

A "GREATER BRITAIN":
COLONIAL KIN IN FICTIONS OF SETTLEMENT, 1850-1890

BY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation traces the ways in which nineteenth-century fictional narratives of white settlement represent “family” as, on the one hand, an abstract theoretical model for a unified and relatively homogenous British settler empire and on the other, a fundamental challenge to ideas about imperial integrity and transnational Anglo-Saxon racial identification. I argue that representations of transoceanic white families in nineteenth-century fictions about Australian settler colonialism negotiate the tension between the bounded domesticity of an insular English nation and the kind of kinship that spans oceans and continents as a result of mass emigration from the British isles to the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and the Australian colonies. As such, these fictions construct productive analogies between the familial metaphors and affective language in the political discourse of “Greater Britain”—a transoceanic imagined community of British settler colonies and their “mother country” united by race and language—and ideas of family, gender, and domesticity as they operate within specific bourgeois families. Concerns over the disruption of transoceanic families bear testament to contradictions between the idea of a unified imperial identity (both British and Anglo-Saxon), the proliferation of fractured local identities (such as settlers’ English, Irish Catholic, and Australian nationalisms), and the conspicuous absence of indigenous families from narratives of settlement.

I intervene at the intersection of postcolonial literary criticism and gender theory by examining the strategic deployments of heteronormative kinship metaphors and metonymies in the rhetorical consolidation of settler colonial space. Settler colonialism was distinct from the “civilizing” domination of subject peoples in South Asia in that it depended on the rhetorical construction of colonial territory as empty space or as land occupied by nearly extinct

“primitive” races. This dissertation argues that political rhetoric, travel narratives, and fiction used the image of white female bourgeois reproductive power and sentimental attachment as a technology for settler colonial success, embodying this technology both in the benevolent figure of the metropolitan “mother country” (the paternalistic female counter to the material realities of patriarchal and violent settler colonial practices) and in fictional juxtapositions of happy white settler fecund families with the solitary self-extinguishing figure of the black aboriginal “savage.” Yet even in the narratives where the continuity and coherence of families across imperial space is questioned—and “Greater Britain” itself—domesticity and heteronormative familial relations effectively rewrite settler space as white, Anglo-Saxon and bourgeois, and the sentimentalism of troubled European families masks the presence and genocide of indigenous aboriginal peoples.

I analyze a range of novels and political texts, canonical and non-canonical, metropolitan and colonial. My introductory first chapter examines the discourse on a “Greater Britain” in the travel narratives of J.A. Froude, Charles Wentworth Dilke, and Anthony Trollope and in the Oxbridge lectures of Herman Merivale and J.R. Seeley. These writers make arguments for an imperial economy of affect circulating between Britain and the settler colonies that reinforces political connections, and at times surpasses the limits of political possibility by relying on the language of sentiment and feeling to build a transoceanic “Greater British” community. Subsequent chapters show how metropolitan and colonial fiction writers, including Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Marcus Clarke, Henry Kingsley, and Catherine Helen Spence, test the viability of this “Greater British” economy of affect by presenting transoceanic family connections and structures straining under the weight of forces including the vast distances between colonies and the “mother country,” settler violence, and the transportation system.

To my mother, Jasmine Walston,
who first introduced me to books and who has always been proud of me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: DEFINING GREATER BRITAIN: A GLOBAL ECONOMY OF AFFECT AND THE ANGLO-SAXON FAMILY IN POLITICAL WRITING AND VICTORIAN FICTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: COLONIAL RELATIONS: DICKENS'S <i>BLEAK HOUSE</i> , CAROLINE CHISHOLM AND FAMILY SETTLEMENT.....	47
CHAPTER 3: ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S "GREATER BRITAIN": BIGAMY, IMPERIAL MARRIAGE LAW REFORM, AND <i>JOHN CALDIGATE</i>	98
CHAPTER 4: UNSETTLING PAST AND FUTURE HISTORIES: FICTIONAL CONVICTS AND THE FUTURE AUSTRALIAN RACE.....	140
CHAPTER 5: A "CURIOUS POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EXPERIMENT": CATHERINE HELEN SPENCE'S FEMINIST GREATER BRITAIN AND THE POLITICS OF RACE.....	191
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	228

