at home and abroad for each poet, this chapter will ultimately show the extent to which the international publishing and reading structures in this period are implicated in class-based reading formations.

“A Certain Prospect of Profit”: A survey of Longfellow’s circulation in Britain

The international careers of Tennyson and Longfellow resemble one another not just because of the poets’ widespread popularity. Both produced bestselling volumes of poetry; made sustained attempts to protect their property interests overseas (through creative arrangements with individual publishers as well as wider advocacy on behalf of international copyright protection); and were embraced by extensive and increasingly enthusiastic transatlantic audiences. A survey of the circulation of international book editions for each of these poets demonstrates the extent to which their transatlantic appeal was tied to book production and involved a consistent development of the inverted audience pattern, in which each author’s international circulation outstripped domestic numbers of copies printed and sold. Their careers also illustrate two very different possible models for the business relationship between an author and his international
market: Longfellow’s British sales were dominated by rapid and constant unauthorized reprinting, while Tennyson’s American sales were generally protected by his long association with a single publisher (Ticknor & Fields).

Longfellow’s British career was characterized by rapid sales, frustrated attempts to keep ahead of piracy, and by the practices of the book market for poetry. During his first visit to England in 1835, Longfellow somewhat disingenuously attempted to secure remuneration for his collection of sketches Outre-Mer, calling on William Tegg and offering to allow him to bring out the title in his “Family Library” series for one hundred pounds. Longfellow records Tegg’s skeptical response in his journal: “Oh, no! impossible! Why in three weeks I can get it for nothing” (qtd. in Calhoun 104-5). Longfellow ultimately brought the volume out with Richard Bentley, with an agreement to divide profits, of which there were none. Tegg’s comment and Bentley’s results are characteristic of subsequent British publishers who had dealings with the American poet. Throughout the 1840s, the only money Longfellow made from collections sold in Britain appears to be through exporting a limited number of his unsold American editions. In a letter dated November 28, 1845, Philadelphia publishers Carey and Hart requested Longfellow’s permission to sell copies of the Poetical Works at half-price in London and offered him half of his usual royalty on these copies (qtd. in Ghodes, “British Publishers” 1167). Quite soon after this, his Poetical Works was published to large sales and his attempts to work with British publishers to issue authorized editions did very little to check the flow of unauthorized collections of his poems.
Longfellow’s British editions fall into two groups: the multitude published without authorization and the few put out by certain (temporarily) authorized publishers. In a letter to Emma Marshall, a writer of historical romances who complained to him about unauthorized reprinting in America, Longfellow wryly noted: “It may comfort you to know that I have had twenty-two publishers in England and Scotland, and only four of them ever took the slightest notice of my existence, even so far as to send me a copy of the books. Shall we call that ‘chivalry,’—or the other word? Some good comes of it, after all; for it is an advertisement, and surely helps what follows. It gives you thousands of readers instead of hundreds” (qtd. Mumby 64). While the unauthorized copies certainly did draw more readers, they also dramatically limited the ability of any authorized editions to make any profit. Ghodes noted that, “For many years Longfellow kept a record of the editions of his works, and the number of ‘English Publishers of all or part of my writings’ which he had listed up to 1876 was actually twenty-four, and there is no reason to believe his list was complete” (“British Publishers”1166). His series of transactions with his authorized publishers represent Longfellow’s attempts to control his literary property, but also shows the fine line in the contemporary literary market between authorized and unauthorized publishers.

The chivalrous gentlemen and the pirates (the word that Longfellow avoids in his letter to Emma Marshall) ironically often turned out to be the same individuals.

Longfellow had transactions with four different authorized publishers, beginning in 1849: John Walker of Liverpool, David Bogue, W. Kent & Co., and Routledge. It is worth pointing out that all of these publishers were conspicuous early reprinter of his work.
"Evangeline" (1847), a highly popular long poem with no authorized version in the British market, offers a useful test case for displaying this pattern. Based on the records of Clarence Ghodes, whose work offers a great deal of excellent bibliographic documentation of Longfellow’s British popularity and publication, and current library holdings throughout the UK, "Evangeline" was a huge publishing sensation and sparked a variety of editions, including those by Knight and H.G. Clarke (both 16mo and 13mo volumes in Clarke’s Cabinet Series) in 1848, and G. Slater in 1849 (in Slater’s Shilling Series). Kent and Richards (later W. Kent) released theirs in June 1848 “with an introduction historical and explanatory,” allegedly “by H.W. Longfellow,” though referring to the poet in the third person and not always favorably (McFarland 61). David Bogue’s illustrated "Evangeline" (printed in 1849) was widely acclaimed, and eventually imported to America by Ticknor & Fields, who released it in 1850 under their imprint (McFarland 93).¹ The Bogue editions were issued subsequently with additional illustrations in 1852 and 1854 (Jane E. Bentham and B. Foster, the illustrators for the 1850 editions, were joined by J. Gilbert in these later editions).² While "Evangeline" was often released as a standalone volume, it also quickly joined the ranks of Longfellow collections that formed a staple of the reprint market. Routledge released both collections of Longfellow’s poetry that included "Evangeline" and separate volumes of the poem itself starting in 1850, releasing his own new illustrated edition of the poem in 1856.

Publishers would frequently gather his poetry in collections from complete Poetical

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¹ Michael Winship notes that Ticknor & Fields also imported illustrated editions of Longfellow from Routledge (American Literary Publishing 53).
² Chapter 4 of Ron McFarland’s The Long Life of Evangeline (McFarland & Co., 2010) surveys the many illustrations of the poem, though does not pay particular attention to specific editions themselves.
Works volumes to various combinations of popular poems, repackaging and reissuing new editions whenever new material became available. John Walker wrote to Longfellow in November of 1850 that there were “six different editions” of his poems currently for sale in England (qtd. in Ghodes, “British Publishers”). This ever-shifting relationship between text, title, and contents makes editions of Longfellow’s work both particularly numerous and more difficult to count.

When entering into formal or authorized relationships with Longfellow, each of his publishers (and onetime pirates) had to compete with the preponderance of unauthorized reprints that dominated the market. According to a review in the Ladies’ Companion from 1858, such was Longfellow’s extensive popularity that “his authorized publishers [were] impelled to request by advertisement that you will ‘give your orders early’ […] and] to resort to ‘artful dodges’” in order to attempt to secure even a provisional recognition of their right to publish or an advantage in the market (“Longfellow’s Poems” 325-6). The extent of these “dodges” often went beyond what Longfellow was willing to sanction and added a taint of piracy even to the few legitimate transactions he was able to secure.

Longfellow’s relationship with John Walker of Liverpool illustrates the range of strategies employed even within authorized transactions to gain an advantage in a market dominated by privateering. Longfellow wrote on May 5, 1849 to Walker, who had recently published an (unauthorized) edition of Hyperion as well as a uniformly-bound

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43 According to Calhoun’s biography, in 1857, Longfellow tallied his sales and found that ten years after it was published it had sold 35,850 copies in America (199). Frank and Maas also cite this figure: “37,000 within ten years”—even in a study on transnationality, they count only American readers and sales (34).
collected works edition (also unauthorized) under the title *Poems, Lyrical and Dramatic, with an introductory essay on the genius and writings of the author, by George Gilfillan* (Liverpool, 1848). In his letter, while enclosing what seems to be a polite letter (now lost) to Gilfillan, Longfellow requests that Walker omit certain “youthful productions whose re-publication I have never sanctioned” (*Letters*, III, 195) from the *Poems* collection. Walker’s reply, acknowledging the request while attempting to capitalize on the relationship, shows the ease with which a publisher could move between the roles of the gentleman and the pirate:

> I doubt not that it would enhance the value of [Kavnaugh, a forthcoming novel], in a pecuniary point of view if you stopped it being sold in America until I had brought out the English Edition. Your doing so would enable me to register the Book as my property in Britain and by this means prevent others from publishing editions. There would under such circumstances be a certain prospect of profit and I would be most happy to share the amount with you. At present, although my editions have been the best & have sold well, yet owing to there being so many editions at less a price than mine, I have been obliged to print at a price that can yield nothing more than a mere trade profit for the capital employed…It is very likely I will have to reprint the Poems very soon. If you could send me a few supplementary pieces, not yet published, to add to the Volume I would feel greatly obliged. (qtd. in Ghodes 1167)

In addition to attempting to seek ostensible copyright protection by commissioning an introductory essay by a British author, Walker attempts to negotiate for two subsequent works, maintaining that early publication could hold off piracy long enough to make a sufficient profit. Longfellow complied, sending advance sheets of *The Seaside and The Fireside* in exchange for Walker’s promise of one hundred dollars when the collection was published. Walker was able to issue his edition (unsurprisingly titled: *Poems, Lyrical and Dramatic, Including The Seaside and The Fireside, with an introductory essay on the genius and writings of the author, by George Gilfillan*) before other
publishers could reprint from American copies, but his head start did not last long. On February 9, 1850, Walker sent Longfellow partial payment of fifty dollars, with the excuse that he had been unable to make the profit he had anticipated because other editions appeared on the market at the same time. In addition to sending his own “complete edition,” he sent Longfellow a copy of one of the illustrated editions of *Evangeline* put out by unauthorized competition. The rival editions joining Walker’s include that of H.G. Clarke, who had advertised his own volume of *Longfellow’s Seaside and Fireside* in the *Publisher’s Circular* for December of 1849 “to be published January 1st.” At least two additional editions appeared in 1850, those by C. Gilpin (New Popular Library) and G. Slater. Other publishers quickly gathered the new poems into collected editions of Longfellow as well, including David Bogue, who would release an illustrated edition of the collected *Voices of the Night; Seaside and Fireside; and Other Poems* in 1851, Clarke & Beeton (1852, 2 shillings for *Longfellow’s Poems: Evangeline and Seaside and Fireside*), and Routledge, as part of his 1855 collection. In this exchange, Longfellow had practically no power, even to compel Walker to honor his financial commitments; Moreover, Walker’s plans proved unable to satisfactorily defend the property from piracy long enough to make any real profit.44

Longfellow’s transactions with Walker and other publishers between 1849 and 1852 were shaped by the uncertainty in the publishing world created by the pending copyright case *Boosey vs. Jeffreys*, which I discuss in Chapter 1. In his initial negotiations with Longfellow, Walker focused on the market advantage offered by

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44 Ghodes notes that Walker’s continuing claim to *Seaside and Fireside* does appear to have hampered Longfellow’s negotiations with subsequent publishers (*American Literature* 1170).
advance publication, but he also mentioned his intention to profit from the state of uncertainty in the book market with regards to international copyright law. Given the possibility that the courts might protect books that were first published in Great Britain, Walker tried to secure actual ownership of *Seaside and Fireside* through prior publication. In 1851, amid general expectation of a positive resolution to the case, Walker made a clear attempt to salvage his position as Longfellow’s publisher and his claim on future work by paying off his long overdue debt to Longfellow for *Seaside and Fireside*, writing,

> I shall be very happy to open another credit with you at an early date… & am happy to inform you that it is likely that the law regarding Copyrights of works by Foreigners will be materially altered by the decision of our Upper Law Courts. This week a Court of Review has given a decision in a Music case which will if confirmed by the Lords give me the power of preventing any one publishing an edition of your works containing the Seaside & the Fireside. It is true the ultimate decision has yet to be given, but the opinion of the Trade is, that the law will be so settled that when a Foreign Author sells his copyright to a British Subject who publishes it before it appears elsewhere the purchaser will have the exclusive right of publishing in Great Britain. There are now numerous editions of your Poems in our Market and all of them appear to sell. (qtd. Ghodes, “British Publishers” 1169)

Walker went on to demand additional poems to add to his *Poems* collection to give them more market value. Ultimately, though, Walker alienated Longfellow with his frequent demands and tendency to make excuses about poor sales instead of honoring his financial commitments, but his claim to own the copyright in some of the poems during this period before *Boosey vs. Jeffreys* was resolved affected Longfellow’s subsequent transactions with British publishers.

In transitioning from Walker to working with David Bogue, Longfellow and his authorized publishers continued to attempt new strategies to give their own editions an
advantage in the market. Longfellow wrote to David Bogue, who had just begun
supplying Ticknor & Fields with his illustrated edition of Evangeline for sale in America,
promising him the British copyright for the verse play The Golden Legend and
permission to publish an authorized collection of poems. Bogue was forced to negotiate
directly with Walker before proceeding with the collection. He offered, in a letter dated
October 24, 1851, to pay Longfellow one hundred pounds “subject of course to any
future reversal of the law as now declared by Lord Campbell” (Letters). Initially, the
American sales of The Golden Legend appear to have been larger, but eventually British
sales picked up. The Literary World announced on January 3, 1852 (No. 257) that
“Longfellow’s ‘Golden Legend’ has been published by Bogue, we presume, under a
copyright arrangement” (14). Bogue wrote to Longfellow: “Here I printed 2000 & the
last of them are now in the binder’s hands. This is much better than I expected & I
daresay I should have done better still but the demand was in some measure chilled by
the uncertainty as to the appearance of an unauthorized edition” (1171). In Longfellow’s
letter to Bogue, in which he acknowledges Bogue’s notice that he had received the text
for The Golden Legend, he writes, “I am glad to hear the ‘legend’ reached you safely at
last. It is successful here. Between Saturday and Tuesday over two thousand five
hundred copies were sold. Since I have not heard. We printed five thousand five
hundred” (Letters, III, 1191). Shortly after its publication, Bogue writes to say that he
was nearly through the 4,000 copies printed (Ghodes 1171). He would go on to release
the play in three different formats and sizes over the course of 1851, subsequently
releasing an illustrated edition a year later, the poem reaching five editions by 1855. The
potential unauthorized edition, which Bogue claimed put a damper on his sales, appears
not to have materialized until Routledge’s edition in 1854, when the reversal in the
*Boosey vs Jeffreys* case had released many American works from provisional copyright
agreements. Routledge records selling at least 8,000 copies that year (*Archives*). At this
point, Bogue decided to bring out a new authorized edition of Longfellow’s novel
*Hyperion* and requested a new preface as a strategy to secure potential copyright
protection:

> I should be glad if you wd write (in return for an honorarium of Ten pounds) a
> few prefatory remarks to appear to the edition. Will you? Whilst I am writing on
> the subject of money I may as well make you the offer of Twenty-five pounds for
> the assignment of the copyrights of the former poems as named in a previous
> letter—to which you must add a few words to be used by way of preface so as to
give an air of authority to the edition to which it is prefixed. (*Letters, III* 1211)

Longfellow responded, “I will think about a Preface…As to the copy-right, if I can get
one for the books already published in England, by means of prefaces, or additional
poems, I should not wish to part with it; but had rather sell you the right to publish, as I
do to Mr. Ticknor here, on payment of a stipulated sum on the day of publication”
(*Letters, III* 1211). The strategy of using new prefaces to try to secure copyright was not
unusual, though Longfellow did not agree to cede copyright for his previous works
(perhaps in response to his experience with Walker).

Bogue’s biggest success with Longfellow, and indeed the poet’s largest sensation
since *Evangeline*, was *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855).45 Routledge, who had consistently

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45 I have found also mention of an 1856 edition put out by T.H. Carter & Co. of Boston, but have been
unable to confirm this. See Kate Flint’s *The Transatlantic Indian* for a discussion of British theatrical
adaptations of *Hiawatha* (132-5).
pirated Longfellow’s work since the 1840s, made a bid to secure authorized publication rights to *Hiawatha* (1855), attempting to gain Longfellow’s goodwill by offering a small payment for an illustrated edition of his collected poems, but was unable to do so. The American editions were strong sellers, and in March of 1865, Longfellow wrote to David Bogue,

> You will not be sorry to hear that Messrs Ticknor & Fields have sold thirty thousand copies of the poem” (*Letters* III 1512). According to Ghodes, in a letter in early 1856, “Bogue…was able to report that he had sold 2,250 copies of a five-shilling edition and 15,000 of a one-shilling issue. He guessed, in reporting these figures to Longfellow, that the probable circulation of the various pirated editions of the narrative ranged from one-third to one-half of the total number of copies he himself had sold. The pirates, he thought, had been ‘kept at bay for a month or two—probably by not knowing whether any of the notes were original [i.e. written by Longfellow or inserted by a British writer in order to secure copyright protection] or otherwise. (1172)

T. Nelson & Sons, Knight & Son, and Sampson Low all put out large editions in 1855. Bogue’s estimates seem to have been a bit low, as Routledge records selling nearly eight thousand of just one of his three different formats by early 1856, and claimed eventually to have sold 37,000 (St. Clair 719). Routledge began retitling his collected editions *The Poetical Works; A complete edition including the Song of Hiawatha* in 1865. Knight & Son also released a volume called *The Golden Legend, and The Song of Hiawatha* in 1856.

Longfellow’s next major publication, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, illustrates most clearly the extent to which authorized publishers had to strategize to gain enough of an advantage over pirate publishers. Upon Bogue’s sudden death in November of 1856, both Moxon and Routledge wrote with offers to see to Longfellow’s interests in Britain,

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46 The Routledge & Kegan Paul Archive show multiple new editions throughout the 1840s, 50s, and 60s.
but he opted to stay with W. Kent, who had purchased Bogue’s business (Ghodes 1172).

Kent had his own ideas about how to gain an advantage over the pirates:

Having arranged with Messrs. Ticknor for the early sheets of your new volume of Poems it is very important to us (especially as we have agreed to pay them double the price of former works of yours) that we should if possible retain the sole right of printing it in this Country. It occurs to us that this could be accomplished if the preface, introduction, a few Notes or a short complete Poem were written by an Englishman, making that Copyright; in short anything that could prevent piratical publishers printing it Complete would answer the purpose. (qtd. Ghodes 1172)

Kent proposed “to insert one or two short pieces by an English writer in both editions—English & American—append ing a note to the English Edition such as we enclose, which leaves it uncertain where the interpolation is to be found. This is the plan that Blackwood adopts each month, inserting an article by an American writer in his magazine” (Ghodes, “British Publishers” 1173). Should Longfellow object, Kent generously offers to publish a notice detailing his plan and identifying the original pieces. However, Longfellow did not insert Kent’s preface in the American edition: “In order to protect this volume from the fate of previous American publications, viz, ‘an instant appropriation’ on the part of an unlimited number of English Publishers, a small but sufficient portion of the contents has been contributed by an English writer. Any publisher therefore who reprints this book without the consent of the authors will render himself liable to the penalties attendant on a willful infringement of copyright” (1173). Longfellow was unwilling to turn his new volume into a collaboration and the plan appears not to have gone forward, though Kent’s edition of The Courtship of Miles Standish did still contain the following notice, intended to temporarily mislead potential pirates: ‘A small but sufficient portion of the contents of this volume has been contributed [to secure its copyright] by an English
writer.” In 1858, Kent’s edition of *The Courtship of Miles Standish* sold 10,000 copies on its first day (*American Literature* Ghodes 110). Kent listed his own edition as the “Author’s Protective Edition” and sold it for a shilling, but Bogue, Bohn, Routledge (offering a 1-shilling illustrated edition), and W.H. Barnes all came out with multiple editions of their own within weeks (1858). As with previous Longfellow works, publishers were also quick to reissue “New and Complete” editions of his *Poems* including the new material and, in addition to the publishers already mentioned, George Philip & Son (Liverpool and London) had theirs out by 1859.

There is no further evidence of correspondence with Kent, perhaps because of Longfellow’s displeasure with the notice that implied that some of the poems in *Miles Standish* weren’t his, and Routledge became his authorized publisher until his death in 1882. Even during his dealings with Kent, Longfellow appears to have kept contact with George Routledge, who wrote to him in 1859, “I have not yet seen your ‘Miles Standish;’ though I see it advertised in the London Papers. When may we look for it here?” (*Letters*, IV 1711). Routledge was Longfellow’s authorized publisher for *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1863). On December 28, 1863, Longfellow wrote to Routledge, “Hoping that the success of the book has not disappointed your expectations” and Routledge replied that it “had been very successful along with a ‘new edition’ of the poetical works ‘complete’” (qtd. in Ghodes 1173-4). Routledge continued to be aware of the implications of developing copyright law for his business arrangements: “The House of Lords decided yesterday, that a Foreign author, by going into Canada and publishing his work first in this country, would obtain a copyright” (1174). He advises Longfellow to
avoid publishing new pieces in periodicals and subsequently offers him a thousand pounds (a comparatively enormous sum) to remain in England until the publication of the
New England Tragedies (Anderson and Rose 264). The Tragedies were brought out simultaneously in London and Boston. Subsequent transactions, though, were not so seamless and Routledge and Longfellow seem to have differed on payments as well as on when to bring out early editions (Ghodes 1177-9).

Longfellow’s dealings with Walker, Bogue, Kent, and Routledge illustrate the state of the British publishing market of its time, in which publishers moved easily between piracy and protected dealings with international authors. In the estimation of Ghodes, “Only a desire for extra profits led a few British firms to make agreements with Longfellow, and all of them appear to have cheated him” (“British Publishers” 1178). Algernon Tassin’s retrospective “American Authors and British Publishers” comparing the British and American book markets in the nineteenth century, suggests that this pattern is typical of the international market for books, concluding,

No one denies, of course, that the black flag flew as continuously in America. But it did not fly over proportionally so much booty nor was it flown by so many houses. And chief of all, it never flew over any of the leading houses. Though there were in London as in America plenty of honest publishers who did not pirate, there were—as there were not in America—some leading publishers in reputation and importance who did…the record of the American publishers has been and still remained better than that of his English brethren. (597)

Despite the difficulties, a Longfellow copyright, however provisional, was clearly a valuable commodity, as illustrated by sales figures that, though comparatively incomplete, were huge and dramatic.

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It can be challenging to obtain a complete picture of the extent of Longfellow reprinting in Britain due to the absence or incompleteness of the records for many of the firms and the degree to which unauthorized publishers gathered his poems into ever-changing collections of his *Poetical Works*, diversifying their offerings by price, size, content, and illustrations. Relying on estimates made by publishers themselves or advertised in periodicals, though, the numbers are staggering. Clarence Ghodes notes, “The incomplete records of the house of Routledge plus the total of Warne & Co. [a prolific publisher of *Works* collections]—two of the chief firms which published Longfellow—added up to well over a million copies” (*American Literature* 126). These estimates of sales of 390,000 copies of *Poetical Works*, 326,000 copies of individual works were claimed in a letter from the firm to Ghodes in 1939 and cannot be confirmed in the surviving archives (St. Clair 719). As shown above, this number excludes most of Longfellow’s authorized editions as well as the editions put out by dozens of other pirate firms. Longfellow’s own estimate corresponds to the following list of twenty-three publishers that I have compiled of British publishers who put out some version of Longfellow’s poetic works in English before 1870: Bickers, Bogue, Chapman, H.G. Clarke, Dickenson, Gilpin, Houlston, Kent & Richards, Knight & Son, Gall & Inglis, Routledge, Tegg, Theobald, Whittaker, Walker, Warne, Bohn, T. Nelson & Son, G. Slater, Bell & Daldy, Sampson Low, E. Moxon, and Nimmo. William St. Clair’s collection of records of sales for various publishers’ poetry series or libraries demonstrates also that Longfellow quickly entered the canon for cheap series alongside

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47 This Edinburgh firm sold 101,000 copies of the Longfellow volume of its *Family Edition of the Poets* series, first released in 1855 (St. Clair 715).
Romantic authors whose copyrights had expired. In the mid-1870s, for example, Milner of Halifax began his “Cottage Library,” selling volumes of Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Scott, and Longfellow, among others. The Longfellow volume alone, priced at a one shilling, sold 63,000 copies by 1895 (St. Clair 720).

Longfellow’s British sales, then, were dominated and determined by unauthorized reprinting. While Tennyson’s works were protected by copyright and available in Britain only in high-priced editions, editions of Longfellow’s works, some authorized but many more pirated, blanketed the market at every price point, particularly the lowest, a point I will return to later in the chapter. The vast number of Longfellow editions in Britain not only outpaced his American sales, but also the number of copies of Tennyson in circulation on both sides of the Atlantic, as I will discuss in the next section. The idea of inverted audiences for international bestsellers, then, includes not only an author outselling his or her own domestic editions abroad (established in the case of Susan Warner), but extends to outselling the copyright editions of correspondingly popular authors abroad.

“Friends and Readers”: A Survey of the Circulation of Tennyson in America

During Tennyson’s early career, critics have long identified differences between his circulation and reception in America and in Britain. John Olin Eidson, in his study of Tennyson’s early reception in America, argues that “America accepted Tennyson much earlier than did his own country,” and that “American critics…exhibited independence of British criticism” in their wide acclaim for his poems (xii). In response to harsh British reviews of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830) and Poems (1833), however, Tennyson
retreated from publishing for most of the 1830s, withdrawing as many copies of his earlier works from circulation as possible. Thus, prior to 1842, in the absence of any American edition of Tennyson’s *Poems*, copies of Tennyson’s 1830 and 1833 volumes were scarce in America as well. The only copies of the poems in America were those brought over from England by private individuals, and “reading the poems from manuscript was not uncommon among early American Tennyson admirers” (Eidson 5). Poems were occasionally reviewed throughout the 1830s in American magazines and the reviews were without exception highly laudatory. Kathryn Ledbetter has noted the practice of reprinting Tennyson poems in periodicals and annuals, suggesting that “The Miller’s Daughter” was a particularly popular choice in American giftbooks (178). Compiling evidence from early reviews of Tennyson’s periodical publications and volumes of poems, Eidson contends that Tennyson’s popularity was first established in America primarily through the poet’s periodical work and that it preceded his British reputation.

Ultimately, plans for a pirated American edition of Tennyson’s poems appears to have provided the impetus for his preparation of a new British collection, eventually published in London by Moxon in 1842. Talk of reissuing Tennyson’s poems in an American edition began in 1838. Eidson records, “By April, Emerson had persuaded

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48 See Marion Sherwood’s *Tennyson and the Fabrication of Englishness* for a survey of these reviews, particularly the most well-known harsh reviews from the *Quarterly Review.*

49 See Eidson, Chapter 1 for an account of Tennyson’s vogue with Emerson and others with New England and Harvard connections. Eidson argues that despite the almost complete absence of editions of Tennyson’s poems (Emerson owned one that he bought in England in 1831), a robust manuscript and periodical culture allowed for what he, along with early American reviewers, saw as the influence of Tennyson on the works of American poets like James Russell Lowell.

50 John Sullivan Dwight’s review in the *Christian Examiner* in January called for an American edition of
[C.C. Little & Company of Boston] to risk the venture” (33). Eidson cites a letter from the company to Longfellow, requesting both his own copy of Tennyson\(^5\) and the one belonging to Emerson, which was in his possession, for the new edition, which was to include the entirety of the 1830 and 1833 collections.\(^5\) For reasons unknown the project was put off until Charles Stearns Wheeler wrote on December 25, 1840 to Tennyson, informing him that Little & Brown, the same company under a new name, wanted to publish the poems and that he, himself, would be willing to “see them through the press.” Tennyson’s reply, on February 22, 1841, shows his view of both his American audience and of reprinting:

I thank you for your polite and kindly communication, as also for the offer of your services in correction of the press, supposing that my book were publishd in America. I am rejoiced that I have made myself friends on the other side of the Atlantic and feel what a high privilege it is for a writer to be born into a language common to two great peoples; and so believe me not insensible—or if that seem to savour too much of the coldness of mere courtesy—believe me deeply sensible to the honour my American friends have done me even in making a request to which I feel it impossible to accede as they, perhaps, might wish. I am conscious of many things so exceedingly crude in those two volumes that it would certainly be productive of no slight annoyance to me, to see them republishd as they stand at present, either here or in America. But I will tell you what I will do, for when I was wavering before, your letter has decided me. I have corrected copies of most that was worth correction in those two volumes and I will in the course of a few months republish these in England with several new poems and transmit copies to Little and Brown and also to yourself (if you will accept one) and you can then of course do as you choose with them. (Letters 187)

Tennyson’s letter along with the promise of a new edition seems to have put the project on hold. His language indicates that it is the threat of piracy abroad that causes him to

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\(^5\) A “treasured” copy of the rare 2-volume collection from 1832 (Gale 262).

\(^5\) Longfellow appears frequently as a member of the circle most involved in publishing Tennyson’s poems. For example, he visited Ticknor & Fields’ offices while proofs for the 1842 edition were being prepared and he was privy to the earliest gossip about plans for In Memoriam (Eidson 74).
cease “wavering” and prepare a new edition of his poems. In contrast to the politeness of the above letter, Tennyson’s more famous response, in a letter to his friend William Allingham, was, “I hate publishing! The Americans forced me into it again. I had my things nice and right, but when I found they were going to publish the old forms I said, By Jove, that won’t do!—My whole living is from the sale of my books” (qtd. in Letters 187). Here he refers to the American publishers as the source of two annoyances: the threat of unauthorized reprinting which forced him to come to a decision about whether to publish and the potential loss of needed income from such a project.

In keeping with Tennyson’s statements about his motivation, Tennyson’s Boston admirers took the word of a new edition as a favor to them on the part of the poet. The phrase “two great peoples” in his letter suggests a growing awareness, common to this period, of America as a worthy and sizeable reading partner. Tennyson recognizes at once its power and the threat to compel him to see his work published in ways outside of his approval or control. The poet himself paid lip service, if little more, to a sense of mutual respect. Somewhat belatedly, The Dial announced in July of 1842, “Alfred Tennyson, moved by being informed of his American popularity, has given himself to the labor of revising and reprinting a selection of his old poems, and adding as many new ones, which he has sent to Mr. Wheeler of Harvard University, who is republishing them here” (Vol. III, p. 135).
American enthusiasts, despite Tennyson’s reluctance, did not hesitate to see the 1842 edition as a personal mark of transatlantic favor and friendship. In the *Arcturus*, the short-lived vehicle of the Young America movement, Evert Duyckinck notes,

> It is understood that Moxon, the London publisher, is about to issue a new edition of the poems of Alfred Tennyson, undertaken by the author, we believe at the solicitation of his American friends and readers. It is a handsome compliment, this, to the “American Market,” and one that is richly deserved. For the enthusiasm for good verse…is far greater here than at home. (235)

A leader in the New York-based literary circle that famously included Melville, Duyckinck was a prominent voice calling for “a new kind of American literature” (Widmer 97). Highly aware of competition from English reprints and involved in the formation of a Copyright Club to advocate for international copyright (Widmer 99), the literary arm of the Young Americans was deeply committed to fostering nascent American talent (Miller 125). In this context, then, the discourse of mutual friendship with Tennyson takes on new significance. While many British authors were seen as damaging the opportunities and reputations of native authors, Tennyson, already a friend, was widely embraced. Duyckinck’s particular brand of literary nationalism expanded unusually to adopt Tennyson. American audiences felt that their connection with the poet was somehow special and unique, to the extent that nationalist projects were disarmed. Duyckinck’s view of American readers, particularly those of his own circle, as uniquely

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53 Widmer: “It ran from 1840 to 1842 and established the young critics, particularly Duyckinck, Mathews, and Jones (who did the bulk of the work) as bona fide New York literati. Articles ranged from politics to urban life (various “city articles”) to reform issues of the day (pauperism, capital punishment) to the new types of culture enjoyed by New Yorkers (heater, art). Predictably, the magazine started with the usual [for Young Americans] insistence the world was beginning all over again for the American: ‘The Sky above him is a new sky, the earth beneath him is a new earth…’” (*Young America* 96).

54 See Perry Miller’s *The Raven and the Whale* for a history of the Young America movement in literature and Chapter 3 (“Young America in Literature”) of Edward Widmer’s *Young America* for a biographical study of Duyckinck and a discussion of his editorial role and advocacy for a national literature.
appreciative of Tennyson’s poetry can be seen as an initial suggestion as to why Tennyson’s verse in America outsold his early editions in Britain.

Even beginning with the 1842 Poems, the earliest American edition of his work, Tennyson was not a direct sufferer from literary piracy. Wheeler did ultimately act as Tennyson’s agent for the new edition, securing him one hundred and fifty dollars for the copyright of his two volumes from William H. Ticknor, an unusually generous gesture on the part of any American publisher. This was the only recorded such payment to an international author by the firm before 1852, and one that sowed the seeds of goodwill on Tennyson’s part for the firm that would become his longtime American publishers (Winship, American Literary Publishing 136). With sales that were good, though not to be compared with later sensations, the American market for the 1842 Poems nevertheless demonstrated clearly the inverted pattern, selling more copies in America than in Britain: “Particularly significant is the fact that the first American edition consisted of from fifteen hundred to two thousand copies; whereas, the English publisher was willing to risk only eight hundred,” and in successive imprints and editions throughout the 1840s American sales continued to outpace those in England (Eidson 38). Even the first English edition of 800 copies took over a year to sell (Wise 80-81, Lounsbury 417). Tennyson’s American sales continued to grow with the American edition of The Princess: A Medley (1848). The new volume was reprinted by Ticknor several times in 1848, the first edition having sold in a week (Eidson 57), and the edition eventually sold over 3500 copies (Cost Books). Ticknor also quickly republished a new edition of the Poems to include The Princess because of its rapid sales, a collection which was reissued
in 1849, 1852, and 1853. The *New York Daily Tribune* proclaimed, on February 14, 1848, five days after the publication of *The Princess*: “Of all living poets hardly any has a wider of more desirable reputation in this country than TENNYSON; the mere announcement of a new Poem from his pen will send thousands to an immediate pilgrimage to their respective bookstores.” Several of the lyrics from *The Princess* were widely set to music and performed, joining a famous and widely-performed musical setting of “The May Queen” by William R. Dempster which reached an “unprecedented large sale” in 1845, adding to Tennyson’s wide appeal (*The Knickerbocker*; December 1845).  