Chapter 1:

Defining Greater Britain: A Global Economy of Affect and the Anglo-Saxon Family in Political Writing and Victorian Fiction

As postcolonial scholarship has shown over the last several decades, the uneven process of decolonization has led to limitations in the study of nineteenth-century empire. Postcolonial scholars have, for good reason, been resistant to labeling many of Britain's former settler colonies—including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States—postcolonial because they continue to infringe on the rights of indigenous peoples in the twenty-first century and therefore have not undergone decolonization fully (McClintock, "Angel" 89; Dalziell 12). As a result, the "bulk of postcolonial 'metatheory'" has either emerged from or centered on South Asia and Africa (Boucher 47) and similarly, India and Africa have been considered the major colonial influences of the nineteenth century (Burton, "New Narratives" 217). Yet recent scholarship has begun to explore the importance of Britain's white settler colonies to the development of nineteenth-century imperialist ideology.¹ This development has begun to expand into a much-needed field of study among scholars of British literature and history because no other European empire depended as heavily on settler colonies as Britain did (Wood 73; Hopkins 216). As important as India and Africa have been to the history of the British Empire, Britain's white settler colonies generated their own brand of colonial racism and maintained different kinds of relationships with the "mother country." As this dissertation will demonstrate, fiction plays a key role in mapping out Victorian ideas about these colonies.

¹ See, for example, Leigh Boucher's "'Whiteness,' Geopolitical Reconfiguration, and the Settler Empire in Nineteenth-Century Victorian Politics" and Angela Woollacott's "Whiteness and 'the Imperial Turn'" in Boucher, Jane Carey, and Katherine Ellinghaus's *Re-Orienting Whiteness* (2009), Woollacott's *To Try Her Fortune: Australian Women, Colonialism and Modernity* (2001), and Deryck M. Schreuder and Stuart Ward's edited collection *Australia's Empire* (2008).

The shift toward transnational studies in literary studies and the new imperial history has begun to situate settler colonialism within imperial networks,² and in particular shows how “the racially designated settler empire emerged as a coherent (although contested) geopolitical unit and potent figurative referent” (Boucher 58). Indeed, as Lorenzo Veracini argues in a 2010 study, settler colonialism cannot be understood through the nationalist and imperialist frameworks developed by postcolonial theorizing, but must be understood as a “global and genuinely transnational phenomenon” (2). The mid- to late-Victorian era was a period in which political writers were theorizing this global settler phenomenon, and this chapter will serve as an introduction to an emergent political fantasy of transnational racial, cultural, and linguistic identification that my later chapters will explore in relation to nineteenth-century fiction. Like the political historian Duncan Bell, but with greater focus on the fiction and gender politics of this imaginary, I will term this fantasy “Greater Britain” after the title of Charles Wentworth Dilke’s important 1868 travel narrative.

As I will show, fiction provides a crucial means of articulating a relationship between this global “Greater Britain” and individual lives, and between Britons “at home” and those abroad. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds suggest in *Drawing the Global Colour Line* (2008) that the

² As David Lambert and Alan Lester argue, literary scholars have in many ways led the charge toward transnational studies. They explain that literary scholars have been instrumental in connecting “colonial modes of representation from different sites” (6), and current transnational histories have recently begun responding to this literary criticism by tending toward this “spatial openness” (6). Select transnational literary scholarship of note includes Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic* (1993), Paul Giles’s *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (2011) and “Antipodean American Literature: Franklin, Twain, and the Sphere of Subalternity” (2008), Lauren Goodlad’s “Can the Antipodean Speak?: A Response to Paul Giles” (2008) and “Trollopian ‘Foreign Policy’: Rootedness and Cosmopolitanism in the Mid-Victorian Global Imaginary” (2009), William Boelhower’s “The Rise of the New Atlantic Studies Matrix,” and Jed Esty’s *Oceanic, Traumatic, Post-Paradigmatic: A Response to William Boelhower* (2008). Also see *Victorian Studies*’ 2003 forum on transnational Victorian studies, featuring Sharon Marcus’s “Same Difference? Transnationalism, Comparative Literature, and Victorian Studies” and Irene Tucker’s “International Whiggery.”