Tennyson’s subsequent work, *In Memoriam* (1850) is an anomaly in his transatlantic sales trajectory because it was simply the only one of his works to be less popular and less widely circulated in America than in Britain, rather than vice versa. In 1850 in Britain, “*In Memoriam* appeared in an edition of 5,000 copies and went through five editions and probably 25,000 copies in a year and a half” (Ericson 348). Even without advance proofs, the American edition of *In Memoriam* appeared within a month, and two impressions were made of the original edition, with new editions every year until 1857, but, “There is every reason to believe that the sales in England, where Edward Moxon was having difficulty supplying the demand, far exceeded those in America…for the first time the demand for a new Tennyson work in Great Britain completely outdistanced that in America” Eidson (76). Eidson suggests that pattern is tied to the difference in early criticism of Tennyson on both sides of the Atlantic. The harsh British

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55 Eidson (69-73) discusses other musical settings of Tennyson before 1858.
reception of Tennyson’s early poems often involved their seeming triviality, and he notes that in taking on a more serious subject Tennyson was providing these critics with what they expected of him. It is important to note here that this difference in popularity is also very suggestive about potential demographic differences between Tennyson’s American readers and those in Britain, an idea I will return to later in this chapter. Not only were British critics demanding more challenging material from Tennyson, but his more exclusive readership tended to be confined to those who appreciated such criticism. American readers, however, were perfectly happy with his less serious work.

During the 1850s, Tennyson’s American sales were consistently strong and, notwithstanding the trade monopoly that Ticknor & Fields took great care to maintain, consistently matched or outnumbered his sales in England. In the case of *Maud, and Other Poems* (1855), “There is ample proof that it sold well. Within less than a month of the first publication, two thousand more copies were printed, and by March 1856, two more new impressions had been issued. The selections of *Maud, and Other Poems* were included in Ticknor & Fields’s one- and two-volume editions of *Poems* in 1856, and in all of their later editions of complete *Poems*” (Eidson 130). According to Houghton Mifflin’s records, “the first printing, issued on August 18, 1855, numbered 3000 copies, the second (later in August) numbered 2000, the third (September, 1855) numbered 2400, and the fourth (March, 1856) numbered 1000 (Eidson 245). The third London edition was in 1856 as well. *Idylls of the King* (1859) also achieved a large-scale publishing sensation in America and brought Tennyson widespread recognition. Longfellow wrote to James T. Fields, regarding the American response to *Idylls*: “I believe there is no
discordant voice on this side of the water” (qtd. in Samuel Longfellow’s Life, II, 341).

Sales of Idylls of the King were extraordinarily strong in America, where 11,000 were sold within two weeks of its August 1st, 1859 release. The sales of the British edition of the first four books of Idylls of the King in 1859 sold similarly well, with 10,000 sold in six months (Altick, “Bestsellers: A Further List” 199).56

Enoch Arden and Other Poems (1865) marked the high point of Tennyson’s American sales. This collection was by far the best seller among Tennyson’s works and the one in which the inverted audience pattern is most pronounced. Its history underscores both his widespread popularity and his comparative immunity to unauthorized reprinting as well as the appeal of this particular kind of narrative of sentimental loss. In his 1923 memoir, longtime publisher Joseph Shaylor recalls the extent of the book’s sales in London: “50,000 copies of Enoch Arden were sold during the first year of its publication” (27). In America, however, the first edition of 60,000 copies sold within months (Brooks 20). An additional 10,000 were issued and sold in Chicago under joint imprint with S.C Griggs, the Chicago partners for Ticknor & Fields. The volume, along with new editions of Poems that were reissued to include the new work, pushed the sales of authorized American editions of Tennyson well over 100,000 for 1865 (Tryon 309). Ultimately, Enoch Arden would go through 41 reprintings or editions between 1854 and 1869, selling 119,028 copies (Cost Books).

Ticknor and Fields generally released Tennyson titles in more than one format in order to maximize sales. In an essay on Tennyson’s poems, the North American Review,

in January of 1860, stated, “The American editions of Tennyson are too well known to need praise” (21). Ticknor & Fields initially developed their famous “Blue and Gold” editions for Tennyson and, according to Jeffrey Groves:

The prestige of the blue and gold editions was so great that in at least one case Ticknor and Fields attempted to transfer it to a book of a different size. When Tennyson’s *Enoch Arden* was published in 1865, Ticknor and Fields released it in both blue and gold and a new binding style. The latter was the same size as the old brown cover but utilized a very different design and cloth. However, even though the two books were different in size, and even though they were printed from different frames, they shared the decorative title frame featured on the spines of the blue and gold editions. The eyes of consumers, trained to recognize the blue and gold design, could now associate it and the status it carried with a new binding. (90-92)  

Alongside the standard cabinet and blue and gold editions, Ticknor and Fields released an illustrated edition, for which they commissioned nineteen illustrations by Felix O.C. Darley, William John Hennessey, Elihu Vedder, and John La Farge. Historians of American book illustration mark this edition as a high point in the development of the art:

“…Ticknor & Fields’ edition of Tennyson’s *Enoch Arden*, 1865, with A.V.S. Anthony in charge…enlisted beside Darley the brilliant new talents of Elihu Vedder and John La Farge and the facile gift of W.J. Henessey. It set the fashion for the Boston books of poetry which under Anthony’s able direction were deservedly popular for more than a decade. Though few surpassed their prototype, they remain among the best things we have produced in pure illustration” (Mather 287). The range of editions corresponded to a range of prices and markets.

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57 In a kind of transatlantic literary shorthand, Ticknor and Fields were conspicuously compared with Tennyson’s British publisher, widely known for his high standards and literary editions. The *Knickerbocker* praised them in these terms: “Success to the MOXONS and MURRAYS of America!” (“Editors Table,” July 1857, p. 94).
Perhaps unsurprisingly given the extraordinary demand, *Enoch Arden* (1864) became the first Tennyson title to be conspicuously pirated in America. Boston firm J.E. Tilton released another lavishly illustrated edition in 1864 with thirty-three full-page woodcut engravings, followed shortly thereafter by an announcement of a second edition in the *Boston Journal* and the *New York Times*: “Still another edition of this exquisite poem is in press by the Messrs. J.E. Tilton & Co., and will be ready in a few days. It has fewer illustrations [the second edition contained six] than their edition just published, but it includes all the late poems of Tennyson and will be furnished at a much lower price” (4). In a particularly bold move, Tilton’s editions all carry the inscription “entered, according to Act of Congress.” Though they clearly could not secure copyright protection for the text, they appear to be trying to do so for the illustrations. These two editions could be seen as directly competing with the Ticknor and Fields editions. According to James Yarnell, who reads this episode as a “Tennysonian publishing war,” Tilton successfully carved out for himself a corner of the lucrative Tennyson market, as “Ticknor and Fields did not continue to publish such distinctive illustrations in subsequent editions of Tennyson’s works. J.E. Tilton’s publications were more successful” (16). No information survives on how many copies were printed in each of these editions, though even a standard edition of one or two thousand copies would have been considered a success, adding to the total American sales of this work.

While the previous discourse had been amicable, publishers and critics on both sides of the Atlantic were quick to condemn the Tilton editions, and in the subsequent furor, the issue of unauthorized reprinting was tied clearly to nationalist debates over
Our Poet Laureate’s latest, and by some esteemed his choicest, poem has been reprinted in the United States by Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, of Boston, who liberally make the author a sharer in their success. …he has expressed a desire that they alone should publish for him, and this had up to a late period been respected by the publishers throughout the United States. Enoch Arden, however, has met with a very marked success; indeed, we believe we are not wrong in stating that the American has exceeded the English demand; and Messrs. Ticknor and Fields have been induced to issue a very handsome edition, on toned paper, illustrated with twenty full page engravings, by La Farge, Vedder, Darley, and Hennessey, well-known and esteemed American artists, and accompanied by two steel engravings. Much to the regret of many of the publishers, another well-known publishing firm in Boston has issued a rival edition, illustrated, and have thus taken a step towards the destruction of that good feeling which ought, we think, to characterise so honourable a profession. In the absence of an international copyright, the course which Messrs. Ticknor and Fields and other American publishers have pursued, and which is only possible so long as their interests are respected, is the only mode by which English authors can hope to reap any advantage from the sale of their books in America; and we do trust, in the general interests of literature, which ought not to be limited by the bounds of countries and states, that we may not again have to record a similar breach of good feeling. (3)

The call for good-will and international commitment to “the general interests of literature” seems somewhat disingenuous given the extent to which unauthorized reprinting dominated the London market for American books at all levels, but the article demonstrates the extent to which the profession in America engaged in self-policing. Michael Winship defines this “courtesy” as the “set of trade conventions [which] established an exclusive right to publish an American edition of a foreign work” (American Literary Publishing 138). The first firm to announce its intent to publish a work by a foreign author would be seen as having a right to it, as well as later works by

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58 Meredith McGill discusses these structures in more detail in Culture of Reprinting.
that author. Arrangements with or payments to the author strengthened the claim, which was generally honored by other American firms, particularly more reputable ones.\(^59\)

While Longfellow’s international editions existed in a British market where publishers at all levels engaged in piracy, the American market, though not immune to piracy, was much more clearly demarcated and effectively policed. We see more of the widespread disapproval for piracy as the *New York Times*, while announcing the Christmas editions of 1864, mentions both editions of *Enoch Arden*. Praising Ticknor & Fields as “the belle-lettres publishers of the country,” the article announces,

…the ‘author’s edition’ of TENNYSON’S new poem, *Enoch Arden*, [...in which t]he embellishments display a degree of careful and correct art workmanship most creditable to all concerned in the enterprise. The volume will be eagerly scanned in Europe and will be regarded unquestionably as the most original and conscientious specimen of illustrated literature that has yet been sent across the Atlantic….Still another illustrated edition of Tennyson’s *Enoch Arden* comes to us from Boston, issued by the house of J.E. Tilton & Co. … [T]he undertaking an edition of a book already—by the courtesy of the trade and the author’s express desire—in the possession of another firm, seems to be a backward step in the annals of American publishing—an example that if generally followed would lead to a universal destruction of confidence, and a revival of the state of anarchy we have of late years happily escaped from. (4)

The outrage generated by these two illustrated editions actually underscores Tennyson’s simultaneous and comparative immunity to literary piracy. In a climate of emerging literary nationalism, Tennyson’s property was defended like that of a native son.

Other pirated editions did eventually emerge and added to Tennyson’s already extensive popularity and sales. Ultimately, the total number of volumes of Tennyson sold by Ticknor & Fields in the 1850s and 60s numbers over 400,000 (*Cost Books*). *The* 

\(^{59}\) Winship offers a fuller discussion in pages 135-140 and Jeffrey Groves’s chapter in *The History of the Book in America: The Industrial Book* also traces the conventions of market courtesy.
American Literary Gazette and Publisher’s Circular on May 15, 1871, notes, “The American public is likely to get a surfeit of Tennyson. The Harpers have sold over sixty thousand copies of their edition, and now J.R. Osgood & Co. have brought out the ‘Author’s Household Edition.’ It is a beautiful volume, well illustrated, clearly printed, and of just the size and style that one likes in an often-read book. J.E. Tilton & Co, Boston, will also soon offer a new edition that will include the author’s latest poems” (33). Though no reliable records remain from Tennyson’s British publishers from this period, the various estimates I have compiled strongly suggest that Tennyson’s American audience did often outnumber his readership in Britain, most dramatically with *Enoch Arden*. At the time of Tennyson’s death, W. Mabie estimated that he had had more readers and admirers in America than in England (556). Commentators noted this trend throughout his career, not just posthumously. Even as Eidson points out that Tennyson’s fan base was established through periodical work, continued commentary on his popularity arguably drove both sales and audience response.

Significantly, not only did Tennyson’s American sales often outstrip his British sales, but he outsold even Longfellow in America as well. In a short article entitled “Nationalism and International Copyright,” W.S. Tryon compares the American sales of Tennyson and Longfellow to investigate whether the lack of international copyright protection meant that books by British authors undercut and stole market share from American authors. Tryon’s nationalist frame is typical of the moment in American Studies he is writing from (1952), and he is invested in reinforcing a version of American literary history that sees American and British authors as rivals. Using the extraordinarily
detailed records and cost books that survive from the firm, Tryon compares the cumulative sales of Ticknor & Fields editions of the two poets between 1839 and 1869, finding that Tennyson sold 400, 770 while Longfellow sold 374, 786. On this basis, he concludes, “copyright or no, when two comparable poets vied for the American market, the American was not driven to the wall, that he could and did compete successfully with the foreigner” (399). This language of competition between native and foreign writers goes back to contemporary copyright debates themselves, with representatives of national literary culture going all the way to Congress to advocate for an even playing field. Here we see, in the language of sports fields and nativism, that mid-twentieth-century literary critics like Eidson and Tryon maintain the same perspective as they frame their inquiries. They assume that native authors need to be protected and defended, but in this case they do not bring together publishing figures with actual critical voices. Tryon’s language of rivalry does not reflect the way American periodicals tended to talk about Tennyson or acknowledge the laudatory reception of Boston and New York literary circles. While there is no shortage of advocacy for an international copyright law, in this period Tennyson was invariably welcomed and beloved.

It is this critical lens that leads Tryon to misread admittedly complex data. The closeness of the figures he cites (400 thousand copies of Tennyson to Longfellow’s 374 thousand) is misleading. This reckoning obscures the extent to which Tennyson’s sales consistently outnumbered Longfellow’s during the late 50s and 60s, in a pattern that extends my initial definition of inverted audiences. For eight of the first ten years in his chart, Tryon records no sales for Tennyson at all, a period in which there was no direct
competition whatsoever, which throws off the cumulative totals. Between 1859 and 1869, when both poets record their most dramatic sales, Tennyson outsells Longfellow by margins between 2,000 and 80,000 copies for nine of the eleven years. In 1865, the year in which the *Enoch Arden* sales were greatest, total sales of Tennyson’s works in America outstripped Longfellow’s by 118,230 to 32,500 (*Cost Books*). The inverted audience pattern is much stronger than Tryon acknowledges, then, for the period in which both authors are publishing popular works regularly with Ticknor and Fields.

Did the American poet “compete successfully with the foreigner”? The question seems to have been motivated more by protecting “native” writers, while ignoring the extent to which Tennyson’s American reception was predicated on seeing him not as a threat but as a friend. While advocates for international copyright in this period along with mid-twentieth century American literary critics may have been invested in these stark nationalist terms, I would argue that this study allows us to move beyond viewing Tennyson and Longfellow and to reexamine the extent to which some international readerships actually escaped from the nationalist lens.

**“The Two Laureates”: International Reading Audiences**

Based on the above survey of the two poets’ transatlantic careers and the reception abroad of their most popular poems, it is clear that the inverted audience pattern is not generated by the fact of unauthorized reprinting alone. Readers are not called into being by the availability of printed books, though many authors across the ages have surely wished they could be. While Longfellow’s widespread sales in Britain were undoubtedly enhanced by the widespread availability and circulation of piracies,
Tennyson’s poems, despite being published almost exclusively by Ticknor & Fields, also sold better in America than in Britain. Both poets were welcomed and adopted by critics and readers across the ocean as well, an important factor shaping and driving their reception.

In *Transnational Longfellow*, Armin Paul Frank and Christel-Maria Maas argue for a view of Longfellow as “a mediator of foreign literatures and a maker of English American poetry” (8). Their analysis measures his “internationalist poetics” by tracing his wide-ranging source material. Focusing on Longfellow’s European sources for *Evangeline* and *New England Tragedies*, they work to counter ‘nativist’ impulses in interpretation. So far, my project has taken an opposite approach to transnationality, focusing not on source materials or the moment of the works’ composition, but on the identities and minds of the international readers themselves. In examining critics’ and readers’ responses to the poems, we encounter additional reasons for their wide international readerships and for the inverted audience pattern.

*The Courtship of Miles Standish*, a long poem published in 1858, at the height of Longfellow’s creative output, tends to invite nationalist interpretations based on a presumed American readership. In this sentimental tale of love, friendship, and rivalry among the early Puritans, the young scholar John Alden woos on behalf of his mentor and friend Miles Standish and Priscilla responds with the famous line, “[W]hy don’t you speak for yourself, John?” In keeping with significant definitions of sentimentalism in American literature (Nina Baym, Ann Douglas, Jane Tompkins), the poem valorizes emotion, weakness, and self-discipline, preferring the emotive and expressive Alden to
the martial Standish. More recently, Mary Louise Kete has offered what Frank and Maas might see as a “nativist” frame, arguing that Longfellow creates a “sentimental nationalism,” a shared vision of America “under the conditions of a widespread perception of loss and anxiety…” (119). In Longfellow’s narrative poems, lost family becomes the way to envision this national community, as “his male protagonists begin as fully integrated social beings who suffer from the loss or the threat of the loss of the societies that have given them meaning” (116).

In Miles Standish, the series of sentimental or familial losses include the remembered death of Standish’s wife, Priscilla’s rejection of his vicarious proposal, the breach of friendship between the two men, Alden’s subsequent resolutions first to leave for England and then to stay with Priscilla and not mention love, and the reported death of Miles Standish in battle. The landscape and the ever-present sea repeatedly mirror this mood of mourning and loss, while reinforcing a view of national character based on nostalgia. Standish looks to the “…steel-blue rim of the ocean” as he remembers his wife Rose, and as Alden contemplates losing Priscilla, he repeated returns to gaze at “the disk of the ocean, sailless, somber and cold with the comfortless breath of the east-wind…” The poem offers hints toward a nationalist reading. As he considers joining the impending voyage to England, Alden stands on Plymouth Rock, “that had been to their feet as a door-step / Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of a nation!” The constant note of mourning and loss reflects not only a national persona that is mourned and restored, but also a nostalgia and sense of loss of the English home. The sea and the Mayflower, waiting to return to England, appear in every scene as reminders of the
communal loss of a home. After accepting Miles Standish’s charge to propose to the woman they both love, Alden questions his decision to come “Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England.” Later, though, the young lovers seem to bond over their shared homesickness. They talk about “their friends at home,” and Priscilla confides that she has been,

Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-rows of England,—
They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and the linnet
…Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old England.
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it: I almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and wretched.

Unable to resolve his broken promise with his lost love, Alden sees the Mayflower in the mist and decides, “Back will I go o’er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon…Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England, Close by my mother’s side, and among the dust of my kindred…” The entire community participates in this sense of loss and mourning, as they come to the beach to say farewell to the Mayflower, as it heads, “Homeward bound o’er the sea, and leaving them here in the desert.” On the horizon, the ship, “Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean, Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a graveyard; Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of escaping.” The triumphant final scene offers a fleeting new vision of communal and national unity, when Miles Standish re-appears at his friend’s wedding, not only alive but forgiving, the “familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the meadows;…to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the Garden of Eden.” The moment does not last long, though, and even at the end the land is depicted as one of “toil and privation’ with graves and ‘the barren waste of the sea-shore.” The overwhelming vision of early America as one of
suffering and loss offers, at the very least, a nationalized interpretation fraught with tension.

Its critical reception in Britain repeatedly turned conversations about the value of the poem itself to the topic of Longfellow’s popularity and his imagined relationship with his international readers. Like the early American reviews of Tennyson, which focused on the friendly transnational relationship between reviewers and the poet, a review of The Courtship of Miles Standish in the London Quarterly Review (October 1858) narrates the process by which a new volume of poetry becomes an object of exchange signifying a warm, reciprocal relationship:

When a new poem by Mr. Longfellow is announced, we know at least what kind of pleasure to expect, and seldom encounter either disappointment or surprise. We look towards the Atlantic for a half-familiar face: it is as though another child of that dear friend of our youth, who left us now so many years ago for a distant land, is about to greet us in his travels, to bring a message of continued love, and to gratify us with a new presentment of old tones and features, the same and not the same, alike, but, O, how different! It is thus that we anticipate and welcome another member of this favourite family of song, assured that we shall recognise and love it under any guise, whether of moral psalm, quaint legend, or pure domestic carol. (275)

Kete’s identification of the sentimental with the image of lost family takes on a wider transatlantic scope here. In this imagined exchange, the poem and even the volume itself, mirroring John Alden, carries messages of affection from an absent friend. Repetition of familiar themes and cadences signify a known “kind of pleasure,” as well as a “message of continued love.” The poem itself, in which two of the three primary characters repeatedly pine for a charmingly idealized English home, certainly offers Longfellow’s British readers a flattering self-perception, while dramatizing the moment at which the “dear friend of our youth” originally left.
Not every voice participates in this transatlantic exchange of favors, however, and other British reviews illustrate the divide between loving mass readerships and critics who wanted to set themselves apart. In the 1858 article “Longfellow’s Last Hexameters,” a reviewer for the Edinburgh-based Chamber’s criticizes Miles Standish for repetitiveness of subject and of meter: “We really do think we have had enough and to spare of those Pilgrim Fathers, and that wearisome ‘forest primeval’…Certainly, if we could have bourne to see more of them, it would have been in some other dress than these hexameters” (296). The poetic subject and meter that favorable and loving reviewers recognized with fond familiarity becomes, to this reader, repetitive and shows a failure of imagination. At the beginning of the review, though, the author admits to a partiality against anything popular, mentioning Tennyson’s outselling Browning as evidence that “the excellence of a poet is not to be measured by his popularity.” Tennyson remains a figure of comparison, though, as the reviewer also admits, with nationalist bias, that he is “inclined to look with some suspicion upon all works of the imagination which bear upon their covers any number above ‘the fourth thousand,’ [but] more particularly when they come from the other side of the Atlantic” (296). The notice in the Kent edition of Miles Standish that had been intended to discourage piracy also became fodder for a nativist critique of Longfellow himself, delivered in the following barb:

He is, for a true poet—and we do not deny him that title—the most superficial thinker possible. There is a gulf between his mind and Mr. Tennyson’s in this respect—although they are often vulgarly classed together—far broader than the separating Atlantic…‘A small but sufficient portion of the contents of this volume, says a notice prefixed to the cheap edition, ‘has been contributed by an English writer,’ and our hope and belief are that this English writer has only contributed the repetitions. This explanation would both rescue a fellow-countryman from the obloquy of being concerned in the production of Miles
Standish, and also absolve Mr. Longfellow from the grave charge of tautology. (296)

In November of 1858, a month later, the Southern Literary Messenger also takes up the question of how the relationship between the two poets relates to their popularity. The article rightly asks whether it is Longfellow’s “extended popularity…which causes his title to original power to be challenged whenever he puts forth another effort” (389), and replies with the rhetorical question: “Is Mr. Longfellow a poet at all? Are we not all wrong in supposing that he has ever spoken to the bosoms of men, and has not his song been addressed only to their ears?” (389). This reviewer notes:

Mr. Longfellow has often been compared with Tennyson, and a recent English critic, in a paragraph of flippant description of America, has arraigned him as only a feeble imitator of the Tennysonian model. But a more unjust accusation could not have been made. In some respects, indeed, the two laureates are alike… Yet is each undeniably a true child of genius. The sphere of Tennyson is dream-land…the sphere of Longfellow is the round world we inhabit. (390)

While attempting to identify the aesthetic differences between the two poets, the American reviewer emphasizes their mutual “genius” and cites their laurels, Tennyson’s official and Longfellow’s bestowed informally by loving critics and readers.

While the critics debated both poets’ claims to genius and the extent to which national identifications enhanced or compromised their status, actual readers seemed to value the poems for their picturesqueness and sentimentality. Kete’s broader argument in Sentimental Collaborations is that sentimental poems represent collaborative moments between author and reader, and she suggests that these moments take what is often viewed as a female genre into the experiences of men as well. Kete discusses Longfellow, but the pattern also extends to Tennyson’s large and enthusiastic American
readership. Tennyson’s *Enoch Arden*, another sentimental poem about a romantic triangle and a lost husband who returns to witness his wife’s second marriage, represents the height of the inverted audience pattern and exemplifies the wider patterns of response such poems elicited from international readerships. Like *Miles Standish*, the story is set in the distant past (“a hundred years ago”) in a village by the sea. *Enoch Arden* emphasizes the pathos of the story of familial loss by formalizing Enoch Arden’s prior claim, granting him marriage and three children with his childhood sweetheart Annie Lee. Only after he is lost at sea for ten years does she consent to marry the long-devoted Philip Ray. Unlike the national and historical specificity of Longfellow’s poem, *Enoch Arden* takes place in “a village” near a port, only later identified as being in England. The tale of Philip’s long-unrequited love and the self-denying heartbreak of the “shipwrecked sailor waiting for a sail” aligns easily with sentimental themes, and American audiences adopted it wholeheartedly. The multiple editions from the two Boston publishers (Ticknor & Fields and Tilton) were not the only access the American public had to *Enoch Arden*, and the poem sparked responses in a variety of media that allowed American readers to participate or collaborate with the tale they loved so much.

Like many highly popular bestsellers, *Enoch Arden* became a merchandising sensation in America. It inspired many popular ballads and pieces of music, either taken directly from the poem or related to it. “Annie’s Reply to Enoch Arden” by C. Everest was published in 1866 by Philadelphia publishers Lee & Walker, with the subtitle “Song Founded upon the Beautiful and Popular poem of Enoch Arden by Tennyson.” The sentimental refrain echoes the beloved scene in which Annie pleads with Enoch not to go
to sea: “Then stay my dearest stay, I pray, And drive my anxious fears away; Then stay my dearest stay, I pray, Oh, stay with me, Oh stay with me, I pray.” Popular Philadelphia songwriter Septimus Winner self-published the “Farewell Song of Enoch Arden; or, I’ll Sail the Seas Over” in 1865, with a similarly emotional refrain: “I’ll sail the seas over, I’ll cross the wide ocean, I’ll sail the seas over for thee.” New York Publisher H. De Marsan subsequently issued the two together, an imagined conversation reenacting the precise moment of sentimental loss and familial separation.

Multiple dramatic versions of *Enoch Arden* toured the country as well, the first opening at the Boston Theatre on February 1, 1865, weeks after the poem’s publication, with J.W. Wallack as Enoch Arden and E.L. Davenport as Philip Ray (Tompkins 114). Two additional versions, by Julie de Marceurite and by Arthur Matthison, both melodramas, opened during 1869 at Booth’s Theatre in New York. In a review of the latter production, the *New York Times* notes, “Enoch Arden, in one dramatic form or another has been for some years, we believe, a standard attraction in various parts of the United States. It was never represented in England however, until last February, and then was produced only through the involuntary agency of an American, Mr. L. P. Barrett” (4).60

American multimodal responses to the poem both exceeded and drove those in Britain. A fourth American staging appeared on October 17, 1870, performed by The Burlesque Company at Wood’s Museum and Menagerie. This version, entitled “Enoch

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60 Barrett, hoping to appear in the production himself, convinced Joseph Stirling Coyne to adapt it and produce it in London. Though Barrett would ultimately be disappointed in his acting aspirations, the production appeared in 1869. “The Home Wreck: a drama, in three acts; suggested by Tennyson’s poem of Enoch Arden,” Coyne, Joseph Stirling, 1869.
Arden, the Sailor Boy,” was a burlesque, in which “a female hero impersonated Enoch Arden, and…the troupe interpolated dances, jigs, topical songs, and puns with their script” (Granqvist 187). *Enoch Arden* remained popular through the end of the century and in 1890 the Photographers’ Association of America even announced a “Grand Prize contest” to illustrate “Enoch Arden.” Among the “suggestions for the help of those who may contemplate trying for the prize” offered by the *Wilson’s Photographic Magazine*… is to find “something suggestive” in “Tennyson’s pathetic poem,” which “abounds with illustrations easily possible for the photographer” (3, 5). The notice states, “We feel that ‘Enoch Arden’ is going to develop the display of more talent on the part of American photographers than did either ‘Hiawatha’ or ‘Evangeline,’ for the scenes which it suggests are more familiar and less arbitrary in costume and accessory…” (3), naming three of the most famous long poems by the two most beloved poets of the century. American readers, here, engage in their own sentimental collaboration and bring the scenes from their beloved poem to life.

*Enoch Arden* even influenced the discourse surrounding American marriage laws. In a *New York Times* editorial entitled “The Latest Enoch Arden” (November 23, 1876), William Livingston Alden complains that any husband who is at all dilatory in returning home is christened according to the poem:

> In this country, especially, the annual crop of Enoch Ardens has been enormous. ‘Out of the golden, remote, wild West, / Where the sea without a shore is’—a vast

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61 When James R. Osgood took over the business of Ticknor and Fields, he put out a notice announcing that the firm then had five volumes of collected Longfellow in its catalogue and thirty volumes of his currently available. They had ten different editions of collected Tennyson, with multiple other volumes, including four each of “Idylls of the King” and “Enoch Arden,” of which “over 100,000 copies have been sold” (“James R. Osgood & Co., Boston.” 230).

62 Mentioned in *Hard at Play* by Kathryn Grover (153).
procession of wandering husbands is continually winding its way homeward to Eastern hearth-stones…. One would naturally think that no really chivalric husband, after going alone to California and residing for a dozen years in a land flowing with bowie-knives and revolvers, without once writing to his deserted wife, would dream of returning home to earn the title of ‘another Enoch Arden.’ Yet the wandering American husband always comes back at last… (4)

In the above quotation, Enoch Arden is mapped imaginatively and deeply over the American landscape. The “wild West” of Swinburne becomes a repository of absent husbands, while the East is imagined in terms of “hearth-stones,” of feminine home fires. The cultural and geographic conditions that separated spouses corresponded to the ways in which Americans imagined their country. Just as beloved books and beloved characters roamed the globe, periodicals of the 1870s, 80s, and 90s are filled with notices of “Enoch Ardens” who are either missing or return home, and numerous versions of “Enoch Arden Laws” were enacted in nearly every state by the turn of the century, designed to protect accidentally bigamous spouses by specifying when an abandoned spouse could be considered free to remarry without legal liability.63 While some sources suggest that the term “Enoch Arden law” did not enter American case law until the twentieth century, it is a constant presence in periodical discourse and even in state laws not long after the poem’s publication.64

As the above survey has shown, the inverted audience pattern was reciprocal in the nineteenth century. Though both were widely embraced, Tennyson outsold Longfellow in America, while Longfellow outsold Tennyson in Britain. This reciprocal

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63 For a survey of these laws according to state, see William Lamartine Snyder’s The Geography of Marriage: Or, Legal Perplexities of Wedlock in the United States (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1889) 78-82.
reading formation did not go unnoticed, and the widespread commentary actually served to enhance it, generating both enthusiastic and disapproving responses that likely both served to extend international interest in the two poets and reinforce the imagined loving relationships between each poet and his readers across the ocean. Comparisons between the two poets and explanations for their reciprocal popularity were offered on the basis of a kind of parallel role for each poet abroad. In an 1865 article entitled, “Dickens in America,” one reviewer for Trübner’s American and Oriental Literary Record suggested that it was the similarity between the two countries that led the citizens of one to be attracted to the products of the other:

Dickens is, without exception, the most popular novelist in the United States; his works have a wider circulation than in England; they sell by thousands, and there is scarce a homestead, even in the remote far west, that has not his volumes on its library shelves. This is singular proof of international sympathy, and worth a score of arguments. Dickens is a thoroughly English writer… but in America his humour is even better appreciated than their native wit, his expressed sympathy with what is good and noble, and his pathetic descriptions of sorrow and suffering, find as responsive an echo in American as in English hearts. And as a further proof of this general international intellectual sympathy, we may record the fact, that Longfellow as a poet is more widely read in England than in his native country, while Tennyson has a far wider circle of readers in America than in England. (155)

The reviewer reads the inversion of readership not as indicative of any difference between the two contexts, but as evidence of their “intellectual sympathy.” In the next section, however, I will investigate these claims of “intellectual sympathy,” considering additional factors surrounding American readers’ choice of Tennyson and British readers’ choice of Longfellow by asking who those readers actually were.

“The Cherished Literary Companion”: Poetry Prices and Actual Readers
For both poets, the inverted audience pattern is clear, but there is more to learn about this audience than simply its size. In the following section, I want to combine the above sketch of numbers of editions with the various critical voices announcing them to consider what these patterns can tell us about the actual readers who held them. The members of the English Longfellow Memorial Committee who united to celebrate and “claim” the poet retroactively were prominent intellectuals, but Longfellow’s work was widely read and circulated not only or even primarily among the British elite. Similarly, Tennyson’s vogue in America began among a circle of Boston intellectuals and spread through the nationalist tastemakers of the Young America movement, but eventually reached a much larger and potentially more diverse audience. In addition to counting copies, collating reviews, and collecting individualized responses, can we do more to trace Longfellow and Tennyson’s mass international audiences?

In this context, as mentioned briefly above, the prices of books can become a useful clue for thinking about real readers and who they were. The widespread practice of issuing unauthorized reprints clearly functioned not only to enlarge the circulation but to depress the average price of a Longfellow volume in Britain. This was felt by his authorized publishers, even as they worked to gain a competitive advantage in the market for his works. In many cases the only advantage they could buy themselves, though, was a brief window of time when theirs would be the only edition on the market and they could charge a premium. John Walker, when in 1845 he convinced Longfellow to cede

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65 Angela Sorby offers another way to link poems to actual readers by looking at the actual space of the schoolroom. In her first chapter, Sorby traces Longfellow’s ubiquity in classrooms of the later nineteenth century, arguing that this context revises our concept of periodization through reading, a strategy that underlies my project here as well, and that the most-taught poems (*Hiawatha, Paul Revere’s Ride*) offer a pedagogical function of teaching children to be Americans.
to him the copyright for the poems in *Seaside and Fireside* on the promise of increased profits, offered the following excuse for not paying even the promised small fee: “another publisher had an edition out in five days after mine at half the price” (qtd. in Ghodes, “British Publishers 1168). In a subsequent letter, he wrote to Longfellow, making the case to be sent additional new material to enhance the comparative value of his edition:

> There are now numerous editions of your Poems in our Market and all of them appear to sell. It is, however, only the complete copy that pays the publisher, but if I had a few more Poems to add to the Seaside & Fireside & the view of the Law I have mentioned be confirmed, any edition published without them would be reckoned materially defective & my edition would not only command a larger sale but I would be able to charge rather more for the Book, which would enable me to remunerate you in a commensurate degree for the preference you have given me. (qtd. in Ghodes, “British Publishers” 1169)

Walker sought to outdistance his competitors by both having new material in his collection and by protecting his ownership of the material, acknowledging that current market conditions meant that he had to price his editions to compete with the unauthorized reprints then current, leaving little profit to share with the author. Most of Longfellow’s authorized publishers tied his compensation to their own ability to be competitive in the market (which usually amounted to a very small margin) and Longfellow’s experience shows clearly that his own compensation or lack of it was tied to these competitive low prices. Though Longfellow had previously dealt in sums like one hundred pounds for his copyrights, in 1868, Routledge offered one thousand pounds for the *New England Tragedies*, paid in four half-yearly payments, or four hundred pounds on the day of publication with supplemental payments of one hundred pounds for ten years, if Longfellow would remain in England for the publication. The contrast is significant, not the least because there was finally some assurance that the market for the
poems could be protected, though there is no evidence that Longfellow was ever paid this sum (Ghodes, “British Publishers” 1175).

In England, editions of Longfellow were priced significantly lower than those of Tennyson, who was known for demanding consistently high payments from his publishers (Mumby 80-81). 66 The standard industry practice, still followed today, for maximizing profits in a copyright work meant that volumes were initially offered in high-priced editions. William St. Clair has outlined this pattern particularly clearly, with close comparisons between British works that were copyrighted and others that were for various reasons not protected by copyright, arguing that “there is close correlation between the price of a book when it was first put on sale and the intellectual property regime under which it was produced” and that copyrighted works move gradually down a “demand curve” from more expensive editions to cheaper ones (28). According to Simon Eliot, “No legitimate competition from another publisher usually meant that the copyright-owner could ask as much as he thought he could get for a book—and hold back from issuing a cheaper edition until he felt that the market for expensive books had been fully saturated” (1). This is the pattern clearly followed by Moxon with editions of Tennyson, but authorized publishers of Longfellow did not have this privilege and regularly had to compete with the myriad 1 or 2 shilling editions that were widely available immediately, often poorly printed because they had been rushed to press, for every one of Longfellow’s works.

66 See also, William Tinsley, Random Recollections of an Old Publisher, 1905.
The extent to which Longfellow’s many publishers blanketed every segment of the British market simultaneously with a variety of editions, cheap to expensive, appears repeatedly in anecdotal examples from the period. The above-mentioned reviewer in *Chamber’s Journal* in 1858 offers an apt description of the range of options available to a prospective owner of a Longfellow volume in Britain:

> We never enter the establishment of any fashionable bookseller without a smile, which is not altogether of approbation, at seeing so ‘large and varied an assortment’ of the exquisitely bound and gorgeously decorated volumes of Mr. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Illustrated editions; collected editions; new and revised editions (with a preface by some literary gentleman, who asserts that the mind of man cannot now conceive a world without an *Excelsior*, any more than without an *Iliad*) author’s own editions; nay, even cheap editions, in order to anticipate and successfully rival that piracy which this poet’s popularity invariably provokes. (296)

In the *National Review* in January of 1859, a much friendlier reviewer begins to suggest a link between the nature of these varied editions and the actual readers who bought, displayed, and read them:

> The actual quantity of Mr. Longfellow’s writings, considerable as it is, is much less than might be supposed from the number and variety of editions in which they are to be met with. No recent poet, we should imagine, has enjoyed so great an amount of publication. We meet with his works every where and in every form.--in complete editions on the counters of the regular booksellers, in stacks of little shilling volumes on railway bookstalls, and in gorgeously-bound and profusely-illustrated volumes on drawing-room tables. He is unquestionably the most popular poet of the day. (198)

In these images, the reviewer surveys everything from the most expensive gift-book editions to the cheapest “shilling” editions. Both of these reviews refer to *Miles Standish*, a poem which could be bought in editions ranging from a 1-shilling collection of Longfellow’s works to an illustrated edition costing fifteen times that amount. During that same year, by comparison, British readers had the option of purchasing a Moxon
volume of Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King* at seven shillings or a new version of his *Poems* for nine shillings or a newly illustrated edition of *The Princess* with 26 engravings for 16 shillings.

While covering every price bracket, publishers of unauthorized Longfellow editions were able to hit one market that Moxon editions of Tennyson, or any editions of British authors currently in copyright, could never reach: the very bottom. In “What Price Poetry?” Eliot surveys the prices for editions of poems by several popular poets in Britain. Before 1862, editions of Longfellow cluster near the bottom of the pricing scale, with many as low as 1s and several at 2s. Tennyson’s, however, average much higher and cluster at 8 to 15 shillings. In succeeding decades, the pattern becomes even more pronounced, with the majority of Longfellow editions priced at 2 shillings (Eliot 2). In Britain, editions of Longfellow were more varied in price and much more widely available in cheap editions than those of Tennyson.

Despite the fact that Ticknor and Fields were able to suppress nearly all other American attempts to reprint Tennyson, the comparative price depression for international editions seems to have applied to their American editions as well. The American edition of *Poems* was sold in 1842 for $1.50, while the London edition sold for 12 shillings (closer to $3.00 in 1842, or approximately $64.00 in 2013)\(^\text{67}\). After this, though, when Tennyson poems were published in larger editions and sold more widely, prices on both sides of the Atlantic came down, though the price differential remained. In 1848, *The Princess* was sold for 50 cents in America and the equivalent of $1.25 in

\(^{67}\text{Calculated according to the method offered by Eric W. Nye in “A Method for Determining Historical Monetary Values.”}\)
Britain, as was *Maud, and Other Poems* (1855). Even with a monopoly on the Tennyson market that was respected by other publishers, Tennyson’s authorized and exclusive publishers consistently priced his editions well below those of their American authors. While literary piracy usually involves overtly reprinting a text without authorization, as was the case with the British editions of Longfellow, this climate creates a resulting damper on the market that depresses prices of non-pirated works as well (an argument often cited by both British and American authors in advocacy for international copyright).68

The relationship between Tennyson and Ticknor and Fields has been the topic of some debate. Eidson ends his narrative of Tennyson’s early American reception on a high note, reading *Maud* (1855) as a triumph of American audiences’ celebration of Tennyson and of the collaboration with Ticknor and Fields. Patrick Scott revises this, suggesting not only that *Maud* was less popular but also that the Ticknor and Fields partnership was less overwhelmingly cordial and dominated at all times by the American publishers’ strategic cultivation of and profit from their British possession. Within the context of this study of international editions, it is clear that the truth lies somewhere in the middle. While Ticknor and Fields did not engage in the kind of overt literary piracy practiced by London firms like Routledge and Warne and even the Boston firm of Tilton, in the case of *Enoch Arden*, they priced their editions in accordance with a market where such piracy was possible. Tennyson was, thus, a victim of a version of piracy that was much more

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68 There is even evidence that some of the American editions were being imported, their low prices undermining British sales: “The sale of the American edition of Tennyson’s poems in England has been suspended by a judgment of Chancellor Giffard” (“General European News” 57). See also, Hagen (131).
cordial but still robbed him of profits he could have gained on his literary property. In 1859, comparative volumes of Poetical Works by Longfellow ($1.75) and Tennyson (75 cents) maintain this pattern. Despite a relationship that Tennyson always perceived as good, Ticknor and Fields paid the poet significantly less than they paid their American authors, compensating him up-front for proofs while Longfellow received a more lucrative contract that gave him a share of profits (Charvat). During this period, there was no legal protection of the property of foreign authors. However, the book trade had developed a system of self-policing, by which an authorized firm could exert pressure on potential competitors by publicly advertising its relationship with an author and its intent to publish his work. Tennyson conspicuously maintained his relationship with Ticknor and Fields as his American publishers, and they would go on to circulate this fact widely in an effort to discourage any competition. They were, for the most part, successful. On March 18, 1865, he wrote to them, “As I have received from you remuneration for my books, it is my wish that with you alone the right of publishing them in America should lie.” They went on to reprint this letter in the front matter of their editions, where it functioned in place of a copyright notice as a deterrent to other would-be publishers of Tennyson.

The ultimate result of this publishing climate and versions of literary piracy taking place in both countries in the mid-nineteenth century was that international editions were consistently not only more widely available (in terms of numbers), but that popular poetry became more accessible to a variety of people internationally. Classes of people who could not afford to pay fifteen shillings for a new edition of Tennyson’s Idylls of the
King in London were much more able to pay two shillings for a volume of Longfellow’s poems put out by Routledge or another of the multitude of publishers who sold his works in cheap editions.

The popularity of international bestsellers that leads to larger audiences abroad, then, contributes not only to the availability of texts but to their comparative affordability and accessibility. There is ample evidence that Longfellow’s work was known and loved by a variety of British readers. During an 1851 visit to England, James T. Fields wrote to Longfellow, “I find your writings all over England. At the houses of all sorts of people, high church & no church, your name is reverenced” (Ghodes “British Publishers” 1170).

In a letter from William H. Prescott on October 7, 1850, just months after Tennyson had been appointed Poet Laureate, Longfellow received the following report on his friend’s visit to London:

Your reputation has been on the increase rapidly & largely the last few years in England. Certain it is that your works are admired not only more than those of any American poet, but of any living English poet…I have heard them quoted & sung and talked of & great interest shown in your personal habits, looks, manners &c. You know in what handsome form your writings are published; and if you should travel there you would find in how cheap & popular forms they are to be found at all the railway stations. (from MS, Craigie House, referred to in Samuel Longfellow, Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, II, 191)

This letter is extremely suggestive because it not only identifies the significant difference between the “handsome” and high-priced Ticknor & Fields editions and the “cheap and popular” British reprints, but also locates each type of edition in a particular social space. Railway stations here stand in for a kind of mass audience, a group of readers with only limited access to the work of “any living English poet,” nicely distinguished here from late English poets whose works joined Longfellow as standard texts for cheap series. In
the *National Review* article cited above, the variety of different kinds of editions that occupy nearly every possible rung on the pricing ladder are tied to particular social contexts, from “railway bookstalls” to “drawing-room tables,” from young ladies’ pianos to “mechanics’ institution” lectures. Longfellow, then, is present in upper and middle class contexts as well as in the universally-accessible railway platform.

Longfellow’s dramatic popularity and the clustering of his bestselling works near the bottom of the pricing scale tie very clearly to a particular reading audience and underscore a belief that was widely held at the time that Longfellow was a poet of the people. *The Ladies’ Companion* in 1858 offers a highly sentimentalized and democratic view of Longfellow’s popularity in Britain:

> Longfellow, the poet, is as well-known in England as in America. … some few great names in American literature we receive and recognize as household words—Emerson, the essayist; Prescott, the historian; Hawthorne, the novelist; Longfellow, the poet. These chiefly, and of these more than all Longfellow. …Longfellow’s poetry is essentially domestic. He sings of the loves, joys, and sorrows of home….Undoubtedly this home-inspiration is the cause of his great popularity. He appeals to all men; all can understand him….Hence his great popularity. (“Longfellow’s Poems” 325-6)

Not only does this article surround Longfellow with a circle of other American writers, each of a particular genre, but it imagines them as comfortable inhabitants of the British home. The *National Review* in 1859 also seemed invested in a particularly democratic view of Longfellow’s audience and popularity: “Not only is Mr. Longfellow’s popularity extraordinarily great, it was extraordinarily rapid also. We do not doubt that it is greater now than ever, and that it has gone on increasing up to the present time; but we believe that very soon after the appearance of the first collection of his works it was greater than that of any contemporary poet. He took the public ear at once and immediately; he
required no introduction from critics and reviewers; he had not to convert or educate his audience, but found it ready and responsive from the first” (198).  His primary audience, as evidenced by the material history of his books as well as of the testimony of readers, was not selected from among those who could afford the high-priced editions put out by literary publishers and tastemakers like Moxon. Oscar Wilde, following a visit to Longfellow in America, would repeat the following anecdote of, “his host’s account of an audience with Queen Victoria, a famous reader of Tennyson, at Windsor in 1869: When he had modestly expressed surprise at his own fame in England, Her Majesty had replied, ‘O, I assure you, Mr. Longfellow, you are very well known. All my servants read you.’ ‘Sometimes,’ Longfellow confessed to Wilde, ‘I will wake up in the night and wonder if it was a deliberate slight” (Calhoun 3).

If Longfellow, through market conditions as well as the nature of his work, had become more popular than living British poets and more widely welcomed among all classes, not just the self-consciously literary or intellectual, we might ask whether the same thing happened for Tennyson in America? Early admirers of Tennyson in the 1830s and early 1840s seem particularly invested in a view of themselves as select and intellectual, as uniquely able to appreciate the poet when he was criticized in Britain, and early twentieth-century critics like Eidson and Lounsbury outline this position.

According to Thomas Lounsbury, “Though the constituency behind Tennyson was not at first large in numbers, so far as that is indicated by the sale of his works, it was remarkable for both its character and its intellect. To it belonged especially the young

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69 Within a month, this review was reprinted in at least two American periodicals: the *Living Age* (Boston) and the *Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art* (New York).
men of promise whose opinions were to be the opinions of the immediate future” (417). As the above-discussed trends developed, however, and sales of Tennyson grew while prices for his edition remained low, this kind of select, intellectual audience gave way to a different kind of popularity, one based less on nationalist rivalry and more on reciprocity and imagined friendship between the poet and his American readers.

Just as British reviewers seemed invested in characterizing Longfellow as a poet who “appeals to all men,” Tennyson’s American reviewers began to cast him as uniquely suited to American democracy. As he concludes his study of Tennyson’s early reception in America in 1858, Eidson comments, “From 1859, Tennyson began to assume more than ever before his position as the people’s poet” (147). Cornelius Wegandt’s 1936 essay on Tennyson offers evidence representing Tennyson as a poet for every American. He begins reflecting on the moment when, as a reporter at a Philadelphia newspaper, the cable announcing Tennyson’s death arrived. He describes a moment of mutual recognition among everyone in the room, “about evenly divided in numbers between men from college and men from printing shop, telegrapher’s key, and paper routes, [that they] had all been brought up on Tennyson” (99). He recalls, “Tennyson was for fifty years a parlor-table book in America, more popular here, it was often claimed, than our own Longfellow, and, as a parlor-table book, Tennyson was widely read…parlor-table books were commoner in households without libraries than in households with libraries, and so resorted to, perforce, for whatever book-reading was done in such homes” (110). He even describes one such book, “thumbed and worn and ready to open at this, that, or the
other place” that he found at a book sale, “resplendent in cart-blue and gold,” a clearly identifiable Ticknor and Fields edition. He claims,

Americans all over the country heard Tennyson from the pulpit in the days when most folks went to church. The children who sat beside their elders during the long sermons found Tennyson, too, in their readers and books of selections for recitation. For years and years verses of his were on Christmas cards and calendars, and in the poet’s corner in the newspapers and in the almanacs. No other English poet of the time…had so many avenues through which to reach the public as Tennyson, and no one at all was so easy to understand on first reading.

(Wegandt’s tone is undoubtedly nostalgic, but it deeply underscores the points I outlined earlier about access and common audiences.

Tennyson’s role as the people’s poet in America, more even than Longfellow’s in Britain, seemed to invite particularly nationalist terms in describing his audience. The Southern Literary Messenger commented in 1853,

> [W]e think it expedient to call the attention of our readers…[to] the singular congeniality of Tennyson’s poetry with the rising spirit of the time, its harmony with what is apparently to be the tone of sentiment in the coming generations, its cordial sympathy with honest endeavor and the claims of industry, and its peculiar applicability to a democratic age. Though he is the poet laureate of England, Tennyson is by no means the poet of royalty…he is the mouth-piece of the people, and gives utterance to their rights, their wrongs, and their aspirations, with a cordial appreciation which belongs only to the poet who feels himself one with themselves. (“Tennyson’s Poems” 657)

In Putnam’s a reviewer in January of 1856 echoes the idea that Tennyson shows an “American contempt” for titles and social class (98). While both poets are identified as uniquely democratic, then, the American reviewers tie Tennyson particularly with a national spirit.

Ultimately, then, Tennyson and Longfellow’s transatlantic audiences can be seen as inverted not just in size, as established earlier in the chapter, but in composition. This
“inverted audience” equation relies not just on numbers of books but even more compellingly on the consequences of those numbers. Tennyson and Longfellow repeatedly seem to stand in for one another in their transatlantic roles and each is welcomed across the ocean as a people’s poet who speaks uniquely to the common citizens of another nation. In an analogy that is consistently implied not only in material history but in reception history, Longfellow is to Britain what Tennyson is to America, and vice versa. A reviewer in the *Illustrated London News* in 1869 outlines this idea:

> There is no English poet now living who has so many readers in England as Longfellow. His writings are, indeed, known to the million; they find a place on shelf or table in the humblest artisan’s home, where Tennyson and Browning have not yet come. This may not be so much the case in America, for aught we know. Though highly esteemed by his fellow citizens as one of the brightest ornaments of their literature, Professor Longfellow is there, perhaps, regarded more as a consummate scholar and artist of poetry than as the favorite and familiar author of the largest class. He may be to them what Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning are to us: the cherished literary companion rather of those whose taste and sentiment have attained a certain degree of culture. …the works of Longfellow may owe their extraordinary popularity on this side of the Atlantic not to their satisfying a lower standard of classic excellence, but simply to the absence of an international copyright, and to the vast multiplication of cheap editions printed in London. So much the greater is our national obligation to so good an English writer.

This reviewer suggests that as the audiences are inverted in size and composition through trends in copyright law and publishing practice, the roles of the poets take on a level of inversion as well. Longfellow, a “consummate scholar and artist” and a Professor at home, finds a place “in the humblest artisan’s home” in Britain, while other reviews suggested that Tennyson was appreciated by the cultured in Britain, counting Queen Victoria among one of his staunch fans, as well as beloved by the common in America.
The last line, instead of erasing nationality, inverts it, claiming Longfellow himself as an
English poet because of his wide adoption there.\(^{70}\)

Here we see a logical extension of the inverted audiences pattern: a corresponding
inversion in the perceived roles of the poets themselves through the eyes of those
international audiences. The parallelism between Longfellow and Tennyson in
circulation and audiences that I have outlined so far was widely recognized. When
claiming either Longfellow or Tennyson as their own popular poets, many of the
reviewers and readers cited above frequently mention the other as a standard for
comparison. The *Illustrated London News* reviewer states, “Professor Longfellow is
there…what Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning is to us,” while Wegandt nostalgically
remembers Tennyson as, “more popular here…than our own Longfellow.” W.S. Tryon
mentions a kind of transatlantic literary shorthand that emerged with the “frequent
references to Tennyson as the English Longfellow’ and to Longfellow as the ‘American
Tennyson’” (304).\(^{71}\) Such comparisons are not unique to these two poets and had long

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\(^{70}\) At the time of Longfellow’s death, a *London Times* editorial (March 25, 1882) once again pointed out
that he was more widely read in England and calls his “as much an English as an American poet” (quoted
in Ghodes 124).

\(^{71}\) The earliest use of this transatlantic literary shorthand that I have found is in a one-act dramatic farce
from the 1856 called *My Wife’s Mirror*. In this play, by Ed. G.P Wilkins and published in New York by S.
French after its first performance, husband and wife Mr. and Mrs. Racket engage in banter about their
reading material. Mr. Racket picks up a book and his wife asks presumes that he is reading “the delicate,
heavenly aspirations of the American Tennyson—the sweet bard of fancy—because his inspired mind
claims kinship with your own.” The book is revealed, however, to be a cookbook, and Mr. Racket replies:
“After all, my love, marriage is a community of desserts—we sit down to eat the dinner of life together—
you take the ethereals and I take the solids…, you worship Longfellow and I adore Delmonico” (quoted in
Grimsted 236). After this, however, the phrase begins appearing fairly frequently. In an 1868 “Notes”
section in *The Land We Love*, Daniel Harvey Hill calls Longfellow “the American Tennyson” (189). In the
1870s, Hiram Miller lamented, “After Longfellow, the American Tennyson…what American poet is there
to-day that commits himself to memory?” (114). An 1873 literature textbook instructs British students in
*History of English Literature for Junior Classes*, going so far as to flesh out the comparison and inscribe it
as pedagogical knowledge: “Longfellow is the American Tennyson, and resembles him principally in the
elegance and purity of his language, and in the music of his verse” (237).
formed a way of constructing transatlantic comparisons. Bryant became the “American Wordsworth” and Cooper, the “American Walter Scott,” attempting in each case to claim equality with a British cultural authority. These habitual comparisons between Longfellow and Tennyson, however, are much more frequently paired and reciprocal, as in international circulation and reception, each poet comes to represent the other’s national and social opposite.

This deep investment in claiming Longfellow as the most beloved poet of lower class audiences in Britain and Tennyson of the common people in America is complicated by the circumstances like those I cite at the very beginning of this chapter. The English Longfellow Committee, headed by the Prince of Wales, represents one of the most distinguished constituencies possible. Longfellow’s audience at the end of his life is coded in the Frank Leslie’s notice, mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, as very elite. Of the “nearly three hundred” members, the American newspaper lists almost a page and a half of names drawn from the top of their fields or “departments of intellectual activity,” including the church, both houses of Parliament, universities, and various royal societies.72 The article seems particularly impressed by the stature of Longfellow’s “distinguished” admirers, taking care to list many of the names of committee members with their proper titles, and coding this group as prominent, intellectual, and extensive.

If read as evidence of Longfellow’s reading audience, this exclusive group misrepresents it completely. However, it is clear that the meeting held greater political and symbolic significance for the process of re-nationalization:

It would have surprised most Americans at the height of Longfellow’s fame in the 1860s, when relations between upper-class Britain and pro-Unionist Americans had turned sour. But by the 1880s, Longfellow’s substantial reputation among the British reading public and a desire—not unrelated to the racial politics of the Empire—to seek ways of affirming the transatlantic tie had persuaded the British establishment to honor him by so grand a gesture [as putting his bust in Poets’ Corner]. (Calhoun 250)

The following description of the meeting, from the London desk of the *New York Times*, depicts a gathering of elite men representing a variety of powerful institutions who, nonetheless, sought a way to literally enshrine the British public’s love for Longfellow in an act of international diplomacy:

London, Nov. 1—A meeting of the Longfellow Memorial Committee was held to-day. There was a good attendance, among those present being the Rev. Herman Adler, Moncure D. Conway, and several artists and literary men. Lord Derby sent a letter regretting his inability to be present. Lord Braye presided. Canon Roswell, as a member of the Chapter of Westminster Abbey, said a memorial of Longfellow would serve to cement the good feeling between England and the United States. […] Lord Granville said he had observed a growing feeling of cordiality between all classes of the two countries. He believed that Longfellow’s death was as great a loss to England as it was to America. The Executive Committee includes the Archbishops of York and Dublin, Lord Granville, the Right Hon. William E. Forster, Max Muller, George Augustus Sala, Lord Derby, the Earl of Shaftesbury, James Caird, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, Thomas Hughes, Alfred Tennyson, Edmund Yates, and Mr. Bartlett-Coutts. It was unanimously resolved that a bust of Longfellow be placed in the poets’ corner of Westminster Abbey and that another meeting be held at the Lyceum Theatre as soon as possible. (1)

Here Longfellow’s recognition functions as a diplomatic tool, deployed to cement the international goodwill not just within the halls of power, but “between all classes.”

A study of the audience patterns for the nineteenth-century’s two most popular poets demonstrates the extent to which the lack of international copyright and the circumstances of the publishing industry functioned to shape literary reputations and condition nationalized readings of texts. An author’s status in relationship to copyright
law directly conditions the ways in which his or her texts are circulated and read. The inverted patterns that developed for Tennyson and Longfellow demonstrate that, despite local differences in the publishing climate of Britain and America, the international market for bestsellers in the nineteenth century was highly reciprocal. The fact that British audiences had wide access to reprints of new American texts long before new British texts emerged from small-circulation, high-priced editions has the potential to significantly revise our concepts of literary chronology and periodization as well as generating new transatlantic “conversations.” Within the reader-centered literary economy, which this dissertation examines, national identifications are slippery and often elide attempts to attach them to particular texts or authors. The readers of Longfellow and Tennyson at different times envisioned themselves as an immense transatlantic group, and at others, as devoted readers who had the power and insight to see texts in a way that re-nationalized them, rendering Longfellow “an English poet” and Tennyson a highly democratic voice of the people.
Chapter 3: Transatlantic Bigamy: American Reprinters and Readers of

*East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret*

In his hagiographic biography of his mother, *Memorials of Mrs. Henry Wood* (1894), Charles William Wood describes Ellen Price Wood’s interactions with her publisher Richard Bentley in the months leading up to the 1861 release of her novel *East Lynne*. Because the family had been traveling in Europe, the timing of Bentley’s request for a “motto” for the novel forced her to confine her selection to personal favorites. Her son recalls, “Much of Shakespeare Mrs. Wood knew by heart; but she was also fond of Longfellow, who in his peculiar way is very human, and adapts himself readily to quotation. Mrs. Wood was in sympathy with his earnest and reverent tone, and taking up the volume, from *The Courtship of Miles Standish* soon found what she wanted” (207). Her chosen epigraph comes from the monologue in which John Alden reluctantly resolves to propose to Priscilla on behalf of Miles Standish:

> ‘Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of corruption
> Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion:
> Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.
> …
> This is the cross that I must bear; the sin and the swift retribution.’
> -Longfellow

Charles Wood continues, “The text was so applicable to the story that Longfellow might have written it for that purpose. They are also some of his best and truest lines. ‘I am
delighted with it,’ wrote Mr. Bentley when acknowledging its receipt, ‘and shall advertise it with the book’” (207). Longfellow’s portability, quotability, and popularity literally embed him into the text of a novel that would also go on to become hugely popular on both sides of the Atlantic. *East Lynne* echoes and multiplies the love triangle of *Miles Standish*, while linking Longfellow’s sentiment with what would come to be known as Wood’s uniquely moralizing brand of sensationalism. This intertextual transatlantic connection with Longfellow would span Ellen Wood’s prolific career, as her son notes: “After that nearly all Mrs. Wood’s mottoes were taken from Longfellow; every motto wonderfully fitting to its story, almost telling the burden of the book; and much must be said for the poet who can furnish thoughts at once so sweet and simple, so true and earnest” (207-208).

Critics of sensationalism are only recently beginning to explore the transnational networks of discourse, publishing, and reading within which the genre emerged and thrived. Long studied separately, British and American sensational and gothic fiction intersect through shared plot formations, discursive patterns, and distribution networks. The recent collection *Transatlantic Sensations* (2012) embodies the emerging interest in transatlantic discussions of the genre. In their introduction, editors Jennifer Phegley and John Cyril Barton argue that the genre “cross-pollinated over the long nineteenth century

through transatlantic exchanges that gave rise to a new kind of writing including the century’s best-selling novels that found large readerships in Britain, Europe, and the Americas” (13). The introduction and the essays in the collection itself demarcate a wide field for new scholarship, while echoing by necessity the sweeping generalizations and geographically vague identifications of readers often used to discuss bestsellers.

Tracing the American reception of British sensation fiction, this chapter focuses on two novels that would become transatlantic bestsellers, inciting a range of responses from their American audiences. While contentious and often anxious critical debates in the mid nineteenth century tied the emerging sensation genre to nationalized readerships, Jeanne Fahnestock notes the bigamy novel as a clear subset of the so-called “sensation” novels of the early 1860s (48). Together, *East Lynne* (1861) and *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862), by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, mark the beginning of a focused period less than a decade long that saw both the zenith of the production of bigamy novels in Britain and a wide-ranging American reception.74 The numerous cheap reprints, periodical responses, and theatrical adaptations spanned not only the cultural centers of the Northeast, but also the Confederacy and the American West.75

In this chapter, I investigate how, for the numerous American readers of these two novels, bigamy becomes simultaneously a narrative and a contractual problem requiring resolution. In tracing the readerships of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret*, I link the proliferation of cheap American reprints to copyright law, publishing practices, and a

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74 With Wilkie Collins’s *Woman in White* (1860), they are widely cited as the three best-selling novels not just of the decade, but of the this century.

75 Fahnestock traces the bigamy theme in British novels and notes its height between 1861 and 1865 (55).
national war which bifurcated laws, publishing, and readers alike. The investigation in this chapter forms a mirror to Chapter 1, as the inverted audience for Susan Warner’s novels in Britain parallels the reading formation for these two British novels in America. While British publishers courted Warner using language of friendship, kinship, and shared religious purpose, that discourse of sentiment takes on a sensational tone as American publishers discuss the novels of Wood and Braddon in terms of love affairs, loyalties, and implied rivalries. Publishers and readers come together to shape the novels’ production and reception, and in the pages of American periodicals I uncover a complex discourse that includes competing narratives of the novels’ national, cultural, and literary origins. The transatlantic audiences for the emerging genre of sensation fiction imagined their own roles in terms strongly influenced by the books’ preoccupation with problematized marriage relationships. Simultaneously, *East Lynne*’s ubiquity on the American popular stage, preceding and dwarfing its British theatrical history, demonstrates the deep connections between American actresses and audiences over shared experiences of bigamy, adultery, and national identities. It is this coming together of the books’ content with their material histories that is part of the ultimate payoff of this chapter. By focusing on readers, particularly the wide and enthusiastic American audience who encountered the text in often complicated ways, this study suggests new ways to talk about these novels within a transnational reading formation that links content of the books with the print culture that produced them.
From Sensation to Bigamy: Contemporary Critics and Transatlantic Blame

The bigamy plot tells stories of origins, traces overlapping and previous claims, and weighs competing narratives about how and when relationships began. For nineteenth-century readers and critics of the “sensation” genre, origin stories became similarly important. Corresponding to its wide popularity, sensationalism sparked a vigorous and at times emotionally fraught critical debate on both sides of the Atlantic in the early 1860s, as English and American critics tried to shift the original blame for the genre across the ocean. This debate provides an important context for American readers’ encounters with *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* by not only placing the focus of the genre itself squarely on its effect on readers, but also by emphasizing the transnational conversation within which individual novels were embedded.