nineteenth century saw the “spread of ‘whiteness’ as a transnational form of racial identification, that was [...] at once global in its power and personal in its meaning, the basis of geo-political alliances and a subjective sense of self” (3). As this chapter will demonstrate, mid- to late-Victorian political writers and fiction writers constitute this link between macropolitics and subjectivity through the rhetorics of affect and metaphors of kinship. Poetry and fiction engage with these metaphors by using the narratives of Anglo-Saxon individuals and families affected by the ongoing processes of convict transportation, free emigration, and settlement. In all of these fictions, the Anglo-Saxon family story glosses over the effects of settlement on indigenous families. At times, these narratives question the idea of a coherent familial settler empire; at others, they reinforce this fantasy and even suggest ways to make the fantasy into a reality. In negotiating the relationship of individual experience to larger political structures, nineteenth-century fictions of settlement challenge the notion of an expansive Englishness by figuring the changing Anglo-Saxon ideas of kinship and fellow-feeling emerging as a result of a growing settler empire.

I. Defining Greater Britain: Political Contexts

As Duncan Bell notes, the general usage of the term “empire” in histories of colonialism obscures the fact that for many mid- to late-Victorians there were in fact several empires organized under differing political structures and which, moreover, occupy “diverse places in both their affections and schemes of political thought” (Bell, *Idea* 9). Earlier in the century, political economist Herman Merivale diagnosed Victorian inattention to distinctions between these separate empires in his important *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* (1841-2) first

delivered at Oxford between 1839 and 1841.³ In a critique of the common usage of the term “Colony,” Merivale defines “Colony” in “the ancient and proper sense, and not in that which has passed from official into general usage, in which it comprehends every species of foreign possession” (1: vi). True colonies, he explains, exclude military stations such as Gibraltar, territories of conquest like India where “native inhabitants” far outnumber “a very slight admixture of the conquerors” and “mercantile emporia” like “factories of European powers on the coast of Africa” (vi). Rather, Merivale emphasizes that a “Colony” is “a territory of which the soil is entirely or principally owned by settlers from the mother country” (vi).

Settler colonies thus occupy a distinct space in Victorian political theory. Writers like Merivale envisioned settler colonies as (relatively) empty spaces ripe for the reproduction of British families and British society, and Merivale’s definition of “colony” as distinct from other colonial possessions would become central to mid-Victorian political ideas about a settler “Greater Britain,” and certainly this was the case by the 1850s and 1860s. In *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861), John Stuart Mill distinguished “colonies of colonization” from colonies of conquest by arguing that the former were “composed of people of similar civilization to the ruling country; capable of, and ripe for, representative government” (336-7). Thus Victorians saw settler colonies in more egalitarian terms than spaces like India. Settler colonies were supposedly dominated by Anglo-Saxon people and culture and correlatively, Mill suggests, they required a lighter system of governance.

³ Merivale’s *Lectures* approached the topic of settlement and imperial connections from a pragmatic viewpoint attentive to labor and free trade, and his views were influenced by Adam Smith and Edward Gibbon Wakefield. The work was influential enough that it earned him the position of assistant under-secretary of state for the colonies in November of 1847, and later permanent under-secretary in 1848.

Constructing an idea of a discrete settler empire was no easy task. If Merivale's need to clarify the distinction between "true" colonies and colonies of conquest is any indication, the average Briton of 1841 was not necessarily clear about the differences between Britain's various territorial possessions. This may have been the result of the fact that even set aside from other colonies of conquest, settler colonies of the early 1840s were a motley crew. In terms of constitutional history, these colonies had just as little political authority and right to self-government as colonies of conquest in 1840 (Madden and Fieldhouse xxii). Other characteristics divided these settler colonies into separate classifications, for though common-law rule should have classified new colonies in Australia and New Zealand as settlement colonies, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land—later Tasmania—were classed as convict colonies and South Australia and Western Australia were unsuccessful company colonies of questionable futurity (Madden and Fieldhouse xxii). Thus there were varying degrees of metropolitan control across settler space.