As a genre, sensationalism was widely defined by the number and demographic characteristics of its readers, as well as its purported effects on them. Patrick Brantlinger’s *The Reading Lesson* traces the tendency of nineteenth-century critics to link mass readerships with contagion and “diffuse moral panic” (142). While some early reviewers defended their favorite novels (a few reviews of *East Lynne* were favorable, noting its frequent moves to caution young women against temptation), most early assessments of sensationalism as a whole ranged from ambivalence to hostility. It was widely denounced, in periodicals and even from the pulpit. Henry Mansel, Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral, famously penned a long review of 24 sensation novels for *The Quarterly Review* in 1863, including *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* as well as six others with bigamy plots, calling the novels “indications of a wide-spread corruption, of
which they are in part both the effect and the cause; called into existence to supply the cravings of a diseased appetite, and contributing themselves to foster the disease, and to stimulate the want which they supply” (482). In this imagined vicious cycle in which texts both created an appetite and fed it, the genre’s popularity itself became fodder for its critics, who professed simultaneous concern for and judgment of mass readers, particularly women.76

While the critical condemnation of sensation novels and their widespread popularity included voices from both sides of the Atlantic, national fault lines emerged over the reasons for the criticism. As sensationalism developed over the long nineteenth century, Barton and Phegley suggest, English denigrations of the “scandalous genre” were based on fears of class leveling, while, “Americans, by comparison more accepting of the intermingling of the classes, were instead deeply disturbed by the sinful nature of sensational subjects” (9). For both, though, popularity was a mark of censure. The British line of argument is exemplified by Margaret Oliphant’s “The Byways for Literature: Reading for the Million” (1858), which argues that sensationalism emerged because the masses like “amusement better than instruction” (qtd. in Phegley and Barton 7). In 1862, Oliphant specifically targeted *East Lynne* on this basis, censuring the “inscrutable breath of popular liking” that led to the novel’s “momentary celebrity” (“Sensation Novels” 20).

Meanwhile, in America, “a Chicago physician” blamed the genre for spreading “licentiousness,” and argued that “the enormous circulation of over 2,500,000 volumes,

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76 See Kate Flint’s *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* and Jennifer Phegley’s *Educating the Proper Woman Reader* for more thorough explorations of contemporary attempts to shape or police women’s reading.
exerting their deleterious influence, and diffusing their pernicious principles throughout society.” The popularity of these books was creating an “ocean of immorality… [and] public poison” (Confessions and Experiences of a Novel Reader 10). Harriet Beecher Stowe’s two-part series “Literary Epidemics” criticizes English and American sensation alike as a “foul and muddy current” (qtd. Phegley xv). The lines between nationalist trends in the conversation are hardly impermeable, however, with critics on both sides of the Atlantic sharing concerns about class and moral failure. Another 1863 commentary, reprinted in Littell’s Living Age from the Examiner, entitled “Mrs Wood and Miss Braddon,” censures the novels for appealing “to the cooks and nursemaids whose taste is now leading a fashion in the world of fiction” (103). Echoing Mansel’s point about causality, the reviewer seems to blame popular audiences themselves for the genre: “the crude, coarse, and prosaic tails [sic] of bigamy and murder” represent, “a popularity discreditable to the public taste…artificial, largely made up of the applause of those who would be influenced in their judgments by announcements of tremendous success in an advertisement or street placard” (97). While the review focuses on two authors, the publishing industry itself becomes implicated in the problem, as advertisements and notices of furious sales appear to draw in ever-wider circles of readers who, unlike the critics, find popularity attractive.

77 In 1865 in a discussion of “Miss Braddon,” Henry James asks what would become an increasing common question: “These works are censured and ridiculed, but they are extensively read. The author has a hold upon the public. It is, assuredly, worth our while to enquire more particularly how she has obtained it” (594). His own explanation for Braddon’s popularity is simply that her books are good enough and that her heroines are modern women, but for many critics, the answer to James’s question would take on a nationalist tone.
Along with using different terms to critique the genre, English and American critics constructed opposing nationalist accounts of its transatlantic origins, travel, and popularity. American reviewers and critics claimed the novels to be morally suspect because of their English origin, nationalizing fears of moral contagion as well as of class leveling. An American reviewer commented in 1863,

It is a noticeable fact that these are all English books. In America this style of literature has been confined to yellow-covered “Bandit’s Brides,” “Pirates of the Gulf,” and their kin, books whose mere aspect has been enough to warn a reader of taste and cultivation from their contents. With one or two notable exceptions there has been, here, a great gulf fixed between the higher walks of literature and these low and coarse appeals to the grosser appetites and passions of man. It has been reserved for the present generation of English novelists to bring to the same service genius, taste, and art that we can only feel sorry to see dedicated as they are. (“New Publications” 2)

Braddon and Wood had the distinction of taking the excesses of “low and coarse” reading material into the American drawing room. George Lippard, producer of his own sensational novels, argued that “English Novels… do more to corrupt the minds of American children than any sort of bad literature that ever cursed the world. They are filled with attacks upon American freedom…Published by greedy pirates in New York, who will not pay a decent price for a book even from the pen of a Cooper or an Irving, these books are scattered broadcast over the land” (“English Novels” 253). Lippard identifies England as the original source of the pollution, but he blames American reprinters for the novels’ availability and wide dissemination. Expressing concern for young, vulnerable American readers, Lippard draws a link between the novels’ content and the transatlantic print culture that produced them. This dual bias against sensational

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78 Lippard has been examined in a transnational context by David S. Reynolds and Shelley Streeby (American Sensations).
texts and the system of pirate publishing by which they so widely circulated would go on to shape the American reception of Wood and Braddon in particular, as I will discuss later in the chapter.

While American critics linked the books’ contagion to their British origins, British reviewers found a more roundabout way to point the finger of blame back across the Atlantic. America of the early 1860s was cast by British critics as a land of sensation. Charles Dickens’s May 1861 editorial in *All the Year Round* cites his observations of everything from American political rhetoric to newspaper journalism to popular theater, maintaining that in the United States, “… sensations are epidemic; they run through the whole community, from abolitionist to slave-dealer…We at home have our insanities, but I think the Americans run madder, and suffer oftener” (11). Likewise, *Chamber’s*, on December 5, 1863, claims, “America, to a greater extent than any other, is a country of sensations. An excitement has wider range and involves a larger proportion of the entire population. The reason of this may be found in the general equality, and the universal diffusion of intelligence. There are fewer persons raised above the influence of popular excitement, and there are also fewer who are sunk below it” (“American Sensations” 353). Not only were dramatic and exciting events taking place in America, but they reflected the sensational character of the populace, democratically leveled to the extent that all are susceptible to this “excitement.”

By identifying America as a place of sensational realities, English critics point the finger of blame for the genre and construct a transnational travel narrative for the books that begins across the Atlantic. Modern critics including Thomas Boyle, Richard Altick,
and Patrick Brantlinger have discussed these novels in relation to widely-read newspaper reports of British crimes and sensational events. Seventy-ninth-century British critics, however, suggest that it was actually the newspaper reports of American events that stoked the demand for literary “sensation.” At the same time as the early 1860s release of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret*, Margaret Oliphant looks to America as an explanation for the books’ British popularity, arguing that recent dramatic historical events create in readers a thirst for “excitement” and that news reports of American current events conditioned audiences for the novels. In a more recent study, Susan Ballee echoes this argument, linking American news (Merrimac, Civil War, and so on) with British sensation fiction. Both involve death, drama, and elements foreign from everyday life. Both are encountered first on the printed page, not experienced directly. Ballee contends that interest in and excitement about American current events drove these books’ popularity in Britain: “The American Civil War, which dramatized the tragedy of class differences in black and white and blood, clearly had an influence on the English sensation novel, which appeared serially juxtaposed with tidings of the war. The English novels were as sensational as the American war they complemented—in black and white typeface, red-handed deeds” (131). Her argument wisely looks to the periodical context to bring together historical events and fiction, but her account of the relationship between particular readers and these novels is both vague and intriguing. In attempting to explain sensation fiction’s rise in the 1860s, she does not distinguish between the factors that may

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79 Richard Altick discusses intersections between fiction and newspaper reading, noting the Richard Hare subplot in East Lynne as a version of a contemporary murder. Jeanne Fahnestock explores the connections between the bigamy trope and the Yelverton scandal of 1861.
have driven the books to be penned or published and those that contributed to their popularity. More importantly, the map she draws focuses exclusively on British readers, leaving unexplored the possibility that American audiences’ engagement with sensation fiction could be even more complex and direct.

The bigamy novels which emerged in the early 1860s and gained wide and complex popularity in America, then, appeared within an already transatlantic conversation about the excesses and origins of sensational literature as a genre. While a common strategy for defining “sensation” fiction continues to be listing common narrative elements (crime, murder, bigamy, insanity, and so forth), in the early 1860s, the bigamy plot in sensation novels became so prevalent that it drew frequent sarcastic comments on both sides of the Atlantic. Noting Wood’s and Braddon’s constant use of the device, a reviewer joked, in 1863, “It is more than time that we had three husbands to embarrass any really interesting heroine,” going on to suggest that the accumulation of husbands is endless: “Medea Blenkinsop, or the Octogamist, or Pails of Blood—what a tale might be made of it!...how delicious would be the exercise of ingenuity in threading the maze among three dozen or more husbands of three fair polygamist heroines” (“Mrs Wood and Miss Braddon”100). In a “Literary Notices” column in Godey’s Lady’s Book (1863), the editor comments, “[Braddon] has, in truth, but one plot, which is repeated…with some alterations. The framework of each of these stories is based upon the circumstance of an individual marrying who has already been previously married, and whose first husband or wife is sure to turn up either in person or by representative, giving a great deal of trouble, the whole resulting in crime. This may be a very clever plot, once
used; but when the changes are rung upon it three separate times, it becomes rather tedious” (399).

As with sensationalism as a whole, in accounting for the origins of the bigamy novel, critics have long looked to its cultural context. Noting the above-mentioned close link between British readerships and sensational newspaper reporting of current events, Jeanne Fahnestock locates the specific origin of the bigamy trope in 1861, when the first bigamy novels appeared and when the Yelverton scandal highlighted the “disgraceful accumulation of laws governing marriage in England, Ireland, and Scotland…[which] made bigamy legally possible. … Though the intricacies of these laws remained an unintelligible tangle to most people…the outrageous fact that a man could simultaneously have legal wives in England, Scotland, and Ireland was notorious” (58, 60). Surveying British legal precedent and case law, she argues that the seeming impenetrability of the laws surrounding marriage heightened interest in the novels by rendering bigamy an actual, imaginative, and narrative possibility. Bigamy in Britain represented more of a moral panic than an actual problem, remaining confined primarily to the pages of novels and periodicals and the minds of their readers.

A shift in focus from the novels’ production to their reception, though, widens the scope of this cultural and legal survey to a transatlantic context in which bigamy is more directly embedded in local events and laws. In America, the passage of the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act on July 8, 1862 specifically criminalized bigamy. This piece of legislation, however, was intended less as a clarification of existing marriage practices than as a political counter to the growing power of the Church of Latter Day Saints in Utah,
illustrated by the fact that Lincoln permitted Mormons to ignore the act in exchange for neutrality in the Civil War. Mormons, long the “demonized Other” in American literature, according to Terryl Givens, are perceptible in the background of the novels’ American reception, as when in 1867 an American reviewer jokingly noted Braddon’s bigamy novels’ “Salt Lake principles” (“Lady Caroline Lascelles & Co” 126). *East Lynne* itself compares its own version of accidental bigamy (or sanitized adultery) favorably with Mormon polygamy: “No one would defend that. We have not yet turned Mormons, and the world does not walk upon its head” (656). However, in 1860s America, bigamy was perceived as a problem that could spread outside Utah.

Despite the seeming clarity of federal legislation, American marriage, divorce, and bigamy law and practices in the 1860s were impenetrable and decentralized. In *Man and Wife in America*, Henrick Hartog discusses the ease of spousal abandonment in nineteenth-century America (20-23), explaining that, “bigamy, or, rather, serial monogamy (without divorce or death) was a common experience” (87). On the legal front, the clarity of federal legislation was countered by the decentralization of state laws and courts. Noting the variety of “legal peculiarities” related to separation, divorce, desertion, or marital property, Hartog explains, “to know the law of marriage relevant to their marriage, spouses had to know the law of marriage in the state in which they lived” (12). Sara Zeigler explains that in nineteenth-century America marriage was part of common law, administered by states in accordance with their own statutes and provisions

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80 Terryl Givens traces “the anti-Mormon crusade in popular fiction” through the captivity narrative, the gothic novel, and the sensation novel (116), and notes scenes of female bondage, plural marriage, and even female insanity and confinement in anti-Mormon novels that shape portrayals of Mormons. See Chapter 6 of his *The Viper on the Hearth* for a survey of newspaper publishing and mass readerships and Chapter 7 for his survey of anti-Mormon tropes in American literature.
as well as by, “courts that were not bound by any national rules or standards governing marital relations” (65). As I mention in the previous chapter, the American proliferation and diversity of “Enoch Arden Laws” in the late 1860s, designed to protect abandoned spouses who went on to remarry, reflected the very real fear that spouses thought dead could resurrect and return years later. Tying this possibility to American geography, Hartog continues, “Marital mobility marked American legal and constitutional life…The boundary between the legally constituted and the non- or illegally constituted was porous and fuzzy. Who was legally married, who was not, was often uncertain, particularly across the vast reaches of an American continent” (19, 23).

Even as bigamy was officially banned in 1862, a national war was separating spouses for years and generating additional distinct possibilities for accidental bigamy. A recent study of Southern marriage during and after the Civil War notes, “The shortage of suitable men after the war gave those remaining many choices of women to marry, allowing widowers to remarry and others to try to escape their former obligations…[and attempt] to remarry without divorce” (Hacker, et. al 47). In America, then, though federal law technically forbade polygamy, state laws and courts and the contemporary wartime context made both actual and accidental bigamy a real de facto possibility.

In a transatlantic world where complex legal formations rendered bigamy possible, the novels themselves generate a complicated understanding of marriage that separates the legal contract from any moral or sentimental bonds. Specific novels imagine a wide range of versions of this narrative possibility. Surveying a cluster of

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81 For additional examples of nineteenth-century bigamy in America, see Hartog (87-92).

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dozens of novels that appeared in Britain between 1861 and 1865, Fahnestock notes, “…four basic permutations of the convention: real/accidental, real/intentional, apparent/accidental or apparent/intentional bigamy” (61). Two of the earliest and best-known bigamy novels, *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* establish the pattern which the burgeoning genre would imitate. In subsequent novels, Wood and Braddon would go on to become popular and well-known practitioners of the bigamy theme. Other bigamy novels from this period by Braddon include *Aurora Floyd* (London: Tinsley, 1863) and *John Marchmont’s Legacy* (1863), and by Wood: *Verner’s Pride* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1863) and *Elster’s Folly* (London: Tinsley, 1866). Braddon in a letter to Bulwer called *Lady Audley’s Secret* and *Aurora Floyd* “my pair of bigamy novels” (qtd. Wolff 108).

*East Lynne* offers multiple ways to define marriage that rely on the imagined possibility of bigamy as well as the narrative reality of adultery. The novel tells the melodramatic story of Lady Isabel, a young wife and mother who elopes overseas with her dastardly seducer, then penitently returns in disguise to the home of her husband and his new wife to act as her own children’s governess. While technically rescued from bigamy by a timely divorce, the novel nevertheless is structured as a bigamy plot, tracing the competing and evolving claims of two wives. Like the typical bigamy plot, the novel involves obsessively documenting which of the two spouses has the prior legal and moral claim. In her first scene, Barbara Hare is identified by her “true and deep love” for Archibald Carlyle and receives from him a gift of a locket, a mark of affection (63). Pages later, Carlyle meets Lady Isabel, wearing her own locket, and marries her. While
only one legal marriage is possible at any given moment, Carlyle exchanges gifts, trysts, and sentiments with both women throughout the novel. The novel remains focused on the possibility of bigamy when later Carlyle, though divorced, refuses to remarry until he receives word of his first wife’s death. When Isabel’s identity is revealed, he immediately imagines himself a bigamist: “His mind was in a whirl, his wits were scarcely away. The first clear thought that came thumping through his brain was, that he must be a man of two wives” (680). Lynn Pyckett suggests that “the bigamy convention” is “especially” (italics hers) clear in Wood’s text, allowing it to “dramatiz[e] a new moral experience created by the reformed divorce laws: a tension between marriage merely as a socio-legal arrangement on the one hand, and moral and religious conceptions of marriage on the other” (Sensation Novel 74). Marriage, in the world of the bigamy novel, is bifurcated into its legal and moral functions. Carlyle, though not actually a bigamist, feels morally bound to his first wife by her prior claim, and when the second wife Barbara, learns her predecessor was still living, she tearfully asks Carlyle, “Has this taken your love from me?” (690).

In East Lynne, accidental almost-bigamy covers and takes the place of the deeper transgression of both polygamy and adultery, using the language of sentiment to cover sensational events and formations. In addition to emphasizing that “we are not Mormons,” that the novel does not include foreign, religious polygamy, the narrator explains that its depiction of forbidden love is based on imagined monogamy, rather than intentional bigamy or adultery. When Lady Isabel returns to her old home, the narrator addresses the reader directly to clarify her mental state:
From the very night she had come back to East Lynne, her love for Mr. Carlyle had burst forth with an intensity never before felt. It had been smouldering almost ever since she left him. ‘Reprehensible!’ groans a moralist. Very…I shall be blamed for it, I fear, if I attempt to defend her. But it was not exactly the same thing as though she had suffered herself to fall in love with someone else’s husband…this was a peculiar case. She, poor thing, almost regarded Mr. Carlyle as her husband. (656)

In the novel’s final scenes, Isabel also speaks as if they are still married, referring to Carlyle as her husband and, on her deathbed, forcing him to acquiesce verbally to the illusion, “that I were here, as in the old days, in health and happiness, your ever-loving wife!” (682). Despite this sentimental illusion which actually serves to emphasize Carlyle’s sensational status “a man of two wives,” the interwoven claims of love, moral duty, and legal contract create a tangle that can only be textually resolved in this case by Isabel’s convenient death.

In bigamy novels, travel plays a key role in straining the legal and sentimental bonds of marriage and allowing for the formation of sensational adulterous and bigamous relationships. In Lady Audley’s Secret, the abandoned spouse is Helen Talboys, left by her husband in poverty with a young child before the novel begins. He leaves to seek his fortune in Australia, but returns to find that she has erased her past identity and made a wealthy marriage, committing “real/intentional” bigamy to become Lady Audley. As George Talboys returns to England on the Argus, the stories of George’s fellow travelers echo and reinforce the pattern that leaving one’s country endangers the relationships left behind. The governess, Miss Morley, returning to her fiancé in England after a fifteen-year absence (to George’s three), articulates the range of moral and sentimental shifts a long absence could bring to a relationship: “The person I go to meet may be changed in
his feelings towards me; or he may retain all the old feeling until the moment of seeing
me, and then lose it in a breath …or he may be so changed by the world as to have grown
selfish and mercenary and he may welcome me for the sake of my fifteen years’ savings.
Again, he may be dead….” (17). In this world, lovers or partners who are absent from
one another never receive any sort of confirmation of one another’s continued love,
constancy, or even existence. The range of possibilities Miss Morley imagines, though,
is linked here to her status as engaged, bound emotionally and morally but not yet legally.
In response to George’s fears for his marriage, she comments, “Your wife…that is
different...There is no reason that my terrors should terrify you” (18), a statement the
diligent reader already knows to be untrue. In the bigamy novel there is no added security
in being actually married, and “real/intentional” bigamy forms the powerfully silent final
possibility in Miss Morley’s list. After encountering his former wife in her new guise,
George Talboys disappears again and reenters the world of circulating spouses.82
Searching for George, his friend Robert Audley, “bought a copy of the Times and looked
instinctively at the second column, with a morbid interest in the advertisements of people
missing—sons, brothers, and husbands who had left their homes, never to return or to be
heard of more” (98). These untold stories cluster around the novel’s central plot,
reinforcing the pattern that in this world absent partners circulate the globe, mysterious,
unknowable, and potentially even unfaithful or remarried.

82 This time he has gone to America, a destination that, Janet Myers argues, “suggests the extent to which
his national identity is compromised by his initial displacement. In nineteenth-century emigration guides,
the United States is often represented as a problematic destination, insofar as this locale threatens the
British emigrant’s sense of national allegiance” (91).
Later in the chapter I will explore more fully the implications of the novels’ obsession with disguise and mirrored identities, but for now, I want to propose that these novels’ understanding of bigamy, or the accumulation of marriages of various degrees of legality and morality enabled by transnational travel and lengthy absences, as a metaphor for reading the books’ transatlantic publication histories. Considering the workings and the prevalence of the bigamy theme not only provides a way to make sense of this documentary evidence I put forward, but it also allows me to more fully explore the experiences and ideas of actual readers. Readers in this period were aware both of a book’s content and the transatlantic circuit by which it reached their hands. In examining the American reception of these two novels, we find repeated moments when their insides and outsides become embedded, when reviewers, publishers, and readers themselves bring together the language of bigamy and literary piracy. In the next two sections of this chapter, I will trace first the actual circulation of the two novels in America and their inverted audiences, and then I will explore the ways in which American critics, publishers, and readers sought to make meaning of those transatlantic encounters, often using the sentimental or sensational discourse of the novels themselves.

“The Public Taste of Today:” Bigamous Readerships and Inverted Audiences

The story of these novels’ entrance into the American reprint market and encounter with transatlantic readerships is already notably similar to a bigamy plot, with its proliferation of simultaneous and quasi-legal spouses who freely circulate the globe. Like the legitimate first marriage with its exclusive legal claim, the copyright-protected British editions of both novels were first serialized and then immediately released in
three-volumes. The readers of the serial and of the book editions are sometimes depicted separately, but the combination of formats led to wide sales and a devoted relationship between the authors and their English readerships.

_East Lynne_ became a surprise sensation in Britain. It appeared as a serial in Colburn’s _New Monthly Magazine_ between January of 1860 and September of 1861, but Wood offered it to two other publishers before Richard Bentley accepted it, releasing a heavily-advertised book edition on September 19, 1861. Wood was clearly interested in using the book editions to shape her relationship with her reading public. In a letter to Bentley on August 8, 1861, she seems anxious to ensure that the advertising campaign distinguish the book edition from the serial in order to gain a wider British audience, noting, “One of my sons tells me that he saw ‘East Lynne’ advertised today in the Times ‘by the author of Ashley’,” which is, she says, “a nom de plume for the New Monthly and that is all…the word ‘Ashley’ will not strike upon the ear or memory of the reading public…This would give an unfortunate impression of ‘East Lynne’” (_East Lynne_, Appendix A 693). Instead, she asks him to advertise the novel as, “By the author of ‘Danesbury House’,,” noting that _Danesbury House_ (1860), “is a class book, but has had an immense sale, and I believe is in most of the libraries” (694). While the serial of _East Lynne_ was for loyal readers of the _New Monthly_ who knew her short story work already, Wood saw the book edition as an opportunity to reach a much broader audience and to establish her reputation as a _novelist_, not a periodical hack. Periodical audiences,

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83 Charles William Wood narrates this submission process in detail in Chapter XVIII of his biography of his mother _Memorials of Mrs. Henry Wood_ (1894).
84 These letters appear as Appendix A to the 2000 Broadview edition of _East Lynne_, edited by Andrew Maunder.
85 Charles Wood notes its sales “in the hundreds of thousands” (_Memorials_ 242).
here and elsewhere, are constructed as ephemeral. If periodicals were like courtships, book purchases, on the other hand, were more binding and also more lucrative. Though she had received only 100 pounds in payment for *Danesbury House* from the Scottish Temperance League, Wood was confident that her new work would reach that same audience, on terms much more favorable to her. In the same letter, Wood reminds Bentley to “be particular that the Christian name (Henry) is inserted” in her by-line as well (694), a point about which she remained adamant throughout her career. Appearing as “Mrs. Henry” reminded readers of her status as a happily married woman, coding her book as respectable despite its plot which included murder, adultery, and implied bigamy.

Bentley and Wood were successful in pitching the book to reach this wide British audience. Even at a price of thirty-one shillings and sixpence, the Bentley copies sold well.\(^86\) 750 copies were printed of the first edition, which sold out; the novel was reprinted in November 1861, and again twice in February of 1862. Wood wrote to Bentley on 12 February 1862, “Since seeing you yesterday we have met an old friend, a gentleman very extensively connected with literature, and associating with men in the highest walks: What he has said about ‘East Lynne’ surprises me. He says scarcely anything has been talked of since the review in the ‘Times’” (695). This *London Times* review by Samuel Lucas (25 January 1862), which included a long excerpt, is often mentioned as a key moment precipitating the novel’s English sales, which ran to 110, 250 copies by 1881, and ultimately 400,000 by 1895 (Mott 143).\(^87\)

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\(^86\) Or $148 in 2013 American dollars. (Calculated according to the method offered by Eric W. Nye in “A Method for Determining Historical Monetary Values”).

\(^87\) Charles Wood, in *Memorials of Mrs Henry Wood*, states, “[I]ts effect was powerful and immediate. No sooner had it appeared than the libraries were besieged” (245).
The British copyright editions of Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* followed a similar trajectory, from periodical to book editions. When *Robin Goodfellow*, the two-penny weekly in which it began, folded in September of 1861 after running only three numbers of the novel, it was moved to the *Sixpenny Magazine*, where it ran in full between January and December of 1862. It was published in three volumes by the Tinsley Brothers in 1862, and “went through eight editions…in three months” (Carnell 147), a figure that particularly emphasizes the popularity of this text in circulating libraries. Wolff explains that Tinsley’s “huge profits on *Lady Audley’s Secret* and *Aurora Floyd* had flowed in large part from the orders placed by a new enterprise calling itself ‘the Library Company Limited.’ Founded as a rival to Mudie’s and other circulating libraries, the Library Company had bought many copies of [Mary Elizabeth Braddon]’s first two three-deckers. But it charged such low fees that thieves began to enter multiple subscriptions and steal the books they were ostensibly borrowing. So the Library Company failed…” (136).

Within just four years, *Lady Audley’s Secret* was said to have sold 132,000 copies (“Our Continental Correspondence”), a number cited frequently by modern critics to support claims of the novel’s global popularity, but which appears to include only its British sales. Jennifer Carnell records, “William Tinsley later wrote that Maxwell,88 perhaps perceiving the enormous potential of the novel, almost published *Lady Audley’s Secret* only as a cheap edition, probably in the Ward and Lock shilling library. Tinsley,  

88 John Maxwell, the enterprising publisher with whom Braddon began living in 1860. Their relationship and eventual marriage formed its own bigamy scandal, as his wife was still alive when Braddon began living with him, becoming stepmother to his five children, and giving birth to six more before his wife’s death in 1874 enabled them to marry. See Wolff’s *Sensational Victorian* and Carnell’s *The Literary Lives of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* for more extended accounts of their personal and business relationship.
however, urged his brother to go and buy the book from Maxwell” (146). Randolph Ivy traces the process by which Braddon’s authorized publishers gradually released the novel in cheaper formats. After releasing a six-shilling single volume advertised in May of 1863 as the ninth edition, in April of 1866, Tinsley contracted with Ward, Lock and Co. to offer a 2-shilling yellowback edition for the mass market, though no records exist of this edition’s sales.\(^89\) Just as Wood used *East Lynne* to publicize a chronology of her own work that emphasized her reputation as a “class” novelist, both of Braddon’s biographers read the publication and success of *Lady Audley’s Secret* as having created an opportunity for Braddon to begin to cultivate dual audiences simultaneously, to draw a distinction between her own penny dreadfuls and her three-deckers as well as to carve out a market niche for herself as a more serious middle-class novelist.\(^90\)

The immediate and remarkable success of both novels in their British copyright editions spread to communities of English readers in Europe and the colonies. As with most popular novels in English in this period, the firm of Tauchnitz (Liepzig) purchased the rights to European editions and published *East Lynne* in 1861 and *Lady Audley* in 1862. Both novels, anecdotally at least, seemed to circulate widely abroad. Adeline Sargent notes, “[t]he success of ‘East Lynne’ was one of the most remarkable literary incidents of the century… ‘East Lynne’ was received with general acclamation, and has

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\(^89\) Ivy gives specific bibliographic details for each of these editions in “M.E. Braddon in the 1860s: Clarifications and Corrections” supplement Wolff’s earlier bibliographic work.

\(^90\) Wolff traces Braddon’s foray into half-penny fiction and the complicated efforts by her publishers to keep these two literary identities separate (118-126). He notes *John Marchmont’s Legacy* as her first attempt “in her development as a genuine novelist” (159), suggesting that in each of her pairs of novels each year from 1863-5, one for the penny market and the other for a more literary audience.
been translated, it is said, into every known tongue, including Parsee and Hindustanee”

(184). Charles Wood’s biography further observes,

Indian readers will gather a large circle of Hindoos around them, and read the book to them in their own tongue; seated upon the ground, the listeners rock themselves to and fro and laugh and weep by turns. Some years ago one of the chief librarians in Madrid informed Mrs. Henry Wood that the most popular book on his shelves, original or translated, was ‘East Lynne.’ Not very long ago it was translated into Welsh and brought out in a Welsh newspaper…In the English Colonies the sale of the various works increased steadily year by year. (248-249)

Robert Lee Wolff’s biography records similar accolades that Braddon received for Lady Audley’s Secret, including letters from R.L. Stevenson, who described sailors rereading Braddon’s novels while waiting eagerly for packets to bring them new ones (“It is something to be out and away greater than Scott, Shakespeare, and Homer, in the South Seas, and to that you have attained”) and an Englishman who used Lady Audley’s Secret to teach his students at the University of Bologna (9-12). In America, however, the novels found a particularly wide and welcoming audience that would be inextricably tied to their universally acknowledged material status as unauthorized reprints.

Like the decentralized and loophole-ridden state of contemporary marriage laws, international copyright law in 1860s America corresponded with a matrix of publishing practices that allowed for a proliferation of editions, of varying legal and moral status. On one hand, the status of a British book in America was simple: it was not eligible for a legal copyright. On the other, a complicated system of trade courtesy and functional piracy brought the book to American audiences anyway. Meredith McGill notes that during this period in America, “‘Piracy’ and ‘legitimate publishing’ cannot simply be opposed to each other…[P]ublishers found ways of regulating markets outside the reach
of the copyright laws, through the courtesy of the trade and through elaborate
transatlantic arrangements that provided for de facto copyright protection in both England
and the United States…Yet for much of this period copyright laws were unenforced and
technically unenforceable; they played more of a shadow role than a central part in the
growth and regulation of the market for printed materials” (“Copyright” 159). By far the
largest publishers and systems for printing and circulating books were located in New
York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago, but the Civil War added an additional layer of
complication with the passage of international copyright protection in the Confederacy,
where “copyright” editions of both novels also appeared during the war. Within and to
some extent as a result of this system, copies of both East Lynne and Lady Audley’s
Secret multiplied across America, dramatically and widely outnumbering their British
counterparts and reinforcing the inverted audience pattern.91

A survey of the early editions of both novels illustrates their extensive circulation
across the United States. East Lynne would appear in over twenty different American
editions and represents a clear example of the inverted audience pattern. Frank Luther
Mott observes that the novel, “became a favorite with the publishers of cheap
editions…[and i]n 1887, the year of Mrs. Wood’s death, the New York Journalist
declared that ‘at least one million copies of East Lynne have been sold, in cheaper
editions, to American novel readers” (144). These included frequent well-advertised
printings by Dick & Fitzgerald of New York, who came out with the first of its editions

91 Neither Braddon nor Wood made any attempt to secure remuneration for the American editions of East
Lynne or Lady Audley’s Secret, though Braddon at least realized the extent of her losses on the American
market throughout the 1860s. Jennifer Phegley’s recent essay in the Transatlantic Sensations collection
argues that The Octoroon; or, The Lily of Louisiana (1861-2) represents Braddon’s early metaphorical
critique of the American reprint market, taking slavery as a metaphor for unauthorized reprinting.
in October 1861, priced at 50 cents. Publishers in multiple major cities jumped in to the *East Lynne* frenzy, including G. Munro (New York) who released at least 5 editions, Rand McNally & Co (Chicago and New York), W.B. Conkey (Chicago), and Peterson’s (Philadelphia), a firm whose relationship with Wood included previous and subsequent periodical publications which I will discuss more fully later in the chapter. In addition, “M.A. Donogue & Company, of Chicago, founded in the year *East Lynne* was first published, manufactured over 400,000 copies of it for various publishers [and] Street & Smith reached six figures with their ten-cent editions” (Mott 143). Donogue & Company alone, then, produced as many copies of the novel as existed in its British copyright editions. The novel’s presence on lists of various cheap series (priced as low as ten cents a volume) was ubiquitous over succeeding decades. In the case of *East Lynne*, these included Dick & Fitzgerald’s Series of Prize Novels, John Wanamaker’s Columbine Library, The Avon Series, the Magnolia Library (no. 37), Collins’s “New Standard Library” (3), the Ivy Series of Fiction (14), Good Value Books (39), the Astor Library of Prose, the Home Library (117), and many more.

Unlike *East Lynne*, which was put out by nearly every major American publisher known for cheap reprints, *Lady Audley’s Secret*’s transition into the North American market was tied to particular publishers, most prominently Frank Leslie (New York) and Dick & Fitzgerald (New York). Following its British book publication, the novel was

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92 John Tebbel notes that Peterson’s claimed (though not widely) to have secured advance sheets when publishing its cheap edition of *East Lynne* (13 March 1862) (247). I have not been able to locate any records suggesting that this was the case, and Tebbel acknowledges that the firm had become well known for its piracies: “Among the more literary authors whom Peterson pirated and published in cheap issues was, of course, Dickens, who appeared in twenty different editions, both in octavo and duodecimo…” (247).
immediately pirated in 1862 as a serial in Frank Leslie’s *New Family Magazine*, a women’s magazine where it ran alongside travel articles, lavish woodcuts, and an entire sixteen-page fashion supplement intended to appeal to female readers across the nation, part of Leslie’s aspiration to build a stable of periodicals that would capture every segment of the American market. In May 1861, Leslie bragged that this title was “the only magazine which goes into every part of the Union, north, south, east, and west,” though Mott notes that by October of that year the magazine was no longer attempting to hold its Southern circulation and “was calling the Confederates ‘rebels’ and regarding them as enemies” (Mott, *History of Magazines*, Vol. 2, 440). Frank Leslie later used the novel, along with two other Braddon titles, to launch the first of his many series of cheap fiction: Frank Leslie’s Series of New Novels (Sterne 183/ “The Business of American Magazines” 252). No record exists of any direct contract between Braddon and Frank Leslie, but he conspicuously used her work to create and extend his national brand.

Dick & Fitzgerald, of New York, specialized in reprints and widely advertised its edition of *Lady Audley’s Secret* as part of its brand of cheap novels. After announcing its intention to publish the title in the *American Publisher’s Circular and Literary Gazette* in June of 1862, the firm heralded the release of its new edition in the *New York Times* on January 27, 1863 with the notice, “The novel has caused an immense excitement in London, and will have an enormous sale here...” (“New Publications” 5). In February of 1863, the *American Publisher’s Circular* carried more following announcements of “New Publications”: “Dick & Fitzgerald send us Lady Audley’s Secret, by Miss M.E. Braddon, which was honored in London with eight editions in the course of six weeks.
The story will satisfy the public taste of today, which requires a deep plot and plenty of incident” (14). This quotation echoes the common trend among critics, pointed out by Phegley and Barton (6-7) of associating sensational literature with food, produced by recipe and dismissible as unhealthy or addictive, while also announcing the new edition by emphasizing its popularity. In addition to its 1863 edition in paper covers at fifty cents, Dick & Fitzgerald would simultaneously release the book in a three-volume edition as well as in pamphlet form (announced in The Albion on January 31, 1863, p. 67), covering the market at multiple levels, and sales estimates run well into the hundreds of thousands. The novel soon joined one of Dick and Fitzgerald’s most successful cheap series, the Series of Prize Novels, priced at twenty five cents (Dzwonkoski 120). This list also included a reprint of East Lynne.

Cheap reprints of sensation novels from New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia quickly found their way outside of North America as well, sometimes competing directly with British copyright versions. A healthy market in Canada for cheap American piracies prompted British copyright legislation that attempted to eliminate it throughout the 1860s (History of the Book in Canada notes the flood of American reprints), and as I will explore further in Chapter 4, the English colonies often ended up as a stage for direct competition among American and British reprints and copyrighted editions. There is evidence that American copies of books like East Lynne and Lady Audley’s Secret circulated to other British colonies, such as Australia and New Zealand.93 In addition to attracting considerable attention in Australian papers and running more serial novels than

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93 Toni Johnson-Woods has noted Braddon’s extraordinary popularity in Australia.
any other author, Braddon’s American reprints were known to be sold at local booksellers and, “Thirty-four [Braddon] titles headed the “Reading for Winter Evenings” series put out by local bookseller Walch, on whose shelves “her books must have occupied considerable …space” (Johnson-Woods 113). This popularity came not only from cheap reprints, however. George Robertson, a Melbourne publisher, in his memoir, recalls, “it having come to my knowledge that pirated editions of several valuable English Copyright Books were being sold in Christchurch, I went to the shop occupied by Shannon in Manchester Street, and asked for a copy of East Lynne…” (28), and he found an American edition selling for 1s 6d, while the price of the British import was 7s 6d. This corresponds with contemporary “expressions of concern about American pirate editions circulating in New Zealand” (Griffith 114). These copies, originating from the large publishing centers in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, directly competed with and undercut the legitimate British editions in British colonies.

While the Civil War clearly did not inhibit widespread reprinting of Wood and Braddon’s novels in the Northern centers of publishing, their novels followed a different legal and practical trajectory in the Confederacy. Michael Bernath notes that, in addition to “severing supply lines between northern publishers and southern readers,” the war corresponded to a rise in Southern literary nationalism and output (24). The South’s relatively small publishing industry was seen as key for breaking cultural dependence on Northern periodicals and educational texts. While Bernath’s list of titles, imprints, and editions published during the Confederacy shows an unsurprising focus on treatises, textbooks, and documents of direct national interest, as well as an absence of titles by
Northern authors, the list also includes several novels by British authors. The Confederate Congress gave priority to passing international copyright legislation, according to Melissa Homestead, “to spur the production of a new national literature reflecting Southern values, to represent the Confederacy to other nations, and to secure the financial interests of authors who were citizens of the Confederacy” (American Women Authors and Literary Property 201-2). However, the passage of international copyright legislation was a diplomatic move as well as a nationalist one. In a prominent token gesture, S.H. Goetzel, a publisher in Mobile, publicized in the Mobile Register in early 1863 a letter in which he declared his intention to offer a “free will international copyright” to Edward Bulwer-Lytton of 10 cents a copy for 10,000 of his novel A Strange Story. 94 While Homestead is interested in how Augusta Jane Evans, a Southern woman novelist, advocated for and used this legislation to shape her own literary property rights, the legal status of British literary property in the Confederacy was fundamentally reshaped as well. In contrast to the cheap Northern reprints, Southern editions of British titles were reframed as legal and legitimate.

While Southern intellectuals, authors, and publishers were attempting to break their intellectual dependence on the North, they continued to publish and read British sensation fiction widely. Of the titles published by Southern publishers during the war, Braddon is the most represented novelist by far, with five titles appearing during the war from a range of small Southern publishers: Aurora Floyd (Richmond: West & Johnson, 1863), John Marchmont’s Legacy (Richmond: West & Johnson, 1865), Darrell

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94 The letter was republished in London, though the American Publisher’s Circular subsequently reported Bulwer’s claim not to have received the royalty (conversation traced in Homestead 208-210).
Anecdotal evidence exists of even more editions that have not survived. In 1865, “The Woful [sic] Condition of the South” describes an encounter with a Captain Semmes of the Alabama, who lamented the result of the war for Southern gentleman and “carried a novel, printed in Richmond on very poor paper. Its title [was] ‘Lady Audley’s Secret’” (4). For most British authors, however, the actual effect of international copyright legislation in the South seems to have been mitigated by the small size of the industry itself and the economic pressures of the war. West & Johnson of Richmond published an edition of *East Lynne* in 1864 and one of *Mrs. Halliburton’s Troubles* in 1865. This is the same publisher, though, who in 1864 failed to pay Evans the full contracted amount for her novel *Macaria*, so the likelihood that they had forwarded any “free will” payment to Wood (in increasingly worthless Confederate dollars) around the same time is negligible.⁹⁶ Confederate reprints of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret*, then, were being circulated and read during the Civil War, though the bulk of the novels’ American readership remained focused in the Northern American cities with robust pre-war publishing industries.

As reprints of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* permeated the vast nationally-divided American market, they point both to the large American readership for these novels and to the complex legal and national status of the reprints themselves. The

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⁹⁵ By comparison, Bernath’s list and the Confederate Imprints Series include one novel each by Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Victor Hugo, and Augusta Jane Evans, and none by northern American novelists (Bernath 355-71).

⁹⁶ Homestead’s “The Publishing History of Augusta Jane Evans’s Confederate Novel *Macaria*: Unwriting Some Lost Cause Myths” includes Evans’s account of these transactions.
Albany Law Journal’s “Literary Notes” section, noting the “enormous circulation” of pirated American editions of East Lynne, states, “One of the trans-Atlantic buccaneers had the nerve to change the name of every place or person in the book, to give it an American flavor” (219). While this edition appears to be one of the many not to survive in modern libraries (or remains so successfully disguised that I have not been able to locate it), the anecdote itself shows the broader desire to re-situate British sensation bestsellers as American books even if that involved reshaping the books themselves, a reauthorization that could lend support to claims of connection between readers and books. This impulse, however, is simultaneously and disapprovingly coded as the work of an outlaw, a pirate. The vast networks of American publishers and readers remained constantly aware of the legal and moral status of their books and of the multiple readerships generated by the novels’ transnational circulation. Simultaneously a sentimental and a legal construct, the bigamy metaphor for transnational reprinting came to reflect not only how readers accessed, selected, and paid for their books, but how they felt about them as well.

Re-writing the Bigamy Narrative: American Publishers and Readers

In a reciprocal pattern of transatlantic blame, critics who defined sensationalism, and its subset of bigamy novels, as pernicious for readers constructed narratives that located its origins overseas. American publishers and readers, however, told a much more personal story about their encounters with individual novels and novelists themselves. Several oppositions emerge from the material histories of these two texts, between British and American, Northern and Southern, or copyright and pirate
readerships. These oppositions remain at the center of the conversations critics, publishers, and readers had about the genre, the novels, their authors, and the reprint market itself. Just as in the negative assessments, cited near the beginning of this chapter, the positive voices involve a constant awareness of nationality and the transatlantic context within which the novels were written, published, and circulated. In these reviews and discussions, American readers construct yet another origin story for the bigamy novel that begins in America but reads this trajectory not as a source of contagion but as a series of love affairs.

The key challenge American publishers and readers seemed to face was to figure out a way to talk about something they loved (Wood and Braddon’s novels) but encountered in a form that they denigrated (unauthorized copies associated with George Lippard’s above-mentioned “greedy pirates in New York”). To substantiate the connection between themselves and the novels as well as their female authors, the American publishers and the readers of bestselling bigamy novels turned back to a central metaphor that is in keeping with the nature and the interests of the books themselves: the simultaneously sentimental and contractual discourse of nineteenth-century marriage. In “Domestic Fiction and the Reprint Trade,” Eve Tavor Bennet, reading the work of Charles Brockden Brown, interprets “adulterous triangles” as textual moments “when a character’s choice between two men, two women, or a woman and a man also embodies a choice between America and another country” (197). I would argue that this metaphorical choice also reflects the imaginative configuration that surrounded the transatlantic publication of Wood and Braddon and shaped many subsequent discussions.
of their work. In this pattern, American readers, familiar simultaneously with the novels’ content and their publication history, wanted to imagine themselves as the ones being chosen. Like a doubled spouse in a bigamy plot, they acknowledged the bifurcation of the legal and sentimental marriage bonds and, if they couldn’t have a legal bond, wanted to claim their own connection as more sincere and long-lasting. American publishers and readers constructed narratives in which they became the first, the most virtuous, or the most loving partners for Wood and Braddon.

As outlined above, American readers were themselves not a single monolithic group, and so in their reception of these novels they generated multiple forms of this marital discourse. Confederate readers in this period spun a narrative that cast themselves as longtime virtuous readers of British books, contrasting their imagined relationship with England to that of Northern readers in a form of what Christopher Hanlon calls “Atlantic sectionalism.” One of the goals of Confederate copyright legislation, Homestead explains, was diplomatic: “By passing an international copyright law, the Confederacy announced to other nations (particularly Britain) that the Confederacy was an ethical nation that respected the property rights of foreign nationals and that deserved respect from other nations” (*American Women Authors and Literary Property* 196). In supporting copyright legislation, Southern publishers were not only able to establish direct connections with British authors, but they could take the moral high ground from their Northern counterparts. Homestead notes,

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97 Focusing on the antebellum period, Hanlon’s *America’s England* describes “the cultural work performed by northern and southern partisans whose appropriations of a conceptualized England tended to align themselves and their regional or political kindred with a kind of reconstituted mother country” (x).
Boasting of royalty payments made by West and Johnston to Southern authors as evidence of ‘the salutary result of our liberation from Yankee bondage,’ the editor of the Southern Literary Messenger, for instance, also praises the firm for having made arrangement with English firms ‘to remunerate English authors for their labours. Hitherto foreign writers have been robbed, by Yankee swindlers, of the fruits of their genius; so that the American book trade was regarded as a system of legalized piracy; but we are glad to learn that the disgraceful proceeding is no part of Southern practice or legislation. (qtd. in American Women Authors and Literary Property 205)

With this language, Southern publishers distance themselves from the dubious practices of “Yankee swindlers” and confer on their own editions a legitimacy missing from the cheap Northern reprints. They even attempted to rewrite the pre-history of reading in the South, before the passage of international copyright law. Homestead notes an article in the Confederate-financed London journal the Index in May 1862 that re-writes the history of nationalized reading in the South, claiming that even before the war: “the Southern gentleman prided himself upon paying five times the price for an English edition, than that same book would have cost in a ‘Yankee’ dress” (qtd. Homestead 206). This review erases any connection to cheap Northern reprints and casts Southern readers as longtime faithful, moral partners.

Titles by Wood and Braddon were published in the Confederacy alongside the urgent project of creating national texts, building a bridge between virtuous Confederate and British readers against their mutual enemy: Northern pirates. Thomas Nelson Page, in his survey of Confederate literary publications, explains that the first year of the war was devoted to producing texts of a national and martial nature, but that soon publishers turned to reading materials, putting out “reprints of several works, supposed to be sensational enough to suit even a soldier’s taste, such as ‘East Lynne,’ ‘Mrs.
Halliburton’s Troubles,’ ‘No Name,’ etc.” (740). The first two titles he mentions are by Wood and the last by Wilkie Collins. The Richmond Age’s review of new publications in April 1864 reflects this typical division in reading matter. Of the five new books, four are distinctly national in flavor: The Child’s First Book by Campbell and Dunn (“We are glad to see this book. We recognize in it the first fruits of a true Southern policy…equal to any Northern effort of the same kind”), West & Johnson’s Macaria; or the Altars of Sacrifice (“It is likely to prove the novel of the season, for it has direct bearing upon the times and cannot fail to interest every reader in the country”), The War and Its Heroes, and The Army Songster (“Literary Miscellanies” 318). The fifth is Braddon’s Eleanor’s Victory, and the reviewer emphasizes the connection between Southern and English culture illustrated by the novel’s publication: “These enterprising publishers have brought out, in book form, this interesting novel of the most charming of contemporary English novelists. That our readers will peruse every page of this novel, we have no doubt—even those who have followed it in its serial publications in the ‘Illustrated News.’ … It is a relief to take up such a book, where the delineator of every day life, interests us in the fortunes of a hero and heroine, without tragic horrors or startling crimes. As such will ‘Eleanor’s Victory’ prove particularly acceptable and interesting” (318). While the review does not overtly nationalize its discussion of Braddon’s novel, the novel offers readers an imaginative link with its English context. Southern readers, first acquainted with Braddon through English serials, now had the opportunity to encounter their “every day life” more directly. Sensation novels, in their Southern editions, acted as a transatlantic bridge for Confederate readers, who situated themselves nationally on a
level with English readers. Simultaneously, in their periodical and book editions, these novels seem to have offered readers a respite from the daily reports of the first war to play out in the pages of periodicals. In April of 1864, when this announcement appeared, good weather was bringing reports of action on all fronts. Richmond itself became a center as well, as Lee’s army checked Grant’s Overland Campaign in the vicinity. In promising its readers a “relief” and predicting that they would read every page of Braddon’s novel, the Richmond Age obliquely references the very different reading material (newspaper reports about the war) from which they required relief.

For the majority of American readers, who were spread across the North and West, encountering the books primarily in pirated forms generated a more complex reframing of their relationship to Wood and Braddon. Just as the bigamy plot splits marriage into its legal and the emotional components, publishers and readers who knew themselves to be reading books outside of a legal contract with their authors compensated by developing an illusion of faithfulness based on language of loyal devotion and prior attachment. Echoing the novels themselves, they cover over the sensational (piracy, theft) with language of sentiment. Lynn Pyckett’s description of the novels’ dual discourse provides a useful metaphor for understanding how Northern American audiences tried to imagine their relationships with these beloved British novelists: “Some sensation novelists developed what one might call spiritual or imagined bigamy or adultery plots, in which heroines who are legally married to one man feel themselves to be spiritually or emotionally married to another” (74). In the bigamy plot, this language of imagined marriage compensates for the absence of a legal bond, while allowing for the
imagination of a relationship that is even more authentic. A version of this transaction appears in *East Lynne*, as Lady Isabel jealously tells her husband not to marry Barbara (652), believes Carlyle had “deserted [her] for another” (358), then first literally dreams and then socially enacts a return to her previous state of matrimony, even after he has divorced her and remarried (352). As mentioned above, after Isabel returns in disguise to her former home, the narrator comments, “She, poor thing, almost regarded Mr Carlyle as *her* husband…” (656). She asks, on her deathbed, for her “husband,” and then expresses her earnest wish, “that I were here, as in the old days, in health and happiness, your ever-loving wife! Do you wish it?...,” forcing him to reply, “For your sake I wish it…” (682). Isabel, then, maintains that hers is the prior claim and the more authentic one, involving her former husband in a second, spiritualized exchange of vows. This imaginary bigamous almost-marriage rewrites the chronology of the novel, restoring the original or prior claim and temporarily writing out the extra spouse.

Similar discourse, laden with sentiment and a deep anxiety about being the first object of affection, is evident in language used by North American reprinters to describe the relationship between the novelists and their American audiences. Despite their willingness to print, circulate, and profit from unauthorized reprints of the novels, American publishers, editors, and even readers repeatedly sought to legitimize their claims to the works and evade the taint of piracy or bigamy. A desire to avoid being classed with the ‘pirates’ often seems to have led more reputable publishers to create, claim or at least imagine a kind of special relationship between themselves and “the author of Lady Audley’s Secret” or “the author of East Lynne” (as Braddon and Wood
were identified for the remainder of their careers). Just as proof of a prior attachment legitimizes a relationship that is in some way deniable or suspect, they created the idea that American readers were actually Wood’s and Braddon’s earliest fans, claiming an exclusive and legal attachment that actually preceded the more obvious relationship between each novelist and her British public. The mirroring that is deeply at the heart of the bigamy plot appears in the imagination of the “adulterous triangle” between a novel and its two readerships.

In the early 1860s, conversations in American periodicals about East Lynne’s publishing history depict an exclusive devotion between the author and her American readers that preceded all other attachments. In 1865, the American newspaper The Round Table included the following notice in its literary gossip section:

Years before Mrs. Henry Wood, the English novelist, author of “East Lynne,” became known to fame, … the Saturday Evening Post published her stories…The result was that when Mrs. Wood suddenly became famous, in consequence of a long laudatory review of “East Lynne” in the Times, she was well known and properly appreciated here, though English readers knew nothing of her and her writings. (R.S.M. 75)

In the American press, the Saturday Evening Post is identified as Wood’s earliest discoverer, her first suitor. Her appearance in the pages of the Post is evidence of a long and devoted courtship. By establishing the 1862 London Times review as the beginning point for Wood’s relationship with her British public, the Post’s American readers can be constructed as devoted fans that recognized her genius even before the fashion that began in London. The relationship between Wood and her American readers is identified as “proper,” based on long acquaintance and legitimate mutual contract. British readers, by
contrast, are relative strangers, interested only by the publicity created by the *Times* review.

Peterson & Brothers, a Philadelphia firm, carefully constructed and asserted a formal relationship with Wood and Braddon as a way to assert a moral, if not legal, claim to their work. Peterson’s reprint of *East Lynne* was one of the first to appear in America in 1861 and the firm was widely known for its reprints of British novelists. Peterson’s used the house-published *Saturday Evening Post* both to gain publicity for and to shape public views of its novels and reprints. In the early 1860s, the Philadelphia-based *Post* was circulating widely across the nation and Wood’s work became intertwined with the magazine’s history in this period. While magazine historians tend to pay particular interest to the periodical’s inception under Benjamin Franklin and its eventual reinvention under Cyrus H.K. Curtis, who bought the paper in 1897 for a thousand dollars with only a few hundred subscribers, the *Post* passed through several owners during the nineteenth century. Ashley Halsey notes, “While its format was still virtually that of a newspaper, it printed literature of a high order. The circulation mounted to 35,000 in 1839, and to 90,000 during the golden days before the Civil War…The publication maintained an undisputed hold upon the imaginations of the American reading public. Other *Saturday Evening Posts* sprang up in imitation” (11). A popular family newspaper with magazine-like content, the *Post* prided itself on its stable of

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98 Twentieth-century magazine historians have focused almost exclusively on the Curtis period, including Halsey’s *A Short History of the Saturday Evening Post* (1949), John Tebbel’s *George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post* (1949), Jan Cohn’s *Creating America: George Horace Lorimer and the Saturday Evening Post*, Helen Damon-Moore’s *Magazines for the Millions* (1994), and *Native Americans in the Saturday Evening Post* (Peter Beidler and Marion Egge, 2000).
popular authors. In 1871, on the 50th anniversary of the adoption of its famous name, Eugene H Munday cites the fact that American audiences had encountered Wood’s works there earlier as proof of the paper’s importance. Munday traces a map of literary circulation in which Wood’s novels begin in America, travel to England and return once more: “it afforded some amusement in the office of the Post, to see the very novels which had been published in its columns, without attracting much attention, brought out afterwards with a great flourish of trumpets in England, and extolled in very high terms, when reprinted in this country, by critics of the American Press” (qtd. Halsey 14).

Wood’s works remained a mark of distinction for the magazine.  

*The Saturday Evening Post* itself carefully fostered this narrative of its connection with one of its most popular authors. Its relationship with Wood (and, by extension, the relationship between Wood and Peterson’s copies of her books) preceded her immense celebrity, the *Post* claimed, and therefore was both devoted and legitimate. In an item entitled “Mrs. Wood” on January 24, 1863, the editors include quotations from various newspapers expressing enthusiasm about *East Lynne*. They then state, “very amusing has it been to *The Post* to see its contemporaries… heralding Mrs. Wood as a ‘new star,’ and speaking of her ‘sudden splendour,’ when she has been a regular contributor to *The Post* for years before [*East Lynne*] the story which made Mrs. Wood’s reputation” (2).

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99 Though it enjoyed wide circulation in the 1850s and peaked as Wood’s early work was being printed, beginning with the Civil War, the *Saturday Evening Post* is generally seen as entering a period of decline: “The publication passed through eight ownerships between 1800 and the Civil War Period…by the 1860s, circulation dwindled to a few hundred subscribers and the physical properties to a handful of type” (Halsey 13). The *Saturday Evening Post* was edited and co-owned by Mrs. Bella Z. Spencer in 1865-66. (Halsey notes, “Journalistic history is sadly silent on the details of Mrs. Spencer’s editorship,” 13). I mention her here because she appears to have been somewhat of a sensation novelist and playwright herself, intriguingly authoring, in 1866, the play “The Two Wives of Lynn: A Play in Five Acts” that takes *East Lynne* as a model (San Francisco: Alta California Publishing House).
Constructing separate chronologies for the relationships between Wood and her two national readerships, the *Post* locates the beginning of Wood’s relationship with her American readers a full two years before she became known to the British public. They continue, “[L]iterary people, like all other people, manifest a good deal of the sheep nature. They go in flocks. In England, the old ram is the *London Times*; the *Times* led off in an article upon Mrs. Wood’s ‘East Lynne,’ and then all the other sheep, big and little, on both sides of the ocean, followed its lead” (2). British readers are characterized as imperceptive and ignorant of the true value of Wood’s work, following one another in unthinking flocks. Theirs is not a relationship of longstanding affection or deep understanding. The article concludes, condescendingly, “By the way, for the edification of our contemporaries, we may inform them that decidedly the best things that Mrs. Wood has written are her shorter stories—especially ‘The Red-Court Farm,’ ‘The Rock,’ and ‘Clara Lake’s Dream.’ The last especially is one of the finest stories we ever read—and yet it was published years ago in *The Post*…” (2). By acting as a critic and suggesting that Wood’s earlier work was superior, the *Post* advances its own readers as having a special perspective insight into her work, even *East Lynne* itself, that her British readers lacked. In the image of a devoted first marriage, Americans had loved, appreciated, and understood the value of Wood’s work before she was well known. They become her earliest and best readers, unswayed by the sudden fashion that brought British multitudes to her door. While British readers may read copyright editions, Americans are imagined as the better readers. Dick & Fitzgerald’s 1861 edition of *East Lynne* reinforces this alternate chronology of Wood’s previous work through its byline.
Instead of using the byline Wood selected for her Bentley editions, they publish theirs as, “By the author of ‘The Heirs of Ashley,’ ‘The Earl’s Secret,’ ‘Red Court Farm,’ etc.”

Just as Lady Isabel engages her former husband Mr. Carlyle in an exchange of affection to reify her shadow marriage, the Post goes on to claim not only that its readers had loved Ellen Wood soonest, but to imply that her continuing decision to serialize her work there showed her own return of their devotion. On July 28, 1862, the periodical announces that it will begin to run a new novel by Wood: “It will be printed from the advance sheets purchased by us at a high price from the distinguished author. Our readers may anticipate a great treat in this new story, as we have reason to believe that it will be one of absorbing interest. …The readers of the Post owe a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Wood for giving them the preference over [many] influential competitors” (2). By continuing to serialize Wood’s novels, the Post boasted that that relationship between its readers and their beloved author was ongoing, despite her simultaneous copyright relationship with her British public and the presence of many rivals for her work. The continuing appearance of her works in the Post’s pages is represented as a mark of her favor, a continued courtship. Each new piece by Wood perpetuates the illusion that the imagined special bond between Wood and her American readers was mutual, ongoing, and requited.

Though the above language may have fabricated the affection and feeling that surrounded the Post and Peterson’s business dealings with their popular female authors, the editor is not wrong in pointing to a shift in the nature of the transactions themselves. Having established the value of a new title by Wood or Braddon with their early hits,
onetime pirate publishers proved quick to take the opportunity to regularize their literary relationships with their most popular authors. Both authors’ titles from 1863 onward were widely and sometimes misleadingly advertised as ‘copyright editions’ in America. In particular, both Peterson’s and Dick and Fitzgerald would go on to publish several of the similarly-prolific authors’ subsequent novels in the 1860s and 70s.

Following the initial publication of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret*, Peterson’s conspicuously brought Wood and Braddon together to create a particular brand of its own, alongside American sensation novelist Emma (E.D.E.N.) Southworth, another Peterson house author with whom both were frequently compared by American critics. The same article of the *American Publisher’s Circular* that carried the second notice of Dick and Fitzgerald’s edition of *Lady Audley’s Secret* brings together the two novelists:

T.B. Peterson & Brothers print from advanced sheets, Aurora Floyd, by Miss M.E. Braddon, a lady who is rapidly assuming a place among popular novelists, not lower than that held by Mrs. Henry Wood. They also send us a new novel by the latter lady, entitled Verner’s Pride, a Tale of Domestic Life. It is the longest of her works, and in England, where it originally appeared in the pages of ‘Once a Week,’ has met with great favor. We bespeak for it an equally hearty reception in the American reprint. (“New Publications” 14)

In their advertisements, the publishers make clear that their texts are the result of a special arrangement with the authors. In May 1862 the Petertons boast of a new novel by Wood, *Verner’s Pride*, another bigamy text: “The author of this novel is an Englishwoman, who has made ‘the hit of the season,’ in London, by the publication of ‘East Lynne,’ a novel which has already run through three editions abroad, and sold by tens of thousands here. The present fiction is even better than ‘East Lynne,’ and has the
advantage of being published first in the United States: The Messrs. Peterson owning the copy-right” (422). While betraying a fuzzy explanation of copyright law, the clear claim of an exclusive and legal relationship with the author enhanced the value of the literary product by legitimizing the publishers’ relationship with the author and generally discouraged competitors. The advertisement notes this and, combining language that is at once personal and national, once again offers American readers the opportunity to experience a new novel before their British rivals. Dick & Fitzgerald were likewise quick to advertise when they secured advanced sheets of Braddon’s later novels. They would become the first American publishers of three of Braddon’s penny novels: The Outcasts: or, The Brand of Society (1864), Only a Clod (1865), and Rupert Godwin (1867) (Quinlan 120). In this area, Wood’s and Braddon’s earliest and most prominent pirates of East Lynne and Lady Audley became their primary partners, ostensibly legitimizing a relationship that had begun outside the law.

While American publishers and critics spun a sentimental tale of a longstanding affection between Wood and her American readers, attempts to generate a similar illusion for Braddon were complicated by her own entry into the conversation. Beginning in 1866, in partnership with her publisher, manager, and eventual husband, John Maxwell, Braddon made her own attempts to more directly shape her own literary reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. Jennifer Phegley’s recent essay in the Transatlantic Sensations collection, the first study to examine Braddon’s work in the context of transatlantic publishing, traces one 1866 exchange between Braddon and the New York weekly the Round Table. Beginning in 1862, Braddon and Maxwell had created a two-tiered
publishing plan, in which, Jennifer Carnell notes, “she was keeping her Braddon work separate from the hack work” (210). Her series of anonymous *Halfpenny Journal* novels, her lower-class cheap titles, “achieved immediate book publication in pirated, crudely printed paper-back form in America” (*Sensational Victorian*, Wolff 119). In 1866, however, the *Round Table* unflatteringly reviewed a novel called *What is this Mystery?* and identified it as Braddon’s. In response, Braddon wrote a letter to the editor, protesting, “I never wrote a novel with the title given, and that I have never had any correspondence with Hilton & Co., its publishers, who, nevertheless, announce their book as printed from my ‘advance sheets’” (“A Letter from Miss M.E. Braddon” 437). While Braddon certainly did not authorize this pirated reprint, her claim that she was not its author was false, since the novel was a re-titled reprint of her novel *The Black Band*. Phegley links this discrepancy to Braddon’s desire to bifurcate her literary reputation (separating her three-decker novels for middle class readers from the “penny dreadfuls” she published anonymously), and traces the subsequent debate on the ethics of international copyright law that raged through American periodicals. In an attempt to resist such piracies and extract some value from her American reprints, Phegley notes, Maxwell would eventually contract with Harpers in 1870 to serialize and then sell authorized copies of a variety of Braddon works, simultaneously joining W.F. Tillotson’s Fiction Bureau which sold licenses to print British works (161-164). Braddon’s attempts to control her literary reputation, however, also reflect a complication of the discursive pattern that had previously surrounded American periodicals’ earlier discussions of Braddon and Wood.
This exposure of Braddon’s dual authorial identities had significant consequences for her reputation on both sides of the Atlantic. Phegley reads the two audiences Braddon was simultaneously seeking as middle and lower class, but American and British readers also display this sense of rivalry. Her willingness to simultaneously court multiple audiences, while keeping them separate and even hidden from each other, is read as a transgression. An 1867 article in *Littell’s Living Age*, reprinted from the *London Review*, entitled “Lady Caroline Lascelles & Co.,” links Braddon’s pseudonymous publications with wider similar bifurcations in authorial identity:

> It appears, by evidence of various kinds, that Miss Braddon has been writing sensational novels, compared with which her own acknowledged works are tame, and has been publishing them in a half-penny journal under the name of Lady Caroline Lascelles…The novels which enjoyed such a circulation in England have been tried beforehand on a Transatlantic public, and have then recrossed the ocean with a different title, and some slight disguise in the shape of grammar.

(124)

The two geographically-opposed and rival audiences for Braddon’s work divide the author herself into dual identities. Braddon is interpreted as an imposter, an actress. The reviewer goes on to imagine the “romance” of “a titled lady appealing to an audience of maid-servants,” suggesting that such a woman should be writing for “one of the most aristocratic of the old monthlies,” printed on “the thickest creamlaid paper with virgin type which should be never used again.” However, when “Lady Caroline” “vouchsafes to deal with American publishers for early sheets, and to throw aside the mask of fashion which is so lightly worn, our wonder is at an end. We can hardly be astonished at Miss Braddon’s assuming a new disguise or instructing the world by means of a new channel”

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100 Wolff traces the debate about this and includes information from Maxwell’s letters (*Sensational Victorian* 118-126).
The prior American publication which sparks multiple transatlantic trips, read by the *Saturday Evening Post* as evidence of a devoted connection, here shows Braddon’s perfidy, her willingness to manipulate her two readerships while keeping them ignorant of one another.

This multiplication of identities and disguises stretched to Wood as well. The reviewer notes, “At the very time that Mrs. Henry Wood’s publisher has been indignantly disavowing another publisher’s Mrs. Wood, we learn that another Mrs. Henry Wood has appeared in America” (124). Despite the seemingly innocent appearance of imitators, the real “Mrs. Henry Wood” is not as innocent as she seems and, the reviewer accuses, also attempts to manipulate her dual audiences. Interpreting her publication practices as strategy to exploit the rival transatlantic readerships, the reviewer comments,

Mrs. Henry Wood writes quite openly to say that she sees no harm in calling an old novel a new one. Why should she not publish ‘Lady Adelaide’s Oath’ in England after having published it as ‘The Castle’s Heir’ in America? What can it matter whether the book is new or old? If she brings out her work at Philadelphia five years before it appears in England, she simply professes to write for an American public. Owing to the price charged for three-volume novels, the English edition will not have a sale in America. (124)

Playing with chronology, establishing what happened first, is one of the narrative preoccupations of the bigamy novel. American audiences, in this narrative, really do encounter new novels first, in a form that prevents any revelatory encounter between the American and English editions (or, legitimate first editions). Extending this model of dual authorial identities for dual transatlantic audiences to Wood, the reviewer accuses her of disingenuously professing to write first for whichever audience is most convenient.
Wood’s claims to write “for an American public,” then, are not genuine, but are bigamous marriages of convenience.