The racial components of the mid-Victorian idea of "Greater Britain" were not yet in place in 1841 either. As Merivale writes, in its strictest sense "colony" refers to settlements where Europeans were more populous than indigenous peoples, and in 1840 the appellation chiefly applied to the two Canadas and the Maritime Provinces (now Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) (Madden and Fieldhouse xxii). A specifically *British* ethnic and cultural domination in "settler colonies" was also questionable. New Zealand was only annexed in 1840 and was populated mostly by Maoris. Following Lord Durham's recommendations in his famous *Report on the Affairs of British North America* (1839), Lower Canada (Quebec) was joined with Upper Canada (Ontario) in 1841 largely to cancel out the majority French population of the former, and the Cape Colony's population consisted mostly of

indigenous Africans and Dutch and French settlers. Indeed, Frederick Madden and David Fieldhouse write in their preface to *Settler Self-Government, 1840-1900* that different legal classifications and heterogeneous populations made the inevitable self-government Mill later wrote of far from certain at the time Merivale was writing his *Lectures* (xxii).

Yet even though these colonies seemed so disparate, Merivale nonetheless groups them together as potential components of a future heterogeneous, transnational community. Merivale crucially links the future political structure of Britain's settler empire to the work of the imagination. Anticipating the language of "Greater Britain" that would emerge in the 1860s and 1870s, he argues,

The union must more and more lose the protective, and approximate to the federative, character. And the crown may remain, at last, in solitary supremacy, the only common authority recognized by many different legislatures, by many nations politically and socially distinct. (292)

This vision, he suggests may be merely the "reveries of speculative politicians," but nevertheless "If the anticipation of it be only a dream, it is one which elevates and inspires the imagination" (292). As this dissertation will show, this type of appeal to the imagination manifests in multiple genres including political treatises and literary texts. For example, the poetic speaker of Alfred Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" (pub. in *Poems* 1842) escapes his own dismal existence by fantasizing about a utopian future where "the Parliament of man, the federation of the world" produces global peace (line 128). I will return to the treatment of "Greater Britain" in poetry and fiction at the close of this chapter and in subsequent chapters. The concept of a global Anglo-Saxon empire was always a work of the imagination that has an affinity with literary production.

By 1868 when Charles Wentworth Dilke's *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking Countries During 1866 and 1867* appeared, this vision of a loosely "federative" union must have seemed like more of an actual possibility to Victorian political writers. The millions of emigrants departing the British Isles in the intervening years had transformed these spaces and joined many of them into a more clearly delineated—and more clearly Anglo-Saxon—settler empire. Dilke's account of his journey through Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and India was a resounding success and marked a crucial moment in political thought. Dilke argues in his preface that he had

followed England round the world: everywhere I was in English-speaking, or in English-governed lands. If I remarked that climate, soil, manners of life, that mixture with other people had modified the blood, I saw, too, that in essentials the race was always one.

[...] If two small islands are by courtesy styled "Great," America, Australia, India, must form a "Greater Britain." (vii)

Dilke's idea of a transoceanic empire united by race, language, and culture was not entirely novel since it was informed by liberal writers like Merivale, Durham, and Mill. Yet when the twenty-five-year-old published *Greater Britain* in the autumn of 1868, his book garnered an enormous response in journals, rapidly ran through four editions and was widely read for the rest of the century (*DNB*). William Gladstone read it and annotated it carefully, and Mill was so inspired that for the last four years of his life he served as Dilke's "principal mentor" (Jenkins).

Why, if Dilke's idea of a "Greater Britain" was derivative, did it appeal to so many Britons? Part of its success was no doubt a result of perfect timing. The degree to which Britain's "colonial empire" could be conceived of as "federative" was sketchy at best when

Merivale published his *Lectures* and the problems attending colonial governance were largely compounded by the fact that Britain's colonies were so distant. But the introduction of rail travel in the 1840s, ocean-going steamships in the 1830s and 1840s, and oceanic telegraph cables in the 1850s and 1860s all seemingly shrunk the planet, making both travel and communication across the vast reaches of empire easier (Bell, "Dissolving" 559). These changes, Duncan Bell notes, revolutionized not only the way that space was imagined, but also the ways communities were seen to inhabit space. An "'imagined' political community on a global scale" ("Dissolving" 553) seemed possible, and the long-term stability of transnational relationships with Anglo-Saxon settlers far more plausible than colonial possessions that had recently experienced rebellions (namely Jamaica in 1865 and India in 1857).