Any attempts by either author to separate her own literary output and reputation into two separate strains are read as a kind of betrayal by American or English readers invested in the illusion of a faithful, reciprocal affection. Linking these practices with moral judgments, the reviewer pompously claims, “this species of traffic in literature does not look very clean, and that an author who makes two separate bargains for the same work, can only avoid the blame attaching to sharp practices by bargaining openly and above-board, instead of blinding the reader by letting years elapse, and the bookseller by changing the title” (124). By making “two separate bargains for the same work,” Wood and Braddon are each bifurcating their affections, paralleling the intentional bigamist, sullying the cleanliness of their reputations, and cultivating secrecy to keep the two audiences in ignorance of one another.

Self-reinvention and dual identities for the central female protagonists form a central device in the bigamy plot. Like Mary Elizabeth Braddon/Lady Caroline Lascelles or the multiple Mrs. Henry Woods, both Lady Isabel/Madame DeVine and Helen Talboys/Lucy Graham/Lady Audley completely erase and rewrite their identities, rendering themselves unrecognizable to their own families and enacting an assumed role. It is this duality that lies at the heart of the bigamy novel. In Lady Audley’s Secret we are initially presented with two wives who each conform to an angelic feminine ideal; the main difference between the two lies in their social class, embodied by their respective husbands. When the illusion that Helen and Lucy are “two individuals who have no
apparent connection” (259) begins to break down, so does the purity of each one’s character. Ultimately, Robert Audley describes the narrative as “a conspiracy concocted by an artful woman…a bold woman, my lady, who thought to play her comedy out to the end without fear of detection; a wicked woman, who did not care what misery she might inflict upon the honest heart of the man she had betrayed; but a foolish woman, who looked at life as a game of chance, in which the best player was likely to hold the winning cards, forgetting …that wicked secrets are never permitted to remain long hidden…” (268). Betrayal, manipulation, and self-reinvention are “wicked” in the economy of the bigamy novel, which trades in the appearance of faithfulness and affection.

Braddon herself had provided her audiences and critics with the imaginative metaphor and framework within which they read her career. Metaphorically, instead of being the lost first love, Braddon is read as the designing bigamous lover, who reinvents herself to profit from simultaneous liaisons with two different readerships. To her readers, national rivalry for affection takes on a new power here. The authorial personae of Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Lady Caroline Lascelles, initially assumed to be unrelated, are revealed as opposing versions of the same woman. Through these two identities Braddon attempts to separate her public persona, purifying her middle class image and output while ironically linking her upper class identity with her lower-class novels. She is, however, discovered and the disguise is removed by American publishers and their pirate reprinting policies. For Wood, on the other hand, printing novels in America, and waiting for them to be forgotten before conveniently retitling them for
subsequent British publication is read as an attempt to manipulate the publishing context to cultivate simultaneous readerships. By 1867, both novelists’ transatlantic circulation and reputation had grown to the extent that such secrecy was no longer possible. Surreptitious attempts to court two readerships, then, were fundamentally exposed by their transatlantic circulation, just as Lady Audley was exposed through the return of her legitimate husband.

Following the commentary on Braddon’s dual identities, the writer of “Lady Caroline Lascelles & Co.” concludes, “We seem to be on a journey to a new colony of St. Ives, on Salt Lake principles. Every husband has two wives, every wife has two lovers, every lover has two mistresses, every mistress has two masters; masters, mistresses, lovers, wives, how many go to a house at St. Ives? For an answer to this riddle we must refer to the works of Miss Braddon” (126). Seemingly, every novelist also has two names, a duality that was both enabled and exposed within the context of the transatlantic publishing and reading world of the 1860s. By the time of these revelations and discussions, Wood and Braddon were already beginning to lose some of their market power. John Sutherland notes that Wood’s value plummeted by the end of the 1860s. In 1869, she wrote to her publisher: “I do not get much more than half what I once had for a three volume work” (189-90). While both authors eventually became more adept at extracting some small value from their American publications, the discourse of devoted affection that framed their initial successes was also breaking down, though in America both novels would continue to find new sources of revenue and devoted audiences.
“Somewhere in America”: Lady Isabel on the Stage

There is an obvious theatricality to the layered, bifurcated identities practiced both by these sensation novelists and their fictional creations. Disguise and self-reinvention is as prominent an element as bigamy, and at multiple points, the action of both novels hinges on the ease with which spouses, both male and female, leave the family, circulate the globe, and surreptitiously return, with one or both partners disguised or unrecognizable, to be revealed in a shocking scene. *Lady Audley’s Secret* repeatedly emphasizes George Talboy’s unrecognizability. In Australia, he watches his own face change: “Thin and gaunt, the half-starved shadow of what I once had been, I saw myself one day in a broken bit of looking-glass, and was frightened of my own face” (21). When he comes back, nobody knows him: “The waiters at the Westminster coffee-house stared at the hollow-eyed, unshaven stranger, with his clothes of colonial cut, and his boisterous, excited manner; but he had been an old frequenter of the place in his military days, and when they heard of who he was they flew to do his bidding” (36). Even Robert Audley, Mr. Maldon, and Talboy’s own son initially don’t know him and, one by one, express shock when his identity is revealed. Mr Maldon’s reaction combines guilt and surprise: “[he] stared and coloured violently, with something of a frightened look” (44). For the intentional bigamist, the altered identity becomes not just a disguise, but a performance. Lady Isabel is so altered by regret over leaving her family and her injuries from a railway accident, that when she returns in the guise of Madame De Vine and lives in her own former home, nobody recognizes her, and she herself heightens this impression, using unusual clothing and green spectacles. Helen Talboys likewise
performs her role as Lucy Graham, acting out a feminine and demure gratitude. Both heroines must fool not just the casual observer, but the former husband. *Lady Audley’s Secret*, however, bares its device, referring to the successful disguise in a way that underscores sensationalism’s lingering destabilization of all seemingly simple identifications, when Robert Audley, the reluctant detective, expresses doubt that crimes leave any traces: “I believe rather that we may walk unconsciously in an atmosphere of crime, and breathe none the less freely. I believe that we may look into the smiling face of a murderer, and admire its tranquil beauty” (141). This re-shaping and the sometimes criminal and often sentimental duplication of identities reflects the significance that the role of Lady Isabel in particular would come to take on the American stage.

No discussion of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* in America would be complete without a survey of their many and varied theatrical adaptations. In fact, through multiple stagings, adaptations, and traveling companies these bigamy tales became even more widely dispersed across the nation, embedded in the culture to such a degree that they came to define an entire period in American drama. Patsy Stoneman, in her discussion of the Brontës, suggests that each adaptation is also part of reading the original: “Every writer (or painter or film-maker) is also a reader who transforms previous texts into new shapes” (5). As each novel was adapted over and over in America, it created a whole new type of “reader” through collaborative engagements between playwrights, actresses, and deeply devoted audiences. While the reprinted book editions retained for the most part the same text, theatrical adaptations customized their interpretations based on a variety of individualized and local factors including genre,
actors, and regional locale. In these remediations, the discourse of faithful devotion to Wood or Braddon is replaced by a parallel relationship between audience and the actress who would come to define the starring role.

A complex understanding of the way a play embodied legal value fostered this widespread transatlantic adaptation and reinvention. Kate Mattacks identifies “the mobile dramatic form as the lynchpin of the transatlantic market in sensationalism” (171). Her recent study of the records of theatrical publishers T.H. Lacy (London) and Samuel French (New York) reveals, “copyright laws and a theatrical culture grounded in adaptation and appropriation” (172). While Lacy and French collaborated to exchange playtexts and permission rights between New York and London, they did so in the context of a market dominated by piracy. In 1863, Tinsley, Braddon’s London publisher, brought a suit against Lacy for unauthorized distribution of Suter’s 1863 adaptation of *Lady Audley’s Secret*.\(^{101}\) In a legal framework that distinguished between a text’s literary and performative value, the court found that Lacy’s “acting editions” violated literary copyright law, a decision which, Mattacks explains, “transformed performance text into a dramatic text” (178) by barring the play’s continued performance while allowing it to still be printed as part of Lacy’s collections of plays for reading. Mattacks explains the importance of this case for establishing a link between literary texts and theatrical adaptations in Britain, though her focus is on the British legal framework.

\(^{101}\) For more information on the case, see Mattacks (177-179) and Wolff (*Sensational Victorian* 145-146). See Chapter 4 of Wolff’s *Sensational Victorian* for a survey of Braddon’s other attempts to challenge those who would pirate her work for the British stage (109).
While British law distinguished between a play’s performative and literary value, the American theatrical context created another way for defining value that would ultimately reshape the performance practices of plays based on sensation novels in particular. In America, Meredith McGill points out, the status of copyright law for plays led to a market model that was not centered on the author at all (either the author of the source text or of the theatrical adaptation): “Fierce competition for audiences, the piracy of dramatic texts through oral transcription, and the quick turnover of plays in repertory theater all worked to defeat copyright registration rules that were designed for texts not tied to performances. Because midcentury American theater relied on touring stars, property in dramatic works lodged not with the text or its author but with the performer” (“Copyright” 167). Though an American playwright could copyright his or her adaptation of a British novel, functionally those copyrights were of value only when they could be sold to traveling companies or stars who could stage the plays repeatedly. The fact that property value lay not in the printed text or the performance itself, but in the performer, reflects the American adaptations of popular bigamy novels, *East Lynne* in particular. Lady Isabel was billed as a dual role, an achievement for an actress, and an embodiment of the various moral and emotional connections with audiences that also defined the connections between authors and audiences.

A 1915 obituary for Braddon notes, “*East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* have already been coupled. For half a century both have shared the favor of popular audiences in the playhouses of England and America. *East Lynne* is always playing somewhere in America” (“Personal Gossip” 42). While *Lady Audley’s Secret* was staged frequently
and became a popular stock play for American repertory companies, its initial popularity appears to have been fairly evenly concentrated in London and New York. Within a year of its publication, multiple versions of *Lady Audley’s Secret* were produced on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to three London productions, Philip Bolton notes multiple performances throughout New York in 1863-64, including a staging of “The Mystery of Audley Court: Lady Audley’s Secret” by John Brougham on September 1, 1863 at Winter Garden (Mrs. D.P Bowers as Lady Audley), a production at Fox’s Old Bowery in November 1863 (Fanny Herring as Lady Audley), and several subsequent New York City performances, most starring Bowers. Some productions emphasized Lady Audley’s villainy, while others became tragic star vehicles, and New York audiences even saw the production of a burlesque version staged for several nights in 1866 at the New York Theatre (Bolton 68). Bolton notes regular subsequent productions over the next four decades.

While Tinsley and Maxwell were willing to go to court to defend Braddon’s property rights to her plays in London, *East Lynne* was never afforded the same protection. Looking back on his mother’s career in 1894, Charles Wood’s biography ties the play’s seeming ubiquity to its copyright status:

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102 Though Braddon’s publishers successfully shut down the 1863 London production of Suter’s adaptation of *Lady Audley’s Secret* at the Queen’s Theatre, a subsequent authorized version by Colin Hazlewood was staged at the Britannia and the Victoria in 1863. A third production, written by Robert Walters (under the pseudonym George Roberts), was staged at the St. James’s Theatre in 1863 as well. In his study of Victorian theatre, John McCormick notes that this production went to great lengths to present Lady Audley as, “a consummate villainess… Clowes and Sons even went so far as to decorate the parade space of their booth with a scene showing Lady Audley pushing her first husband into the well” (118).

103 H. Philip Bolton’s *Women Writers Dramatized* offers a list of American productions of *Lady Audley’s Secret*, though they are focused in New York and the list is clearly incomplete (Bolton 66-71).
It has been dramatized and played so often that had the author received a small royalty from every representation it was long since estimated that it would have returned to her no less than a quarter of a million sterling, but she never received anything. … In America for years it has been one of the most popular of their dramas, as *East Lynne* has been one of the most popular of their books; but from this also the author reaped no advantage… (249) 104

In February 1866, a production of *East Lynne* headlined by the American actress Avonia Jones (who would go on to take her production of the play to Australia) was hailed as the first English adaptation of the popular novel. London critics marveled that it had taken so long: “the lapse of five years between the date of publication and the period of its presentation on the London boards in a dramatic form would seem to involve a mystery quite a provocative of wild guesses at a solution as any which perplex the readers of Mrs. Henry Wood’s highly interesting story” (qtd. Maunder 174). Andrew Maunder points out one earlier version, a November 1864 working-class adaptation which changed the story’s title to *Marriage Bells; or the Cottage on the Cliff* and Lady Isabel’s name to Emily, added an on-stage murder and duel, and heightened commentary on social class and wage slavery. Nevertheless, given its popularity, the novel was followed by comparatively few theatrical adaptations in England.

In contrast to the two British productions in the five years after the novel was published, *East Lynne* appeared in America almost as soon as it was reprinted. Lucille Western’s production took an 1861 national tour that included the cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia and Boston. Its first New York performance (widely and incorrectly cited as the first American performance) took place on December 9 of 1862, one year after the

104 Charles Wood also notes, “In France the story has been dramatized and is frequently played in Paris and the Provinces” (249).
appearance of the novel, almost two years before *Marriage Bells* and four years before the first West End production. By March of 1863, three competing versions were playing simultaneously in New York: productions starring Matilda Heron and Lucille Western, and a limited-run benefit production (March 1863) for John F. Poole, with a Mrs. Jones in the lead role. Another American adaptation by G.L. Stout appeared in 1864 (Joyce 19). In 1875, a translation of a French version of the story, called “Miss Multon” and widely referred to as “The New East Lynne” gained great popularity. Other versions were less reverent, including Harry L. Newton’s 1872 “East of Lynn, Mass.: A gabfest burlesque in one act” and Frank Drew’s burlesque version entitled “The Great Western” (clearly a play on the well-known Lucille Western production) in which he played Lady Isabel (Feb 1866).\textsuperscript{105}

The two earliest American productions were tied to prominent actresses, each of whom both embodied the production’s property value, used the play to establish her own brand, and eventually took the production on multiple national tours over the succeeding decade. Matilda Heron’s turn in the Lady Isabel role established her as a leading practitioner of “emotional” school of acting.\textsuperscript{106} In her New York staging of the play at

\textsuperscript{105} H. Philip Bolton’s *Women Writers Dramatized* lists many known adaptations of *East Lynne* (entries 2497-2761) including seven productions before August of 1864, five of which are with Lucille Western (395). This list, though, is far from complete for any productions outside of New York City. Nineteenth-century theatrical records are virtually nonexistent. Robert Joyce’s M.A. thesis *A Study of the Popular Appeal of East Lynne on the American Stage* (1963) focuses almost exclusively on the Lucille Western production, with an entire chapter devoted to analyzing its play books and staging. However, he does not mention Matilda Heron’s production or several of the other early versions and his research appears to have been limited to New York newspapers. In my research, I have compiled references from various books, newspapers, and other ephemeral evidence of various productions across the country, but have not been able to conduct anything like a systematic study. Tracing the Lucille Western production in particular, though, would reveal a great deal about both the geographical spread of *East Lynne*’s American reception and about regional and repertory theatrical culture in nineteenth-century America.

\textsuperscript{106} For a longer biographical sketch of Heron, see Bodeen, *Ladies of the Footlights* (96-99).
Niblo’s Garden, Brooklyn, Heron played Lady Edith in Benjamin Woolf’s adaptation entitled *Edith; or the Earl’s Daughter*, a role that she would go on to reprise at playhouses across the nation. After achieving her first acting successes in San Francisco in 1855, Heron was best known for her portrayal of *Camille or the Fate of a Coquette*, which she adapted from Dumas’s *La Dame aux Camelias* in 1857. *Edith* seems to be an attempt to find a new star vehicle and stock play for Heron’s company.

Bonnie Eckard, in her examination of Heron’s *Camille*, notes American audiences’ desire to nationalize the popular actress:

> Heron portrayed feelings with abandon never before exhibited on an American stage...She often walked with her hands on her hips and picked up her ball-dresses without grace. This rough-hewn quality marked Miss Heron’s interpretation as American since it fit an image of robust, vigorous, and unyielding strength compared to her frail, proper European counterparts. Indeed, Americans hoped to find in Matilda Heron an actress of their own national spirit who could gain international attention and fame. Although Matilda Heron’s acting was too rough and unpolished to be seriously considered by foreign critics, she was the pride of American audiences. (145)

American reviewers interpreted Heron’s *Edith* using similarly emotional and national terms. The *Knickerbocker* notes that the play “drew crowded houses nightly” and ties that success to Heron’s performance: “Miss Heron is one of the very few artists on the American stage who possess genius, and make the profession something more than mere conventional imitation, and her success is simply due to the fact, that she identifies herself thoroughly with the characters she assumes; she creates, and embodies her own individuality in the creation. Her ‘Lady Isabel’ is her own, and not by any means Mrs. Wood’s” (461). Ellen Wood is all but forgotten and Matilda Heron herself becomes the story’s embodiment and progenitor. The *New York Times*, noting the production’s link to
the novel, re-nationalizes it as well: “its production in this City some three months ago at this theatre met with a success which stamped Matilda Heron as the first actress of America, and Edith the greatest play of the age” (7). The transatlantic negotiation by which the story itself appeared is subsumed, here, into a celebration of American theatrical achievement and connections between the leading lady and her national audience.

While Matilda Heron’s Edith was interpreted nationally, it was (Pauline) Lucille Western’s Lady Isabel who would go on to become truly embedded in American theatrical and regional culture. The version of East Lynne written for Lucille Western by Clifton Tayleur would go on to become the most successful and most widely known adaptation, with performances across the nation over the following decade. While managing the New Holliday Theater in Baltimore, Tayleur wrote and staged an adaptation of East Lynne there for the seventeen-year-old actress in 1862.\textsuperscript{107} The Western/Tayleur production played in Boston on April 21, 1862, and another source suggests that this Boston version competed with another local version produced by Manager Henderson of the Boston Museum, and starring Kate Estelle (Robert Joyce 12). The Lucille Western production visited Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. as well, before it opened in Brooklyn on January 26, 1863, though the New York debut is widely cited as its first American production. The New York Tribune announced the play’s arrival: “…the appearance of Miss Lucille Western at the Winter Garden, in the drama of ‘East Lynne,’ which she has produced in various cities with remarkable success…Miss

\footnote{107 Some sources incorrectly list this production as taking place in 1860, before the novel was even published (Blood on the Stage, 448).}
Western’s version, as well as her personification of the leading character, Lady Isabel, will be witnessed with interest and curiosity” (qtd. in Joyce 14). Negotiations for the rights to this play are usually read as a triumph for Western, an example of a woman who successfully owned and controlled her own property. According to Sally Mitchell, “Western paid [Tayleur] 100 dollars and signed an agreement with the theater that gave her half the gross. During the New York engagement that began on March 23, 1863 [the date of its official New York opening], she earned at least 350 dollars every night. Western continued to bring East Lynne to New York annually for the next ten years and made the play a mainstay of her national tours” (xiii). Tayleur would go on to write another version of the play called Lady Isabel of East Lynne for Mrs. D. P. Bowers (who would later play Lady Audley) and stage it in Richmond, amid reports that he and Western had had a disagreement about the rights to the first adaptation. As mentioned above, though, theatrical property rights in America were tied much more closely to the star performer than to the author of the adaption (and hardly at all to the author of the original source material). Lucille Western would go on to use the role to build her reputation as well as her own repertory company, which toured the United States widely over the succeeding decade.

Lucille Western’s productions of East Lynne were wildly popular. In Annals of the New York Stage, George Odell notes that Western played this role, “over nine hundred times throughout the United States” and distinguishes the responses of critics from those of wider audiences: “crude as the critics found her, Miss Western pleased the public. And ‘emotional’ drama was now on the crest of the wave” (qtd. Bolton 395).
Appearing to universally packed houses, the first New York production had to add extra performances to cater to the diverse audience. The *Times* noted on March 28, 1863 that the theater was holding a special an afternoon performance because “there are thousands of readers of the novel who would be glad to see it in a dramatic form, but are unable to attend in the evening. This opportunity afforded by Miss Western, will enable them to do so” (7). Joyce concludes that, “Although Miss Western was never accepted by the theatre’s leading critics as one of America’s great actresses, her appearances in *East Lynne* generated for her a short lived but legendary popular fame throughout the United States” (53). By 1866, one article in *Leslie’s Illustrated Weekly* suggested that Western was so popular because she was a self-made woman. Her hard work and devotion rendered her admirable to her devoted public.

Lucille Western billed her version of *East Lynne* as “a moral emotional play,” precisely identifying the two qualities that defined her adaptation as well as its appeal to American audiences. Joyce notes that the playbills and advance billings emphasized the “moral tendencies” and “religious” nature, partially to overcome any sense that the play’s sensational content or theatrical context could in any way be considered inappropriate for family audiences (42). It was the play’s “emotional” quality that individual viewers repeatedly noted. Clara Morris, a slightly younger nineteenth-century actress who would go on to play the role herself throughout the 1870s, describes herself weeping and sobbing while watching Western’s performance of Lady Isabel:

Oh, dear! oh, dear! The tears that were shed over that dreadful play, and how many I contributed myself! I would stand looking on from the entrance, after my short part was over, and when she cried out: ‘Oh, why don’t I die! My God! why don’t I die?’ I would lay my head against the nearest scene and simply howl like a
broken-hearted young puppy. I couldn’t help it, neither could those in front help weeping—more decorously perhaps, because they were older and had their good clothes on. (127)

Charles William Wood also notes reports of highly emotional American adaptations of his mother’s novel:

Not very long ago a gentleman observed that a friend in America was complaining of blunted feelings. “Nothing touches me,” he said, “as it once did. I neither cry nor laugh when others do, or feel moved one way or the other.” “Come with me,” said his friend. ‘They are playing East Lynne to-night. We will go and see it acted.” And, with the rest of the audience, he was much affected as the play went on. “I don’t quite see the insensibility you complain of,” said the friend as they left the theatre together. “You have relieved me,” was the reply. “I thought my feelings were dead or paralyzed, but to-night have found them as much alive as ever.” (223-224)

The Western adaptation, in reshaping the novel into a “moral-emotional” vehicle for its prominent star, established patterns that would become common in most later adaptations. Certain scenes and plotlines from the novel became iconic, while much of the remaining material was cut. John McCormick identifies several key qualities that most adaptations shared, including an emphasis on scenes including Lady Isabel and the removal of the Richard Hare sub-plot. Little William’s death scene was also given more prominence, reflecting the deep importance of the death of children in sentimental

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108 Clara Morris would go on to become known for her portrayal of the central role in the Lord production of Miss Multon, a French version sometimes called The New East Lynne because it follows an essentially identical plotline (The Rose Man of Sing Sing 37).

109 McCormick identifies common patterns in late nineteenth-century British adaptations, which were in evidence for the early American versions as well: “whole passages of dialogue [were] lifted directly from the novel and tacked onto a plot that linked the chosen episodes. The Tillers used a text from the Dicks collection, which they duly shortened and simplified. Act III ended with the death of Willie, who has not recognized his mother in Madame Vine. The fourth act was reduced to little more than the death of Isabel herself. This adaptation of East Lynne omitted most of the first half of the novel, which was rather incoherently alluded to. It started with the elopement of Lady Isabel and then focused on her return as governess to her own children under the name of Madame Vine. The whodunit element, which dragged readers along, was lost almost entirely, and audiences were informed almost incidentally that Francis Levison was a murderer as well as a seducer. The Hare plot and family, with the exception of Barbara, were omitted” (118).
and sensational narratives. Actually, *East Lynne*’s most famous and widely-quoted line “Dead, and never called me mother!” does not even appear in the book at all, but comes from the theatrical version.

While the early New York productions remain the most thoroughly-documented, the play quickly began to circulate widely and its connection to America would be defined by its place in the repertoires of stock companies. Gilbert Cross notes that *East Lynne* was so popular with touring and stock companies that ‘Next week, *East Lynne*’ became a familiar expression to refer to “the seemingly inevitable nature of their repertories.” According to Robert Joyce,

[The play’s] greatest success came in the repertory of the road companies that appeared in every town and hamlet of the country during this period in the American theatre. Kendall, in a study of the theatrical activities in New Orleans during this period, states that the play was seen most often with the road companies and floating theatres of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Harlowe Hoyt, in *Town Hall Tonight*, a study of country theatres (the term he applies to rural theatres) of the eighties and nineties, relates that *East Lynne* remained a popular feature with the traveling companies “as long as rep shows played in the small towns.” (15-16)

While these tours are mentioned repeatedly in theatrical studies of the period, no single source comes close to listing all of the locations. Lucille Western’s company was instrumental in taking its *East Lynne* to cities and towns across America, appearing regularly in Chicago, Philadelphia, and annually in New York. Western herself had a home in Boston and regularly performed there as well (Beasley 67). 110 Joyce notes performances by Western in San Francisco, St. Louis, New Orleans, and Providence

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110 Her national tours, in which *East Lynne* was her featured piece, took Lucille Western across the nation. An 1867 Chicago production with McKee Rankin is mentioned by Cropsley (152-154) and Beasley (66-67). According to *America’s Longest Run*, Western brought East Lynne to the Walnut Street Theater in Philadelphia for three weeks on Jan 25, 1864, came back again later that year, again in 1865 and 1868.
(Rhode Island), and she also appears to have gone on a tour of the American West in 1869, with stops in Carson City, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. Western’s was hardly the only company to stage *East Lynne* regionally, though, and countless sources mention additional productions, including one in Confederate Richmond in 1863.

While Wood and Braddon remained located in Britain, the publishers and readers of their American reprints imagined a connection that spanned transatlantic lines. The American actresses that adapted and embodied Lady Isabel, though, circulated as widely as the productions themselves, coming to each town and encountering the audiences in person, providing even more direct opportunities for engagement with the texts. Andrew Maunder suggests that theatrical productions were a vehicle for the diffusion of the novel across class lines in the 1860s, when: “Sensation novels…were increasingly being used in different ways for different kinds of theater audiences” (176). This kind of embeddedness, of reshaping the texts to their local contexts, happens repeatedly in surviving anecdotal evidence of the play’s staging.

Surviving accounts of one Wild West production of *East Lynne* demonstrate both the range of the tale’s circulation beyond its original incarnation and its tendency to provoke deeply-felt responses that are strongly rooted in local contexts across

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111 Lee Scanlon notes performances in Salt Lake City in 1869 (*Change in the American West* 23), while Robert D. Armstrong notes performances in Carson City (*Nevada Printing History* 174).
112 This performance is mentioned in *The Confederate States of America* by E. Merton Coulter (489). It is even rumored that John Wilkes Booth took a role while acting in Richmond. John S. Wise recalls, “One night we attended the play *East Lynne* at the old Richmond Theatre. The performance was poor enough, to be sure, to a man fresh from Paris, but I thought it was great. On our way home, [his elder brother, an attaché of the American Legation] remarked that the only performer of merit in the cast was the young fellow John Wilkes Booth. In him, he said, there was the making of a good actor” (qtd. Samples 37-38). Samples notes, though, that no records exist of Booth actually taking this role.
America. This anecdote of the encounter between *East Lynne* and one of its many audiences not only challenges readings of sensation novels based solely on the national origins of their authors, but literally enacts the power and pleasure American audiences found in these widely-circulating variations of the bigamy plot. Newspaper editor and onetime traveling actor Charles Chapin, in his memoir written while at Sing Sing, describes a theatrical performance given by his company while on a tour of the Western United States:

I recall the night “Calamity Jane,” a notorious female desperado, came to see us play *East Lynne*. She and “Arkansaw Bill,” equally famous as a bandit and stage[coach] robber, occupied front seats. “Calamity” was dolled up for the occasion in corduroy suit and sombrero and appeared to be particularly vain of her green kid gloves. …As soon as she was comfortably settled in her seat she bit a chunk from a plug of tobacco and chewed as industriously as any miner throughout the evening. She and her escort clapped their hands in noisy appreciation until Lady Isabel eloped with Sir Francis and then “Calamity” showed her disapproval of the erring wife’s conduct by marching down to the footlights and squirting a stream of tobacco juice over the front of Lady Isabel’s pink satin evening gown. There came very near being a rough-house when the curtain was lowered and Mr. Lord began to voice a protest over the indignity to his wife. Trouble was avoided by the lady desperado tossing a handful of gold coin over the footlights to pay for the gown ….Throughout the remainder of the performance she chewed her cud in courteous silence. (30-32)

This image of a “notorious female desperado” (32), interrupting the action of the play in Deadwood, South Dakota in order to punish the heroine’s violation of a particular code of female conduct (using tobacco juice—a mark of her own gender bending) demonstrates the deep connection so many across nineteenth-century America felt with these sensational narratives. Widely known for her own transgressive adventures and

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113 Multiple versions exist of the tobacco-spitting incident and while this one may not be authoritative, it certainly reinforces the ubiquity of *East Lynne* in the repertoires of such traveling companies (a point Chapin emphasizes) as well as its connection with the audience. See also, James D. McLaird’s *Calamity Jane: The Woman and the Legend* (61, 302).
overlapping love affairs, Calamity Jane was herself a figure in the mythology of the American West, developed in Beadle’s dime novels of the 1870s and similar cheap books. The “corduroy suit and sombrero” publicly exacts her punishment of the “pink satin evening gown,” in class-crossing terms fully legible to the audience of miners and cowboys. Pausing the play, the actress and audience reenact Lady Isabel’s sin and punishment within the context of a particular embodiment of American regional culture. Jeanne Fahnestock suggests that the bigamy plot allows readers to “have it both ways,” to vicariously sin and be innocent; this is the transaction we see being acted out once again (65). The notorious Calamity Jane joins in the drama as the enforcer of marital faithfulness and punisher of female transgression, while offering Ellen Wood’s novel one more “reader’s” uniquely American response.

Mirroring the events within the narratives themselves, tales of transnational travel, of new identities, and of liaisons that are accidental, immoral, and often illegal, can be told about the journeys sensation novels themselves took across the Atlantic and around the globe. Instead of presuming that these texts must be English, this chapter considers what it would mean to read these books as American, revealing new reading formations in relation to the Civil War, marriage laws, and acting tours. Tracing the American reception of *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* reveals the extent to which individual readers brought together the books’ insides and their outsides. Studying this process revises our ways of counting and grouping individual readers and constructing literary chronologies and careers. The critical stakes of the sensation genre are consistently framed in relationship to readers, but readers themselves had the power to shape counter-
narratives about their own experiences. While the proliferation of reprints was enabled by contemporary copyright laws and publishing practices, the novels, authors, and characters were widely embraced and even reinterpreted by individual readers. Critics negotiated the dual transatlantic publishing contexts using the simultaneously sentimental and sensational discourse that characterized the bigamy novels themselves. The genre would go on to be wildly popular, retaining a consistent place on publisher’s lists until the turn of the century. Through their process of publication, circulation, and reading in America, *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* provoked a series of conversations about the sensation genre, literary property, and transatlantic sensationalism.
Chapter 4:

*The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*: Mapping the Colonial Detective Novel

In 1852, Susan Warner received word that a packet ship traveling between London and Melbourne had been christened the “Fleda,” after her heroine from *Queechy* (Anna Warner 354). Sailing the route between London and a colonial port, the Fleda followed a widely circulating path eventually taken by all of the bestsellers discussed so far in this study, as they traveled from nineteenth-century centers of popular publishing, such as New York and London, to an ever-growing group of English-speaking colonial readers around the globe. During the late nineteenth century, colonial markets became an increasingly important destination for British and American books, and there has been growing scholarly interest in histories of the book in colonial Canada, Australia and South Africa.¹¹⁴ British publishers created cheap colonial series to compete with imported American reprints, while developments in copyright law aimed to protect and shape these import and export patterns. In the last decades of the nineteenth-century, the growing influence of colonial markets and audiences began to re-draw the map for the circulation and reading of books in English. That map had once been primarily transatlantic, but these new readerships exerted an increasing force on the market, creating an important

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¹¹⁴ This is evidenced most clearly by recent collections, including *History of the Book in Australia* (University of Queensland Press, 2001), *History of the Book in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2004), and *Reading Across the Pacific: Australia-United States Intellectual Histories* (Sydney University Press, 2010).
global context for the movement of the bestseller. For most of the nineteenth century, the colonial book market was uni-directional, with British and American bestsellers in a mix of copyright and reprinted editions from London, Boston, Philadelphia and New York dominating colonial markets.