According to the *Edinburgh Review*, the novelty of Dilke's travel narrative was in his "happy idea of extending his voyages over the whole area, and bounding them by the area, of English-speaking countries" ("Dilke's *Greater Britain*" 232), and thus Dilke gave concrete shape to the transnational structure of "Greater Britain." Dilke, James Anthony Froude, and John Robert Seeley—who John Gross terms "the triumvirate of mid-Victorian imperialist ideology" (Seeley xii)—contribute significantly to the theorization of "Greater Britain," linking together the colonies that would later become the first members of the British Commonwealth: the Australian colonies, New Zealand, British North America, Newfoundland, the Cape Colony and Natal.⁴ As will be crucial to the argument of this dissertation, their arguments highlight the "cultural and emotional interdependence" of global spaces (Bell, "Dissolving" 559). Federating the colonies alongside their "mother country"—or at the very least imagining the colonies as part of a larger family of Anglo-Saxon nations—became seemingly more viable as the nineteenth-

⁴ Seeley also includes the West Indies.

century progressed. As I will stress in this chapter, the idea of “Greater Britain” depends heavily on the language of emotion and family, which are, in turn, one of the provenances of the nineteenth-century novel.

“Greater Britain” itself was no uniformly used phrase, and as Bell notes, shifts meaning in both Dilke’s and Seeley’s writing, at times including India, and at times limiting “Greater Britain” to spaces united by common language, self-government, or race, including the United States (*Idea* 8-9).⁵ Public intellectuals did not agree on what constituted “Greater Britain,” and the terminology they use reflects the diversity of views. In this dissertation, “Greater Britain” will serve as shorthand for the constellation of issues attending this mid-Victorian conception of a global Anglo-Saxon imagined community. Terms that were used to refer to this global Anglo-Saxon community include “transpontine England” (“Dilke’s *Greater Britain*” 247), “Colonial Empire,” —which Seeley critiques for assuming “too military and despotic” a tone to describe “the relation of a mother-country to colonies” (34)—“Federal Britain,” the “United States of England” (Bell, *Idea* 8), and Froude’s own preferred term, “Oceana.” The frequently used phrases “English-speaking nations” (Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand* 354) and Dilke’s own “English-speaking countries” for all intents and purposes act as synonyms for “Greater Britain.”

⁵India’s liminal position speaks to its immense economic importance in the mid-Victorian period, but also the fact that it does not fit the same criteria for a “colony” that Merivale—and later Dilke—mapped out. J.R. Seeley, who perhaps more clearly theorized “Greater Britain” than Dilke or Froude, both excludes India from “Greater Britain” by virtue of racial difference, and then argues that there were actually two different Greater Britains, and that India was the second (Bell, *Idea* 8-9). The United States also features controversially in conversations about a “Greater Britain” because it could not, of course, become part of an actual federated settler empire, but as Dilke indicates, the United States also seemed to represent the continuation of England’s linguistic and cultural legacy even after its independence. As this dissertation suggests, “Greater Britain” was a fiction itself rather than a real political structure, and as such, the United States’ place within it remains instrumental to some theorists (including Catherine Helen Spence, who I’ll discuss in chapter five). See Bell’s *The Idea of Greater Britain* for a more lengthy discussion of the politics of including India and the United States in this vision of global polity.

While this language does not stress affect or kinship, it does stress a linguistic affinity that is roughly coextensive with the limits of a global Anglo-Saxonism.

The assorted claims to an Anglo-Saxon global community were, I argue, a fantasy testifying to lack of metropolitan control of settler space. As the insurrections in Upper and Lower Canada in 1837 and 1838 had established, it was apparent that Britain's settler dependencies would move gradually toward independence just as the former American colonies had done. In *Considerations on Representative Government*, Mill points toward changing relations between Britain and its colonies when he writes, "England was like an ill brought-up elder brother, who persists in tyrannizing over the younger ones from mere habit, till one of them, by a spirited resistance, though with unequal strength, gives him notice to desist" (338). The colonial policies Britain pursued afterwards were informed largely by the suggestions made by Durham, namely that "colonies of European race, equally with the parent country, [should] possess the fullest measure of internal self-government" (Mill 338). Canada's increasing desire for independence reverberated in other settler colonies as well. The Australian colonies had finally barred Britain completely from sending convicts to its shores the same year that Dilke's book appeared,⁶ and varying forms of "responsible government" had been granted to most settler colonies in the 1840s and 1850s. As Miles Taylor argues, Britain attempted to contain the spirit of mutiny bubbling up across Europe and in the colonies by making constitutional reforms in 1848-49, and by the mid 1850s, "most of the settlement and Crown colonies possessed an elective franchise" that was far more inclusive than the franchise in the mother country (Taylor 176). While British-appointed governors continued to have significant controls over colonies—in some cases more than prior to constitutional reforms (Taylor 177)—it was nonetheless clear