By the mid-1870s, Australia became the largest book importer from Britain, surpassing even the United States (Weedon 38-40). Richard Nile and David Walker posit, “The bestseller is an intriguing and largely unexplored phenomenon in Australian literature,” but until the end of the nineteenth century, “non-Australian authors wrote the majority of books that would become bestsellers in Australia” (235, 253). The late nineteenth-century book market in Melbourne saw increasing investment on the part of British publishers, the first of whom set up Melbourne offices in 1884 (Nowell-Smith 93). Australian readers were particularly interested in British authors like Walter Scott and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. In fact, Toni Johnson-Woods notes that Braddon was the most widely serialized novelist in Australian periodicals in the 1870s-90s, which links these readers with Braddon’s American readers that I discussed in Chapter 3.

Though many British and American texts sold well in Australia, in 1886, Fergus Hume, a Melbourne barrister and aspiring playwright, produced the first Australian text to make the reverse trip, from Australia across the sea. *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* not only sold widely in its original local edition in Melbourne, but quickly became a London sensation, making its way into American reprint markets as well. The case of Hume’s text

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115 Weedon’s study includes statistics and a graph that chart the growth of Australian book imports (38-40).
116 Cassell’s and Ward & Lock both set up Melbourne offices in 1884 and put out lists of cheap publications. Macmillan’s entered into a business arrangement with the Melbourne publisher Robertson’s (one of the publishers that rejected Hume’s manuscript) in 1855 (Nowell-Smith 93).
fundamentally complicates the maps that I have drawn so far in this project, demonstrating that by the end of the nineteenth century, Britain and the United States were no longer the only producers of books or the homes of large groups of readers. The geographical reading pattern generated by this text not only represents an inverted audience, but also maps a book market that parallels aspects of imperial identity politics. The colonial map and market extend and re-negotiate the transatlantic legal and imaginative relationships drawn thus far, and in this chapter, I will examine the colonial book market’s connection with larger publishing centers. In order to look at how its journey and its inverted audiences navigate the nineteenth-century global publishing market, I trace Hume’s bestseller through many incarnations: its initial self-published Melbourne edition, the speculative London sensation, and the myriad American editions that quickly followed. As it circulated through the transnational book market, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* maintained a strong and complicated sense of its Australian-ness and, in the following chapter, I examine the conversations about national identity contained in the book itself and provoked in the different markets in which it was received. This chapter examines the moment at which the Australian publishing industry became robust enough to produce a bestseller of its own, creating a process of corresponding exchange and identity negotiation. *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* also exerted its own influence on the British market, raising debates about imperial/colonial literary relations through the emerging genre of the detective story and taking the reciprocal model of inverted audiences to a newly global scale.
From the Colonies to the Imperial Center: *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*’s Publication History

Widely cited as one of the most successful detective novels of all time,¹¹⁷ as well as the best seller of its period, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*’s origins were not particularly auspicious. In the following section, I will trace the story of the novel’s publication, both as Hume tells it and according to the evidence left by surviving material editions themselves. The best-known narrative about the origins of the first Australian edition of *The Mystery of the Hansom Cab* comes from Hume’s own preface to an authorized 1894 London edition. Here Hume uses the story of the book’s initial publication to attempt to build a career for himself and to secure the reader’s sympathy. He emphasizes the disempowerment of the colonial author which sets the terms for most scholarly discussions of the book. Hume states that the considerations that initially prompted him to construct and publish his novel were purely professional. An aspiring playwright, Hume claims, “I found it impossible to induce the managers of the Melbourne Theatres to accept, or even to read a play. At length it occurred to me I might further my purpose by writing a novel. I should at all events secure a certain amount of local attention” (8).¹¹⁸ He browsed local bookstores and decided to imitate Emile Gaboriau’s detective novels, a genre that he was told sold particularly well.

Eventually, Hume produced a text that resituated the detective genre in a local Melbourne context. In Hume’s words, he “determined to write a book of the same class;

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¹¹⁷ It appears in nearly every standard history of detective or crime fiction, usually with a comment on its Australian origin and massive Victorian circulation.

¹¹⁸ This quotation and all subsequent quotations from Hume’s preface or the text of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* come from a 1976 Arno Press reprint of the 1894 Jarrold & Sons London edition.
containing a mystery, a murder, and a description of low life in Melbourne” (8).

Christopher Pittard argues that the novel revises our histories of detective fiction, which often begin with Sherlock Holmes in 1891, and he situates it as a blend of the sensation novel and contemporary urban histories. As predicted by the title, the novel deals with the mysterious discovery of a murdered man in a hansom cab and the subsequent quest to identify him and find the killer. Like Gaboriau’s work, the novel brings together various strata of the late-Victorian city, from slums to the houses of the colonial elite. Despite having followed this familiar and successful formula, when Hume attempted to get the book published, he recalls, “everyone to whom I offered it refused even to look at the manuscript on the ground that no Colonial could write anything worth reading” (9).

Unable to overcome the prejudice of Melbourne publishers, Hume claims that he decided to publish an edition of “some five thousand copies...at my own cost” (10).

Copies of this original Melbourne edition are rare. The only known examples of the first edition are located in the Mitchell Library, Sydney and the State Library of Victoria. The Mitchell Library’s copy credits the Melbourne firm of Kemp & Boyce as printers. Hume may have taken some financial risk in publishing this first edition (Kirk 443), but it is clear that he did not lose money. The Melbourne edition of the *Mystery of a Hansom Cab* sold rapidly, at least on a local level. According to Hume, this edition, first published on Saturday, October 26, 1886, sold out in three weeks and “the public demanded a second” (10). Though there is no record of this second printing or a third, at

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119 It is possible that the estimate of 5,000 copies (which would have been a surprisingly large number) was incorrect. Hume’s printers could have misled him about the numbers they printed or he could have mis-remembered the actual numbers. This would certainly explain why so few copies survive.
least two copies remain of a “fourth edition” published just over fourteen months later, in December of 1887, which contained some minor corrections and was set on new plates (Gwyn James 1). Melbourne readers, then, embraced this depiction of their city and turned it into a local hit. When offered fifty pounds by a group of “speculators” for the British and American rights to subsequent editions of *Hansom Cab*, Hume implies that he had little inclination or choice but to accept. The book had accomplished his local purpose of making a name for himself in Melbourne artistic circles; thus, he no longer needed the novel and did not have the resources to circulate it further. With a shade of false humility, he claims, “no one was more astonished than I when it passed beyond the narrow circle for which it had originally been intended” (8).

Like Susan Warner’s *The Wide, Wide World*, Hume’s *Mystery of a Hansom Cab* entered the London market at a period characterized by a degree of uncertainty about relevant international copyright law. In 1868, the House of Lords had delivered a decision in *Routledge v. Low* in an attempt “to clarify imperial law regarding colonial copyright.” Simon Nowell-Smith notes, “According to this judgment, protection granted to a book first published in the United Kingdom extended to all the Queen’s dominions but books first published in a British territory oversea though they might acquire local copyright under a local law, if that law had been approved by order in council, secured no copyright in the United Kingdom or in other oversea territories” (87). This decision shaped local laws and import practices in Canada, Australia, and India, but few colonial authors, particularly new authors, were able to secure any copyright protection beyond their colonial contexts. Publishers could obtain a license to print local, colonial editions.
of particular books, but an 1887 study on copyright law claims, “The licensing system by local law and Orders in Council cannot fail to be cumbersome and expensive, and however strictly observed must necessarily be unsatisfactory to all concerned, especially to the author” (Marston 26). Many sources also suggest that, regardless of current copyright law and practice, there was a degree of laxness about the observation of copyright laws in Australia, particularly regarding the importation of pirated American reprints of British copyright volumes (Marston 26-29).

In late 1886, the same year that Hume published his novel, a new copyright act extended copyright protection to books that had been registered in any colony throughout the empire. One contemporary publisher stated that the act “placed International on the same footing as National rights” (Marston 50). According to Simon Nowell-Smith,

The late eighties were a time of copyright ferment not only in the new world but in Europe and throughout the British empire. 1885 saw the first draft of the Berne international convention. Several of its provisions conflicted with existing British law. A new international copyright act (49 & 50 Vict. c. 33) was accordingly passed [in 1886] in order to iron out the discrepancies and the opportunity was taken to remove outstanding colonial grievances. (90)

Nevertheless, under the 1886 International and Colonial Act, protection for colonial authors seemed only to extend to book copyrights: “The newspaper or magazine was the Australian author’s most readily accessible forum, but he only obtained Australian and not United Kingdom copyright” (94). It is possible that the fifty pound payment, which Hume and others later state to be ridiculously low, was based on the possibility, always present when new copyright legislation emerged, that its copyright status could later be undermined by legal challenges or additional changes in the law. However, it also
reflects Hume’s lack of stature or bargaining power, as not only a new author, but also a colonial one.

When it was republished in London, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* soon sparked a publishing sensation. Hume narrates, “I parted with the book to several speculators, who formed themselves into what they called ‘The Hansom Cab Publishing Company.’ Taking the book to London, they published it there with great success, and it had a phenomenal sale, which brought in a large sum of money” (10). Though not all of these speculators can be identified, the copyright was registered to a Jessie Pearson Dove Taylor on October 28, 1887. Dove Taylor shared some of the daily work of running the publishing house, but he was not the managing partner. According to John Carter, “the publisher; Frederick Trischler, migrated with the book to London” (43). Trischler, an aspiring Australian publisher’s clerk rather than an independent publisher, moved from Melbourne to take on the position of Manager of the offices of the Hansom Cab Publishing Company at 60, Ludgate Hill, E.C. Stephen Knight suggests that the publishers also used this address as the headquarters of their advertising efforts: “the specially formed ‘Hansom Cab Publishing Company’—… seem to have been the all-around advertising, printing and publicity firm called ‘The Effective Advertiser’ which shared an address with the specially formed ‘Hansom Cab Company’ (along with an innocent-seeming bootmaker and engraver)” (68). The copyright for the firm’s next title, Hume’s *Madame Midas* (1888) is also registered to Trischler, “trading as the Hansom Cab Publishing Company,” and a subsequent title is registered to Dove Pearson and Trischler jointly (James). By 1890, after it had published 20-25 titles, the Hansom Cab
Publishing Co. imprint disappears. However, copyrights continue to be registered by Trischler & Co. until sometime in 1892, many for books with titles or contents that seem similar to that of the company’s first eponymous bestseller.

The publishers generated a massive advertising blitz, distributing a variety of materials including a sixteen-page pamphlet describing the book (Carter 43). At the time, in November of 1888, the *Illustrated London News* observes, “[W]hen such a writer of genius meets with such enterprising publishers, great things can be done” (qtd. in James). Arthur Conan Doyle later attributed the book’s phenomenal success to the publisher: “What a swindle *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* is!” he wrote to the *Ma’am* in March, 1888, “One of the weakest tales I have read, and simply sold by puffing” (qtd. in Carr 54).

The choice of name for the Hansom Cab Publishing Company reflects the consistent interest in branding and marketing on the part of the “speculators” who brought the book to London. The books produced in the initial print runs seem designed to promote easy name recognition of the text and to substantiate the Hansom Cab brand. Not only is the title prominently displayed on the cover of the text and echoed in the publisher’s name, but the book emphasizes key details about the text itself. There is a large picture of a hansom cab on the cover, and across the top of the front cover it is billed as “A Sensational Melbourne Novel.” The title page echoes: “A Startling and Realistic Story of Melbourne Social Life.” Unlike many contemporary books, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* was only available in one kind of first edition: cheap. With its yellow (or grayish yellow) paper cover and its price of one shilling, this novel was clearly
packaged to attract a wide readership, especially among the lower classes. In fact, a 1905 dictionary of *Slang and Its Analogues* credits Hume’s novel with creating an entire new category of cheap fiction, defining the “Shilling-Shocker (or –Dreadful)” as “a sensation novel sold at a shilling: a fashion initiated (1887) by *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, by Mr. Fergus Hume: *cf. Penny-Awful*” (Farmer and Henley 405).

Beginning with a monstrous first edition of 25,000 copies, which sold out in three weeks, the book went on to become a London bestseller. The individual copies were printed with a running total of the number of copies sold (100th thousand, 377th thousand, etc.) and the sales figures touted by the Hansom Cab Co. editions themselves act as a fairly consistent record of the novel’s early London sales. Extant copies mark its progression (at continuing increments of 25,000 copies for the first 300,000 copies) from the earliest editions to later ones in the hundreds of thousands.

This level of sales in such a short time not only dwarfs the book’s Australian readership, even proportionally, but points to a brief but furious *Hansom Cab* frenzy. According to Amy Cruse,

…there arrived from Australia a book called *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, by Fergus Hume. It had had an enormous sale in its native country; in England its success was nothing short of amazing. Twenty-five thousand copies were sold in three days, and yet there was a large unsatisfied demand. The libraries were besieged for it. For months no one who lived in an English town of any size could escape from *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*. Those who did not read it for themselves—and of these there could not have been many—came to know it almost as well as those who did for they saw it in every bookshop and on every bookstall, found it the subject of conversation wherever they went, had advertisements of it thrust upon their notice, heard songs about it sung in the streets. (140)
Contemporary periodical reviewers comment similarly about the novel’s sales. The *Illustrated London News* claims, in 1888,

> In less than six months, considerably more than 300,000 copies of Mr. Hume’s marvellous story were in the hands of the public, a success so startling as to astonish our booksellers and even the publishers themselves. His popularity still prevails, for several thousand copies a week are sold, even at the present time…when such a writer of genius meets with such enterprising publishers, great things can be done. (qtd. in James)

In 1889, the *Quarterly Review* somewhat reluctantly admits that even with “all reasonable deductions for unthinking exaggeration and for deliberate misstatement, we suppose we may take it that the ‘Mystery of a Hansom Cab’ has commanded a larger sale than any other story of our day, even in its own class” (423). Other more ephemeral estimates exist, including (in 1898) that it was “said to have attained a circulation of over a million copies” (Turner and Sutherland 22). Ken Worpole even claims, “Hume’s *Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886) became the best selling novel of the nineteenth century” (48). While this claim is clearly hyperbolic, it does point to the at least temporary ubiquity of Hume’s novel in the popular market.

In addition to the advertising pamphlets put out by the Hansom Cab Publishing Company, the book inspired (and benefited from) a series of other related texts or events that appeared prominently at the same time. Hume credits a “kind and generous” review by *Daily Telegraph* theater critic Clement Scott with “no small degree” of influence on the novel’s success in London (10). Another factor contributing significantly to *Hansom Cab*’s strong early sales was the staging of a popular and well-publicized theatrical version in 1888. The London editions of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* all contained the statement “The Dramatic rights are specially reserved by the Author,” and Hume
migrated to London not long after his novel in order to collaborate with Arthur Law on an adaptation for the stage, which opened in February of 1888 at the Princess’s Theatre. In April of 1888, Mrs. Humphrey, theater critic for *London Society*, noted the “great success” of this production, “now under the management of a fascinating little American lady, Miss Grace Hawthorne.” She enthused, “the critics condemned the play as faulty in construction, but the public is crowding to see the ‘mystery’ elucidated. Human nature is always attracted by the mysterious element, and those who have read the book, equally with those who have not, are curious as to how the puzzle is worked out on the boards” (448). William Archer, an American drama critic, calls the London production “a rough-and-ready adaptation of an Australian ‘shilling shocker’” (24). This production ran successfully for over a year, closing on May 12, 1888, only to give way to a new version.

The advertising strategies for the original theatrical production of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* resembled a sensational version of the kind of literary puffing that made the book editions so successful. As one writer recalls,

> A quarter of a century ago, a London manager invented a new advertising scheme which has been the fruitful parent of many similar devices. …He was manager of the melodrama “The Mystery of a Hansom Cab.” Hiring a number of hansoms, he placed in each the dummy figure of a man in a dress suit, with blood-splattered shirt, and had them driven through the principal streets. He succeeded even better than he had expected. The ghastly spectacle became the talk of all London. The newspapers denounced it as an atrocity. It was said that nervous people had fainted, that children had screamed, and that ladies had gone off in hysterics. Finally, the authorities gave the lucky manager an additional “ad.” by ordering the hansoms back to the stables under pain of arrest. (Walsh 25)

Others describe this event similarly, and we can certainly conclude that the book and the theatrical production were mutually publicizing.
During this period when *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* was so much in fashion in London, a great deal of misinformation circulated its authorship. Various claimants to the name Fergus Hume appeared on the scene. The *Eclectic Magazine* records in its “Foreign and Literary Arts Notices,” in January 1889, that “A person who gives himself out to be the author of “The Mystery of a Hansom Cab” has been fleecing the booksellers of Bristol, England. He is said to be a handsome man of 5 feet 11 inches, with dark hair and complexion, and has ‘a slight American accent.’” Such hoaxes occurred to the extent that the real Hume, upon his arrival in London, appears to have had some difficulty establishing his identity as “the author of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*,” and much of his 1894 preface seems designed to refute false rumors about his identity:

Several people before and since my arrival in England, have assumed the authorship of the book to themselves; and one gentleman went so far as to declare that he would shoot me if I claimed to have written it. I am glad to say that up to the present he has not carried out his intention. Another individual had his cards printed, ‘Fergus Hume. Author of ‘The Mystery of a Hansom Cab,’ and also added the price for which he was prepared to write a similar book. Many of the papers put this last piece of eccentricity down to my account. I may state in conclusion, that I belong to New Zealand, and not to Australia, that I am a barrister, and not a retired policeman, that I am yet two decades off fifty years of age, that Fergus Hume is my real name, and not a non-de plume; and finally, that far from making a fortune out of the book, all I received … was the sum of fifty pounds. (10-11)

Despite this initial confusion, the Hansom Cab Publishing Co. edition creates a very plausible fiction of a highly involved author. In addition to reserving the dramatic rights to the novel, “the author” offers a dedication: “To James Payn, Novelist, this story is dedicated, in grateful acknowledgement of his kind encouragement to THE AUTHOR.” Payn was the editor of the *Cornhill magazine* at the time as well as a successful producer of popular fiction. Hume appears to have modeled his later career after Payn’s—
characterized by rapid and prolific production of popular and formulaic genre fiction (Waller 637).

After the theatrical production closed and the *Hansom Cab* fervor died down, copies of the books continued selling in Britain, but certainly not so well as before and Trichler & Co. filed for bankruptcy in October of 1892 (James 1). The copyrights were sold off and the title was actually out of print for approximately a year and a half, though Hume, by this time, was busy supplying multiple publishers with dozens of new titles by “the author of the Mystery of a Hansom Cab.” The “Notes and News” section of the *Academy* announced, on May 26 of 1894, “Messrs. Jarrold & Sons, having purchased the copyright in Mr. Fergus Hume’s *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, will shortly publish a revised edition, in cloth” (436). Advertisements expressed optimism that there remained a large population yet “unreached” by the novel, and included several periodical puffs in their advertisements including the statement from the *Scotsman* that “this edition should be welcome to many.” This edition had many of the same features of its predecessor, and it carried on the practice of tracking the number of thousands sold on the books themselves. In the Jarrold & Sons edition, British sales of *Hansom Cab* are credited as having exceeded the “Five Hundredth Thousand.” Jarrold & Sons likewise continued the tradition of advertisement through branding by publicizing their new edition of *Hansom Cab* as part of a “Fergus Hume Series.” The volumes were all “uniformly bound” and included *The Mystery of Landy Court, The Lone Inn*, and *The Mystery of Captain Flick*, as well as work by other mystery authors. These later editions differed markedly from the earlier “shilling shockers” in that they were bound in cloth with gilt edges and cost a
much more upscale price of 3s6d. The more expensive editions show a surprising inversion of the normal trend, documented by William St. Clair, in which copyrighted titles begin in expensive editions and gradually appear in cheaper editions.

While the Hansom Cab Publishing Company was able to establish an official or protected edition of its first text in London, Hume’s novel fared very differently across the Atlantic. Despite the fact that Hume states that he sold “the English and American rights” to the speculators for the sum of fifty pounds, the American copyright was never enforced, or even enforceable. As discussed in previous chapters, international copyright protection was not established in the United States until the Chace Act of 1891. In the case of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, American editions appeared almost immediately after the text became popular in England, from as early as 1888, just over one year after Hume’s initial publication of the novel in Australia. For American publishers, this text, with its immediate and sensational London popularity, was a relatively safe bet that numerous competing publishers in both New York (including G.W. Dillingham, J.S. Ogilvie, The Worthington Company, Hurst, J.W. Lovell & Co., and G. Munro) and Chicago (including M.A. Donohue & Co., Universal Publishing Company, Conkey, Belford, Clarke & Co., American Publishers, and Rand, McNally) seemed willing to make. Chicago publisher Skandinavens Boghandel even released a Norwegian translation in 1891 entitled *En hansom-cabs hemmelighed: fortaelling fra Australien*. In my research, I have found evidence of at least eighteen separate editions by twelve different
 Nearly all of the editions come from publishers in New York or Chicago, centers of popular publishing, though I have also found evidence of an 1890 edition put out by Arthur Westbrook of Cleveland, Ohio. In an 1896 review of a later Hume novel, *Munsey’s Magazine* addresses an audience of “those familiar with Mr. Hume’s work—and who is not?” (377). Peter Haining suggests that the circulation of the novel “doubled when the story was reprinted in America” (32). Indeed, the novel’s ubiquitous presence on publishers’ and library lists in the years following its initial appearance suggests that it was even more widely read in America than in Britain.

The wide variety of American editions, nearly all cheap paperback editions, demonstrate both the strength of the popular press in the United States and its capacity to absorb quickly new material from overseas into the large canon of public domain texts that publishers steadily released in various libraries and lists and cheap editions. In some editions, the cheapness of the editions themselves shows the extent to which the text was detachable to the apparatus and, thus, useful for inclusion in a variety of cheap lists or libraries. Publishers of the title included G. Munro (New York), who released an 1888 edition as well as a Seaside Library edition (no. 1075) in 1889. New York publisher J.S. Ogilvie released an edition in 1888, and followed this by later releasing the book as part

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of numerous series: the Red Cover Series (no. 17, 1889), the New York Library (no. 23),
the Eureka Detective Stories Series (no. 16), and the Sunset Series (no. 1888), all in 1900.
All of these editions seem to be from the same plates. The Chicago firm of Donohue &
Company also released multiple editions of Hume’s novel, the first sometime in 1888 as
No. 99 in the Alert Library series. It was later re-released using the same plates by
Donohue, Henneberry & Co as No.176 in the Modern Author’s Library. In these cases,
the text of the novel seems almost detachable from its apparatus. The covers contain
illustrations that are not recognizable as coming from within this text at all. The first
Donohue edition displays a picture of three men on horseback. One is dressed in fancy
English riding clothes, while the others are slightly less well-dressed. They are outside
what seems to be the entrance to a mansion, with a cast iron handrail and a sculpted
pillar. In the other picture, a lady and gentleman are kissing in an equally posh drawing
room, furnished with a chandelier and luxurious furniture. Both pictures convey a sense
of wealth, of high life. Neither is recognizably Australian, though the text takes place in
Melbourne, and neither refers to events in the text. In these editions, the text clearly
serves as a commercial vehicle and even cover illustrations seem to be interchangeable.

The ease and speed with which Fergus Hume’s novel moved from its minor,
localized success in the Melbourne market to London, and then to American markets via
New York and Chicago, reflects the political and economic reality of late Victorian
colonialism and transnational travel. London was the center of the British empire, just as,
in this book’s material history, it functions as the center of the global book market, the
center for creating copyright law, and a center for popular theater, periodicals, and
advertising. Though always prominently identified as an Australian text (indeed, to an extent it obscures the difference between Australia and New Zealand in Hume’s own biography), *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*’s widespread popularity and circulation in Britain and America reveals important tensions in the way the text inscribes nationality.

**Hansom Cab**’s Negotiation of Colonial and Transnational Identities through the Emerging Detective Genre

When Fergus Hume initially tried to find a Melbourne publisher for his novel, he recalls, the terms of his rejection reveal not only a literary taste that privileged books by British and American authors, but an anti-colonial bias on the part of the Australian book trade. These publishers, according to Hume, “laughed to scorn the idea that any good could come out of Nazareth—*i.e.*, the Colonies” (9). This sense of cultural inferiority on the part of Australian publishers corresponds to the ways in which the text not only marked itself as native to Australia, but also was consistently interpreted through the lens of imperial/colonial identification at every stage of its journey.

Within this context, one way that *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* negotiates the terms of its transnational circulation and of its own Australian self-identity is by interrogating the geographical roles commonly allocated to the colonies in Victorian detective fiction. Though detective or crime fiction\(^{121}\) has (arguably) existed for centuries in isolated examples, it emerged as a distinct genre in the 1880s and 90s, becoming widely popular in story and novel form (Cox). By this time, Patrick Brantlinger suggests,

\(^{121}\) Detective fiction and crime fiction can be viewed as two different categories, with the former as a subset of the larger category. However, in this paper, the terms will be used interchangeably. Several essays in a recent collection edited by Robin Winks attempt to engage some of these questions of categorization, and for a larger discussion see *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays* (The Countryman Press, 1988).
the British sense of confidence in the divine right of imperialism had deteriorated, leaving a sense of anxiety in much of Britain’s literature. This imperial anxiety tends to appear in contemporary detective fiction through the stories’ and novels’ relatively consistent constructions of place: Britain at the center, colonies in the periphery. *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* (1886), however, often seems to reverse this geographical and ideological pattern, constructing the colony as central and Britain as peripheral. In its constructions of place, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* is both ambivalent and somewhat inconsistent, vacillating imaginatively between the colonial city of Melbourne and Britain, questioning which location is inscribed as central and which as peripheral.

In the introduction to his recent book *Capital Offenses: Geographies of Class and Crime in Victorian London*, Simon Joyce describes many relatively recent intersections between the fields of geography and literary studies. He citing Franco Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* as an example of a simple kind of mapping of literature that utilizes the idea of tracing how characters or ideas move (or don’t move) through space as a way of interpreting a novel. Moretti’s study offers several actual maps and diagrams to depict the geographical movements and significance of characters, wealth and literary genres. While Joyce goes on to explore intersections with Frederic Jameson and “cognitive mapping” in order to lead to a discussion of the Victorian city, his initial development of the idea of literary mapping presents a useful tool for discussing patterns of place in late Victorian detective novels, particularly those involving colonial contexts. One obvious example of such a trope is the circulating spouses of the bigamy novel,
mentioned in Chapter 3, who conveniently and mysteriously disappear to the colonies and reappear transformed in various ways.

Even in theory, the genre of detection lends itself to the idea of mapping. As a genre, detective stories are organized around a crime-event, a social disturbance which is gradually located (or “mapped”), understood, and resolved over the course of the story. While the object of the crime could potentially have its origin within the empire, in these novels the crime itself and its detection are almost invariably located squarely in England, and most often in London itself. A clear center/margin pattern emerges, with the location of the original disturbance providing the center and the origins of the external or hidden forces that cause it constituting a kind of periphery. In keeping with this theory, Ernest Mandel suggests that a feeling of safety within English cities and a confidence in police protection prompted the Victorian detective story to find its most shocking criminals from the imperial or social outside (i.e. the colonies or the slums). Though this pattern is not without exception, it emerges from the available texts with a regularity that draws attention to any deviation.

Empire seems to function conspicuously on the margins of British detective texts. As suggested above and seen in the sensation novels discussed in Chapter 3, the colonies often function as either receptacles or sources for the destabilizing or criminal forces within English society. In crime or detective fiction, suspicious characters arrive in London from India or Australia, endowed with sinister skills (such as sharpshooting or the mixing of undetectable poisons) or magnificent and alluring treasures, which either prompt or enact crimes. In “The Empty House,” Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock
Holmes apprehends the infamous Colonel Moran, a former military officer in India rendered dangerous to society by his superior sharpshooting skills, developed through tiger-hunting. In Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four* (1890), the plot hinges on the Agra treasure, plundered during the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Wilkie Collins’ *The Moonstone* (1868) is perhaps the most famous early example of a foreign jewel that incites crime. At the end of these stories, a colonial destination often provides a convenient solution for those who have been socially dislocated by the process of detection: a safe but gentle punishment for the sympathetic criminal or a new start for the deserving member of the lower classes who has helped solve the crime.\(^{122}\) In crime fiction, figures or objects travel in clear transversals that converge on London or another central scene of detection and redisperse at the end.

*The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* inverts the center/margin pattern established by most other such novels, functioning as a colonial text. Its primary characters, including not just criminals, but protagonists and victims, are all first or second-generation British settlers in Melbourne, capital of the Victoria region of Australia. The novel centers on the mysterious murder in a hansom cab of Oliver Whyte, an Englishman who had recently arrived in Australia. The ensuing plot follows the fate of Brian Fitzgerald, a young Irish aristocrat who came to Australia to replenish the coffers of his family estate and Whyte’s romantic rival over Madge Frettlby, a pretty second-generation-Australian heiress. Her father, Mark Frettlby, made his fortune in Australia but his dubious past

\(^{122}\) For example, in “The Great Ruby Robbery” (1892) by Grant Allen, a farm in New Zealand is the reward for the industrious parlormaid and her mailman fiancé who provide the final clue to solve the mystery. Also, in R.E. Francillion’s “A Circumstantial Puzzle” (1889), an embezzling, but repentant clerk finds redemption and a new life in Australia.
threatens to resurrect itself. Though Fitzgerald is accused, tried and acquitted of the murder, the novel gradually reveals Whyte as a blackmailer, a destabilizing force in the coherent Melbourne society of the novel. Following the enactment of investigation by an enterprising lawyer (Calton) and a police detective (Kilsip) that leads them through all sections of Melbourne, and the discovery of the secret and of the killer, Brian and Madge leave Australia to start a new life in “the old world,” a reverse journey in which Great Britain functions as a convenient device to restore social order. In this novel, England, thus, seems to encapsulate neatly all the roles traditionally allotted to the colonies in such fiction, while Melbourne takes the central roles most often allotted to London.

When read in terms of geography and mapping, this piece of ambiguously British literature takes a new rhetorical meaning as a text from the outside. In Imagined Communities, Benedict Anderson explores the way that the British colonial endeavor used the European-style map of the world to shape imagined perceptions of the relationship between the center and the periphery. He describes historical maps in which the possessions of various imperial powers are color-coded, turning each colonial possession to a detachable jigsaw piece, suggesting that such maps, logos or pieces can be co-opted as tools for nationalism or the construction of an imagined national identity. Chu-Cheuh Cheng applies Anderson’s ideas about postcolonial mapping more directly to literature, discussing the relationship between Britain and its colonies that is expressed in the “cartographic writing and literary mapping” of various forms of Victorian fiction (2). He argues that the rhetorical strategies of maps like the one described by Anderson function in two ways: “imperial wish” and “imperial anxiety.” The first of these is a self-
confident rhetoric and display of imperial assertion and native invitation. The other, however, emerges more and more towards the end of the century as a post-Mutiny rhetoric of fear that the colonized will assert itself and a sense of inferiority. Cheng suggests that these strategies appear in rhetorical constructions of place and otherness in Victorian literary texts.

Like the map of empire described by Anderson, Hume’s text places Australia (specifically, Melbourne) at the center of the novel and England at the periphery within a genre of fiction that has traditionally functioned in the opposite way. Throughout The Mystery of a Hansom Cab, the narrator uses this structural inversion as a base upon which to collect meanings, definitions, markers of colonial identity. One might argue, then, that the rhetorical strategies of the novel actually function in terms of “colonial wish” and/or “colonial anxiety.” Even the Melbourne publishers’ rejection of Hume’s manuscript on the grounds of its colonial origins can be read in terms of colonial anxiety, as not only a preference for more widely known and accepted literature from the imperial center but as a kind of self-doubt, a sense that Melbourne literary culture was not sufficiently developed to produce a successful book. In addition to its patterns of geographical mapping, the novel’s use of specific narrative moments in an attempt to construct the city of Melbourne as highly cosmopolitan further dialogues with the conventional division between imperial and colonial place in Victorian detective fiction of the 80s and 90s.

The narrator of The Mystery of a Hansom Cab seems at all times to be aware of Melbourne’s ambiguous position both in the colonies and in a British novel and
repeatedly goes to great rhetorical lengths to construct the colonial place as wonderful and even superior. Expressing a kind of “colonial wish,” the narrator invokes a sense of local Melbourne pride and identity. However, the narrator complicates this picture by often constructing Melbourne and Australia through opposition or comparison to England and Europe, betraying a kind of inferiority complex or “colonial anxiety” rhetoric. Though this text seems to invert the imperial/colonial pattern in crime fiction and attempts to construct a colonial identity, it still manages by the end to reinstate the imperial center, both structurally and rhetorically.

In *Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, the narrator gradually constructs a strong sense of civic identity that involves every aspect of Melbourne life, mentioning specific details that Melbourne audiences would recognize as their own. The narrator observes, “If there is one thing Melbourne folk love more than another, it is music. Their fondness of it is equaled only by their admiration for horse racing” (143). In comparison with Sydney, Melbourne was considered to be the city of the arts, the realm of the music hall, the opera house and the newspaper. Horse-racing was another significant and well-known occupation in Melbourne, with the Melbourne Cup Handicap as a culmination of the season. In one scene, the lawyer Calton passes “a knot of horsey-looking men...standing under the Opera House verandah giving and taking odds about the Melbourne Cup, or some other meeting” (142). The novel also mentions the Melbourne Club, the most exclusive gentleman’s institution with a forty-guinea entrance fee (Davison 207). In both the exposition and the plot of the novel, there is a distinct preoccupation with modes of transportation (cabs, trains, etc.) by which central Melbourne is linked to its suburbs.
Robert Dixon points out that, “the principal characters are in constant movement, traveling with ease through the streets from one class of suburb to another” (40). In addition to countless small references to specific street names (Russell Street, Collins Street, Flinder’s Lane, Bourke Street, St. Kilda, etc.) and recognizable landmarks (the Town Hall clock, the Burke and Wills’ monument and Moubray, Rowan and Hicks, a prominent department store), the narrator includes two lengthy descriptive passages of several pages each that invoke a sense of the spectacle of public Melbourne life. Through these images and passages, the narrator seems to construct a vision of Melbourne as a premier world city in every respect.

The first of the descriptive passages invokes a vivid sense of a city that is commercially prosperous and socially upwardly-mobile. It comes early in the narrative and describes the midday scene of Collins Street, a prosperous commercial thoroughfare: “It was Saturday morning, and fashionable Melbourne was ‘doing the Block’” (87). For the benefit of the many British and American readers not familiar with Melbourne social practices as well as for the Melbourne natives who might be pleased by such a vision of their own city, the narrator explains,

It is on the Block that people show off their new dresses, bow to their friends, cut their enemies, and chatter small talk...As the sun brings out bright flowers, so the seductive influence of the hot weather had brought out all the ladies in gay dresses of innumerable colour, which made the long street look like a restless rainbow. Carriages were bowling smoothly along, their occupants smiling and bowing as they recognised their friends on the sidewalk. (87-88)

The narrator goes on to mention specific figures that have congregated to see and be seen, including lawyers with their “pretty daughters,” and “the representatives of swelldom.”

In general, this description evokes a sense of fashionable spectacle and community.
Concluding the description of the street, the narrator practically invites the reader to be pleased with the sight: “Altogether it was a pleasant and animated scene, which would have delighted the heart of anyone who was not dyspeptic, or in love—dyspeptic people and lovers (disappointed ones, of course) being wont to survey the world in a cynical vein” (88). In 1886, Collins Street would have been filled with banks, warehouses and shops, so its vision of parading wealth mirrors Melbourne’s status as the commercial center of Australia. In 1883, Gilbert Parker quipped, “You cannot escape the feeling, go where you will, that the chief end of life in Melbourne is to make money” (qtd. in Grant and Serle 162), and the Collins Street scene overtly hints at this sense of prosperity.

To balance the vision of prosperous Melbourne life, the next significant descriptive passage displays another major street that, though also central to Melbourne civic life, has much less lofty social significance. This section provides a glimpse of the theatrical district of Bourke Street, a location that was as significant for the civic life of Melbourne in 1886 as Collins Street was for the financial sector. In 1880, H. Perkins observed: “Though not the most fashionable thoroughfare by day...[Bourke Street] is yet, at all times, the busiest street, and at night it reigns supreme without a rival” (in Grant and Serle 165). Significantly, in this night scene the classes that congregate are much more varied. Once again, the narrator constructs a unique sense of place that is distinctly recognizable as belonging to Melbourne: “Bourke Street is a more crowded thoroughfare than Collins Street, especially at night. The theatres that it contains are in themselves sufficient for the gathering of a considerable crowd. It was a grimy crowd for the most part...” (142). Once again, the narrator goes on to describe specific figures: the “ragged
street Arabs,” the woman selling the late edition of the *Melbourne Herald*, the group of “three violins and a harp playing a German waltz.” It is in this section that—under the Opera house verandah—the aforementioned “horsey-looking men” appear. Class distinctions surface in the image of “carriages dash along with their well-groomed horses, and within, the vision of bright eyes, white dresses, and the sparkle of diamonds” (142-3).

The wealthy Melbourne citizens also enjoy the theatres, but travel in such a way as to minimize their contact with (and subsequent contamination by) the “proletarians” (144).

Though not so extensive and spectacular as the two street scenes, the textual constructions of the slums of Little Bourke Street show a side of Melbourne that, if not familiar to a middle class reader, was distinctly recognizable and formed a constant part of the civic consciousness. The celebratory rhetoric of the early sections creates an interesting dialogue with these later notorious slum scenes, which, Hume admits, had to be “toned down” (9) for the second edition. The narrator uses the trope of the maze to describe the slums through which Kilsip leads Calton. According to the narrator, Calton “felt somewhat bewildered by the darkness and narrowness of the lanes through which he had been taken...” (142). Australia (and especially the city of Melbourne) had a long, tortured relationship with its large Chinese population, which Kathryn Cronin explores in *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria*. As Kilsip and Calton pass the opium dens of Little Bourke Street, “Now and then a mild-looking string of Chinamen stole along, clad in their dull-hued blue blouses, either chattering shrilly, like a lot of parrots, or moving silently down the alley with a stolid Oriental apathy on their yellow faces”
This racist depiction was full in keeping with contemporary rhetoric on race and immigration.

The figures that inhabit the back alleys of Little Bourke Street form a clear part of Melbourne society even for those who had never seen them. Marcus Clarke, a prominent Australian novelist of the naturalist school and journalist in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and he wrote a series of exposés of the life of the lower classes in cities including Melbourne. He describes the anxiety of proximity felt by the upper classes: “Little Bourke Street and other known underworld haunts are ‘but a stone’s throw from the most fashionable parts of the city” (qtd. in Ryan 89). The sense of urban slums nearby was an integral part of the Melbourne concept of itself.

One clear reason for the presence of these slum scenes is the way that they invoke the traditional nature of the detective genre. The detective functions as a figure that is able to successfully solve the crime through his familiarity with various social strata. In *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, Kilsip’s familiarity with and negotiation of the slums of Little Bourke Street eventually lead to the revelation of the secrets prompting the crime. Christa Ludlow reads the figure of the detective and that of the investigative journalist as figures who, together, allowed “the nervous middle classes to read the colonial city” (2). This novel, then, presents Melbourne as a complete Victorian city, appropriate for the enactment of crime and detection.

In constructing Melbourne as a complete (including both the high and the low, as did London, Paris, and other European models) and highly cosmopolitan city, Hume’s novel aligns itself with a uniquely strong sense of civic pride that dominated Melbourne
in the mid- to late-1880s and manifested itself in the contemporary cliché: “Marvellous Melbourne.” Coined in 1885 by globe-trotting London critic George Augustus Sala, this nicely alliterated phrase was on everyone’s tongue in 1886, when *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* was first published. In Mark Frettiby’s confession, he gives his early history, mentioning how he came to “Port Phillip, now so widely known as Marvellous Melbourne...I saw that it was a young and rising colony, though, of course, coming as I did, before the days of the gold diggings, I never dreamt it would spring up, as it has done since, into a nation” (301). In his article (which appeared in papers including Melbourne’s *Argus*, the *London Daily Telegraph*, the *Australasian* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*), Sala expresses astonishment at the rapidity in which a town that half a century previously had only thirteen buildings and was called “Bearbrass” had been “transformed it into a mighty city” (Davison 230). Melbourne was not just a cultural capital, but it was the financial center as well, and the late Victorian period was a time of immense prosperity undergirded by heavy speculation and extreme optimism. According to Delyse Ryan, “The combination of Melbourne’s desire to eclipse the other colonial cities in terms of prestige, the knowledge that it was prospering in the current land boom, and the preparedness of the local population to believe an assertion that their city was internationally renowned” all ensured that the phrase gained popularity (81). In an 1883 volume entitled *Town Life in Australia*, R.E.N. Twopenny reports the attractions and diversions of Melbourne society in a tone that fits the spirit of the times:

If you are a man of leisure you will find more ‘society’ in Melbourne, more balls and parties,...more and better theatrical and musical performances, more racing and cricket, football, and athletic clubs, a larger leisured class than in Sydney. ...The Melbourne races attract three or four times the number of visitors that the
Sydney races do; all public amusements are far better attended in Melbourne; the people dress better, talk better, think better, are better...There is far more ‘go’ and far more ‘life’ to be found in Melbourne, and it is there that the visitor must come who wishes to see the fullest development of Australasian civilisation, whether in commerce or education, in wealth or intellect, in manners and customs—in short, in every department of life. (qtd. in Grant and Serle 160-161)

Citizens of Melbourne in the 1880s were ready to believe that their city was marvelous, and they loved to see images of themselves reflected in contemporary entertainment.

The tendency toward civic pride was especially strong in Melbourne theatrical circles and, in this vein, a recent article by Delyse Ryan explores the historical context of a popular 1889 play appropriately entitled “Marvellous Melbourne.” Ryan links the play with contemporary cultural movements, including exposés of urban low-life by journalists like Marcus Clarke, the literary precedent of the city novel, and “the trend in colonial theatre of this era to emphasise the local aspect of a production” (82). A contemporary review of the production congratulates the authors on their choice of setting, echoing the local enthusiasm for having “less of foreign countries and more of our own” (qtd. in 85). At the time that he wrote The Mystery of a Hansom Cab, the young Fergus Hume was certainly familiar with the current trends in the theatrical world of Melbourne, which is clearly an influence on the way in which he works not only the phrase “Marvellous Melbourne” but its rhetoric and optimism into his novel.

In a spirit of self-promotion and celebration, Melbourne sought not only to distinguish itself in comparison to European cities, but other Australian ones as well. In 1985, Bruce Bennett gave a series of lectures to the Foundation for Australian Literary Studies on the importance of establishing a precise sense of place in Australian literature.
In these lectures, he discusses Australian literature of the past century in an effort to combat the view of Australia that includes just “Sydney and the bush” (6). He claims that there has been little notice taken of “actual places and region and writers’ relations with them, and depictions of them” (6) despite the fact that such regional depictions were often part of bids to force the center to distinguish among these peripheral areas. He suggests, “It is a psychological fact that those who inhabit the perceived centre are less likely than those who inhabit the perceived peripheries to believe in concepts of regionalism” (5). He demonstrates that this tendency to generalize about former colonies has persisted throughout the history of Australian literature. In the Victorian era, the British center had little interest in anything but generalizations about its former colonies. Patrick Brantlinger explores how Trollope and others perpetuated an either overly-simplified view of Australia as both a pastoral place of redemption and a corrupt/contaminated den of filth. However, Bennett makes it clear that the civic pride so evident in The Mystery of a Hansom Cab functions regionally as well as globally. Melbourne was making a bid to escape from the Sydney-centered view of Australia, just as it was making a bid to escape from the Britain-centered view of the globe.

Despite the fact that the construction of place in The Mystery of a Hansom Cab displays a strong valorization of the local, the narrative also betrays a larger sense of identity as a colony of England. Specifically, it seems to employ a rhetoric of “colonial anxiety” in its need to continually establish a role for Australia as a colony by constructing place in opposition to that of England (or Europe more generally). Sue Turnbull notes that, for almost a century after this novel, Australian crime fiction would
display the same sense of inferiority in its inability to construct place without comparison to other places that are closer to the imperial center. Retaining an awareness of its geographical, imaginative, and material origins, the novel often seems to be explaining Australia and Melbourne to an English reader. In these comparisons, though, Australia as a place is generally implied to be inferior, at least a mere copy or at most a perversion of that which is “normal” and good.

Since it is in the southern hemisphere, Australian weather patterns are generally opposite of those in England, and the narrator continually explains these anomalies as something strange. When compared to English standards, the essence of each season is suggested to be lost or perverted. In a discussion of “A Midsummer Night’s Dream,” Brian Fitzgerald jokes to Madge, “Midsummer out here is so hot that one gets no sleep, and, consequently no dreams. Depend on it, if the four lovers whom Puck treated so badly had lived in Australia they wouldn’t have been able to sleep for the mosquitoes” (94). Just as European summers are privileged over the hot Australian ones, even the warm Australian winters are shown to be inferior. The Collins Street scene takes place on “a broiling hot day... a real Australian December day dropped by mistake of the clerk of the weather into the middle of August” (87). The narrator seems to suggest that that which is “really” Australian is clearly the more unpleasant. Similarly, the final scenes take place during the Christmas season and, in acknowledging the oddity of an Australian December, the narrator suggests the fundamental oddity or inferiority of Australia itself:

A hot December day...such a description of snowy December sounds perchance a trifle strange to English ears. It may strike them as somewhat fantastic...But here in Australia we are in the realm of contrariety, and many things other than dreams go by contrary. Here black swans are an established fact, and the proverb
concerning them...has been rendered null and void by the discoveries of Captain Cook. Here ironwood sinks and pumice stone floats, which must strike the curious spectator as a queer freak on the part of Dame Nature. At home the Edinburgh mail bears the hardy traveller to a cold climate, with snowy mountains and wintry blasts; but here the further north one goes the hotter it gets, till one arrives in Queensland, where the heat is so great that a profane traveler of an epigrammatic turn of mind once fittingly called it, “An amateur hell.” (197)

Conventional wisdom about swans, “A black swan is a rare thing upon the earth,” is entirely undermined by Australian reality. Indeed, if whiteness is an inherent part of swan-ness, black swans become not only an aberration but a symbol of the complete inversion of the Australian context, as Hume posits here.123 This passage is particularly interesting in its suggestion that in all aspects, Australia reflects the contrariness of its weather patterns. Australia is “hell” to the heaven of England or Europe. The narrator is quick to point out that Australians retain their staunch loyalty to English Christmas traditions and fashions, despite the fact that such rituals are often rendered uncomfortable by the warm weather. Australians, then, are constructed as aspiring to be English in this novel, while only their country is completely the opposite.

The narrator tempers the descriptions of specific Melbourne locations, which seem to celebrate the local so strongly, by comparing these locations—unfavorably—to others in Europe. The descriptive section about Collins Street functions dually in this way. In it, the narrator comments, “Collins Street is to the Southern city what Bond Street and the Row are to London, and the Boulevards to Paris... Collins Street is not, of

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123 Nassim Taleb’s *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (2007) outlines the basis of black swan theory, which deals with events that are large-scale, unpredictable, and conspicuously outside normal realms of expectation.

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course, such a grand thoroughfare as those above mentioned, but the people who stroll up and down the broad pavement are quite as charmingly dressed, and as pleasant as any of the peripatetics of those famous cities” (87). Not only is Collins Street unable to assert identity outside of a comparison with European cities, but the narrator quite obviously apologizes for it as being not quite so grand.

One could perhaps argue that this comparison with cosmopolitan European cities like London and Paris strengthens Melbourne’s assertion that it is a world city. It is significant that not all the comparisons are negative. Mark Fretlby’s mansion is described as being “not unworthy of Park Lane” (53). Favorable comparisons certainly strengthen Melbourne’s bid for importance as an Australian city, to resist those who see only Sydney. However, Fretlby’s house is represented as the rare exception, rather than the rule. Also, according to Sue Turnbull, the kind of narrative construction of place through comparison with European locations that we see in this novel has remained a feature of Australian fiction until only recently. The pervasiveness of this technique suggests that a sense of colonial identity is at its root. While this “colonial anxiety” may not always manifest itself through a sense of inferiority, it certainly is characterized by a constant sense of identity as a colonial possession.

While the rhetorical construction of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* seems to be asserting Melbourne’s prominence as a national and international city and its status as its own geographical center, the constant and pervasive comparisons to England (and Europe) ultimately seem to undermine this “colonial wish.” Ultimately, the rhetoric and mapping of the novel’s end serve to fully destabilize the project of colonial construction
and ultimately to reinstate Britain as a larger imperial center. Two-thirds of the way through the novel, with Brian acquitted but the murder and the mystery not fully unraveled, the central characters leave Melbourne for their stations in outer Victoria to spend Christmas in the country. For a novel that manifests so much excitement over the colonial city, the change of tone surrounding the city at this point in the novel is remarkable. In a sudden change of attitude, the characters repeatedly refer with a shudder to the “riotous, feverish Melbourne life” (301). They are sick of the city and ultimately sick of Australia, longing to leave.

Soon after, with the mystery fully solved and the secret of Mark Frettleby’s past re-buried, the newly married Madge and Brian “only too gladly [leave] Australia, with all its sorrows and bitter memories” (321). This move away from the center of the action is consistent with the traditional kind of mapping described earlier. In British detective novels, displaced or subversive characters often leave for the colonies (the periphery) at the end in a move that preserves the stability of the center, so one might expect the opposite to be true here. However, the significant difference is that the characters leaving for England are the upper-class protagonists, rather than members of the criminal or deserving lower classes. The center of society, then, shifts from Melbourne to England at the end of the novel, with the sympathetic characters leaving to seek “the old world and the new life” (322). In a sense, The Mystery of a Hansom Cab is both Australian and British. It functions both as a text from the colonial periphery and a prominent member of the body of detective fiction in this period. It writes to both locations and seems to try to mediate some kind of geographical and rhetorical relationship between them. As a
dual text, this novel makes large claims for itself, larger than most British detective novels of this period (which generally promise little more than a few hours’ pleasant occupation). It presents a place that is cultured and complete and seems to be making an initial bid for cultural and geographical respect and acceptance for Melbourne, for Australia and for the colonies. The strength of this bid, however, is ultimately subsumed by the novel’s end, which reinstates the mapping of the traditional British detective novel. Though the center of the map temporarily shifts to “marvellous Melbourne,” the novel does not have the strength to hold it there.

The narrative of *The Mystery of A Hansom Cab* functions dually: constructing the local as marvelous, while also constructing the colonial as peripheral. This reflects the novel’s dual sense of audience that came from the material conditions surrounding its publication. Clearly, at least initially Hume saw himself as writing for acceptance by a local audience, as he, himself, claims. However, the novel displays a wider concept of audience that included the English reader, and a sense of its own place within a world defined by imperial/colonial relations. The novel’s final trajectory away from Melbourne and toward England parallels not only the journey made by *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* itself, but of its author and even one of its publishers (Frederick Trischler). In each case, London offered opportunities that Melbourne did not: a huge audience for the novel, a career for Hume, and a business for Trischler.

**International Reception of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab***

While the colonial subjectivity displayed by *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, as discussed above, involves a complex dialectic between self-congratulation and self-
criticism, the discussion provoked by Hume’s novel and its massive London and
American circulation was much less nuanced. The critical reception maintains a strong
sense of the otherness of the text, framing discussions with images of “invasion” or
surprise. The text, always identified as Australian, is presented as having jumped onto
the scene and shocked British sensibilities.

The contemporary reception of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* in Britain and
American centers around this pattern of surprise. *Chalmer’s Cyclopedia of Literature*
records that in 1887, Hume “sprung on English readers” *Hansom Cab* and the rest of his
novels. Of the theatrical version, William Archer claims, “The Mystery of a Hansom
Cab,” a rough-and-ready adaptation of an Australian “shilling shocker,” was
industriously advertised into a fair imitation of success (24). The rhetoric of reviews is
characterized by critics’ attempts to account for the book’s unexpected popularity,
identifying the wide circulation as something of a “mystery” itself. In 1889, a reviewer
for *Blackwood’s* remarked, “The public taste is inscrutable in its developments,” and
attributing “the boundless sale of ‘The Mystery of a Hansom Cab’… to the exigencies of
railway traveling, to the folly of idle readers, who want nothing but a little excitement,
and perhaps to an over-supply, which clogs appetite, and makes vinegar and pickles
welcome as a variety of sensation” (“The Old Saloon” 266). In the *Papers of the
Manchester Literary Club*, another reviewer diagnoses the problem as also one of
vulgarity of taste: “[A] clever plot won for *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* a temporary,
but enormous popularity. The reason of this is no doubt to be found partly in the gradual
disappearance of plot-interest from current novels” (“History of the English Novel” 441-
In another search for an explanation, an *Edinburgh Review* article speculates that one explanation for the popularity of books like *Hansom Cab* (specifically mentioned by name), “is that, owing to various circumstances, a demand has arisen for novels which, instead of being read at leisure, are devoured in hurried intervals, like a stockbroker’s luncheon in the City; in which all that is sought is excitement and distraction at the moment; and which are, when they have once been read, done with like an ended meal” (305). Digestive metaphors actually give way to rather mixed religious ones in the *Quarterly Review*: “to scores of thousands who have read—or who are declared to have at least purchased—‘The Hansom Cab’; and there may be some use in indicating the fatted calf to those who are fain to fill their bellies with the husks that the swine ate. For surely never was there an age in which the emptiest literary husks were more eagerly devoured than now, nor in which there was less excuse for its depraved appetite” (422).

Reviewers draw a stark distinction between the two estates of the nineteenth-century global reading audience. One is vulgar, indiscriminate and driven by appetite for sensation, while the other appreciates works that prompt sober reflection. In another *Blackwood’s* article, reprinted in 1890 in the American periodical *The Living Age*, a critic offers advice to an aspiring writer, saying that to be a bestseller, his book “must be a startling novel, a nineteenth-century Mrs. Radcliffe style, the shilling thrilling volume of sensational incidents, worked up by the pen of a ready writer, ‘The Mystery of a Hansom Cab,’—this is what succeeds; but a work of culture and thought, men or women either have no time to read, or at any rate no time to appreciate” (305). As in the reviews of the sensation novels from Chapter 3, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*’s popularity is read as an
index of character of the readers who received it. Even in 1939, in her history of detective fiction, Amy Cruse follows this critical strain, interpreting *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* as illustrative of the characteristics of its readers:

It was really a melodrama with a detective framework. Its immense popularity is to be explained not so much by its merits as by the mood of the public that received it—a public far more eager for excitement than that which had received Wilkie Collins’s [*The Moonstone*]! The lurid details of the story appealed to those readers who were lovers of the horrible. Such readers exist in all ages and among all classes; among the sensation-seeking post-Victorians the taste was highly developed. (141)

The critics, both contemporary and later, overwhelmingly set themselves outside the book’s mass audience, reflecting a high-brow rejection of the popular.

The massive audience of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* is surprisingly anonymous, knowable mostly through its reading habits, through the myriad of cheap editions and advertisements that survive, and through critical characterizations. Though they may not have been “lovers of the horrible,” these readers were certainly highly subject to currents of literary fashion. It is significant to note the degree to which individuals who admit having read the book tend to reject any identification with the text, particularly after the massive wave of *Hansom Cab* mania passed away. They dismiss it as part of the “depraved appetite” of the masses, though indirectly allowing that they read the novel themselves, attested by their ability to summarize and criticize it.

This trend of mocking the book’s popularity while simultaneously displaying a kind of fascination with it is reflected in the many parodies inspired by the novel. Christopher Pittard notes several parodies that appeared at the time, including one from *“Beeton’s Christmas Annual*, in the title of a short play by R. Andre, ‘The Mystery of a
Handsome Cap.’ A comic song, ‘The Mystery of a Hansom Cab’ by E.W. Rogers and A.E. Durandeau, appeared in the same year” (330). The dual response of disgust and fascination finds a more extended and complex form in a book-length parody released in 1888, within a year of the original text’s London publication. Entitled *The Mystery of a Wheelbarrow; or Gaboriau Gaborooed: an idealistic story of a great and rising colony: a blood-curdling romance* by one W. Humer Ferguson, the parody was published by the London publishers Walter Scott & Co. and appears to have been published simultaneously in Melbourne. In this text, we see evidence of a reader who is at once careful and critical. He has read the original closely and attends both to minute details and to implicit goals. The comedy relies on the original book’s overwhelming popularity and assumes a readership familiar with the smallest details, following the original text closely in terms of structure but changing or inverting everything from character names and actual conversations to chapter titles and plot elements. Oliver Whyte, the murdered man, is Oliver Black, while the Frettleby family is renamed Frecklenose and Brian Fitzboodle becomes Fitzdoodle O’Brier. The circumstances of the murder and even the various episodes by which the detective (Kilsip, renamed Cowslip) collects evidence parallel the original.

In addition to rendering small details ridiculous, the parody shows an awareness of the book’s own goals and pretensions. The topics in *The Mystery of a Wheelbarrow* that display the strongest parody seem to be moments that correspond with the book’s anxiety about its origins, which I discussed above. While *Hansom Cab* is simultaneously proud and ashamed of its colonial roots, *The Mystery of a Wheelbarrow* conspicuously
drifts beyond its primary mode of silly puns and wordplay when treating all things Australian. Repeatedly referencing the text’s colonial origin, the parody mocks its mix of patriotism and pretension, as it exhibits Australia to a larger audience. The phrase “our great and rising colony” appears frequently, as do unflattering observations about speech patterns and characters that are tied to the colonial context. Examples include, “Fitzdoodle’s face was ghastly pale and ‘his brows wrinkled angrily’—a facial distortion of colonial origin” (48) and “Mrs. Cracles was one of the dry and chippy specimens of human mechanism, such as exist only in our free and rising colony” (54). Nearly all of the passages from the original text discussed above, including those on A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Australian weather, and the various streets of Melbourne, make an appearance in altered form. Claiming to be a “student of the Victorian edition of Shakespeare’s ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’,,” Fitzdoodle summarizes its plot in Australian form, “Titania stung to death by mosquitos and widowed Oberon on staff of Sydney Bulletin…and Bottom arrested for sheep-stealing, and Puck, with his wings clipped, reduced to writing shilling dreadfuls a la Gabaroo” (62). In an inversion of the original book’s own discussion of Australia, the parody claims, “Australia is a ‘realm of topsy-turveydom,’ as well it might be with the ‘sun one hundred odd in the shade.’ On a Christmas day the very plum pudding must have felt itself to be a sad anomaly—ready to shed its exterior plums in sheer disgust at the obvious frauds perpetrated by all astronomers from Philadelphus to Christie…the peculiarities of Australian astronomy” (112).
Going beyond this inversion of the original novel’s simple patriotism, the parody reveals a deeper streak of anti-Australian sentiment, bringing in darker episodes from the colony’s early history, including crime and racism. The parodist explains the public reception of the murders thus: “The aristocratic families of Melbourne, whose forefathers—the early dwellers in the colony—had no very enviable characters to keep unspotted from the world, were justly proud to have nourished in their midst a murderer … The ladies of Melbourne, whose grandsires had come over with the Conquerer (convict ship, B2), screamed with delighted horror when they learned who was the murderer…Everybody was charmed” (71). Corresponding to Australia’s own dark secrets are the secrets kept by individual characters, recast in the parody as much nastier. In the original text, Mark Frettby’s dark, blackmail-worthy secret is typical of the sensation novel: accidental bigamy. His first marriage to an actress, who had disappeared and been wrongly presumed dead, rendered his subsequent marriage illegal and his daughter illegitimate. This narrative is tied to the early history of Australia, to his time as an early settler at a station and to the pull of the theatre district in the city. In the parody, however, the character goes from settler and accidental bigamist to con man. The narrative explains Frecklenose’s gradual ascent to riches:

[He] arrived in Australia with the customary eighteenpence, penknife, and bit of string. With this insignificant capital he had laid the foundation of his fortunes—at first as a gold-digger, then squatter, and afterwards proprietor of a cattle wash, which had the peculiar efficacy of leaving sheep and oxen hairless and woolless as looking-glasses. A large sum was subscribed by appreciative settlers and presented to the enterprising Frecklenose on the sole condition that he consented to ‘run’ his cattle wash in a neighboring colony. (35)
The secret discovered by “Susannah” that leads to murder is that Frecklenose was “in the habit of boiling down black babies for the manufacture of a certain compound of which he held the recipe; … that recipe fell into her hands, and, ultimately, came into Black’s possession” (142). While the baby in question is revealed at the very end to be made of rubber, the streak of racism and of abuse of aboriginal populations takes the place of family drama or bigamy as the heart of the mystery. Being Australian, then, is reinterpreted within the context of a much deeper anxiety about origins than the original text portrays.

Ultimately, though, the parody skewers most mercilessly the book’s clear literary pretensions, the idea that any Australian text could hold its own in an imperial market. It refers to the whole crime/narrative itself as “literary patriotism” (134), while a character’s memoirs are cast as “another mystery to swell the glories of Australian literature” (140). A running gag compares the events to those in an aspiring Gaboriau novel but misspells his last name in ever-more-creative ways. The whole exercise in detection is reinterpreted as a writing contest. Chapter 3, entitled “An Alluring Bait. V.R. Murder. Prize Competition,” begins:

Whereas on Friday, the 27th day of July, one thousand eight hundred and ----, a murder was committed of a highly sensational nature so dreadful and extraordinary, that it is supposed by the Victorian Government that the assassin can have had no meaner object in view than that of rivaling in daring atrocity the mysterious crimes described in the much-admired works of Gaboriau and Du Boisgobey, thus affording gratuitous material for the creation by some Colonial genius of a shilling shocker calculated to crown with glory the immortal literary achievements of our great and rising Colony. Taking this profoundly philosophical view of the matter, the Government have decided to offer a prize of one hundred pounds for the best sensational romance based upon the facts disclosed at the Coroner’s inquest. (16)
This advertisement is followed by another for dentistry services, etc., referencing the myriad cheap editions of the original novel which were also packed with advertisements. The text claims, “However horrible and atrocious the wheel barrow murder might be, it had the beneficial effect of establishing the supremacy of the Melbourne evening newspapers over all other journals of the kind. Not even the London Star or the Pall Mall Gazette could have invented a more blood-curdling contents bill than that produced by the Melbourne Moonshine” (65). The character of O’Brier claims, “The most important point in Australian murders is their resemblance or dissimilarity to those that have been plotted and executed in the fertile brain of the novelist. Miss Braddon? Gaboreau? Dickens? Not in it, any of them! Murdered in a wheel-barrow—a good old wheel-barrow!” (48). Ironically, this accusation that the novel’s claims to startling uniqueness (the hansom cab) are based on little more than imitation is fairly similar to Hume’s own description of his writing process, in which he read popular novels and copied them. Australian literature here is reduced to mere imitation, even as this particular tale was being widely read, restaged, and imitated across London and America.

The critics and parodists distance themselves from the book’s popularity among a mass audience even while participating in the general fascination with it. Even Fergus Hume seems to be willing to set himself outside his own text’s subsequent popularity, to a degree. Significantly, Hume does not recover control of the text of his most famous novel until eight years after its initial Melbourne publication, with the release of the authorized 1894 edition by Jarrold’s London. In this edition, he claims to have “thoroughly revised” the text, removing “the many typographic, and other errors, which
disfigured the first edition” (7). Hume’s revisions extend beyond mere copy-editing. He removes some of the most graphic depictions of poverty and vice in the Little Bourke Street sections and much of the Melbourne local color. Such revisions extend my earlier suggestion that Hume’s text betrays a sense of colonial anxiety, of ambivalence towards its own Melbourne origins. It is also possible to view these revisions as attempting to raise the tone of the work itself, to lift it from the category of the “shilling shoker” and make it more fitting for a 3-and-6 gilt-edged edition. In removing the most lurid and “characteristic” examples of local color, Hume also renders the text less uniquely Australian, emphasizing its confused allegiances as a colonial text.

The case of *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* adds to our understanding of how international bestsellers were generated and how they moved from a domestic reading audience to a potentially different foreign one. In a sense, the Australian book trade was decades behind the American book trade in terms of development, so looking at the growth of bestsellers in Australia adds to our understanding of how colonial markets develop and the kinds of tensions/questions that shape them (similar to but also different from America, Canada, South Africa, India). The inverted audience pattern here shows the way the market disempowers Australian authors, while creating unique opportunities for them.

Adding colonial destinations to our map of nineteenth-century reading, not just as markets for a few reprints, but as sources for texts, demonstrates the degree to which nineteenth century reading audiences for books in English were global. Attempts to nationalize particular texts will always be complicated by the competing allegiances of
their readers. This project shows the extent to which the market, shaped by particular laws and practices, conditioned the way these texts moved. It helps us know what questions to ask of the texts, and to realize who was reading them and what was important to these readers.

Together, the case studies in this dissertation, in re-drawing the map of literary history to include the responses of the readers who offered international books new homes, come to embody a highly contextualized way of reading and nationalizing bestsellers in a particular environment. Though Frank Luther Mott points out, “there is no such thing as a typical bestseller” (4), each text also highlights patterns and reading formations that are already present and generates new ones of its own. This study shows how bestsellers link the content of particular books with the print culture that produced them. As this pattern of inverted audiences or of reciprocal reading is amplified at particular moments, when highly popular books created publishing sensations, I uncover a newly active way of reading the collaborations among publishers and readers, whose responses take books far away from home.
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