⁶ Western Australia ended convict transportation in 1868, though it had ended considerably earlier for most of the Australian group. See chapter four for more on this subject.

that Britain would have to begin the work of political retrenchment by conceding colonial sovereignty and conciliation.

As political connections became more tenuous, conversations about the settler colonies in the mid-Victorian period centered on the colonies' place in British politics. Most Victorians assumed that because the colonies were attaining self-governance and would only continue to want more control over trade and military protections, some form of political separation was inevitable. As J.R. Seeley would later write in *The Expansion of England* (1883), the empire was haunted by the American "secession," which has created "in the English mind a doubt, a misgiving," which "made it difficult for the metropolitan public to see in their 'second Empire' anything but an unstable consortium whose subjects would eventually follow the same path to independence as their predecessors had a century before" (Seeley 14; Gould 486). As Eliga Gould suggests, informal forces like gentlemanly capitalism and global trade structured the British Empire far more than a unified administrative vision, and for that reason

the British Empire remained at base a composite, multi-centred polity. Like Seeley, the Victorians who grappled with matters of imperial governance hoped that a common nationality and sense of patriotism would supply the glue necessary to hold its distant territories and possessions together. (488)

This unifying nationality, however, was "more virtual than real" (Gould 489). To metropolitan politicians, separation suggested the necessity of solidifying ties by finding a middle ground that would allow the colonies a measure of independence and equality within the empire without losing the military and economic advantages of these spaces.⁷

⁷ Growing concerns about competing empires, including Germany, Russia, and the United States drove many of the arguments for federation, which would consolidate British power.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, debates about how to effectively structure the settler empire—how to provide enough freedom but not too much, how to minimize metropolitan financial costs and maximize gains, how to federate the empire without conceding anything that might be necessary to Britain’s domestic sovereignty, etc.—dominated in conversations about how to handle the settler empire for the next half century. As Bell shows, some writers argued for the creation of a federal system based in part on that of the United States and some suggested the creation of a separate “Imperial Parliament” to deal specifically with colonial affairs, which would allow colonial representation. Yet there was also significant resistance to the idea of colonial representation in Britain’s government. Indeed, Ged Martin argues that plans to allow colonial representation in parliament were never a “serious possibility” mid-century (6), and this is also arguably the case for the rest of the century. But this did not stop writers from reiterating arguments about federation time and again. Notable opponents of a formal federation enshrined in law included Gladstone, Merivale, Richard Cobden, and Mill, and the “intellectual weight was against the Empire federalists” (Martin 69). Perhaps as a result, the manner in which closer ties might be formed—what a federal British Empire would look like, for example—remained vague and undefined.

I will not trace the myriad arguments surrounding the political possibilities of a federated Greater Britain. This work has already been admirably done by Duncan Bell, as well as Martin, John Kendle and Michael Burgess.⁸ I will suggest instead that the constant use of affective language and metaphors of family continued to insist upon the importance of *imagining* such a political formation, with or without the trappings of official policy.

⁸ See Bell’s *The Idea of Greater Britain* (2007), Martin’s “Empire Federalism and Imperial Parliamentary Union, 1820-1870” (1973), Burgess’s *The British Tradition of Federalism* (1995), and Kendle’s *Federal Britain: A History* (1997).

In order to forestall seemingly eventual separation, Britain had historically made exclusive trade relations with its colonies, but Merivale argues in 1841 that in so doing: “We give *them* [the colonies] commercial advantages, and tax ourselves for their benefit, in order to give them an interest in remaining under our supremacy” (2: 73). If the “mother country” were to dispense with these trade agreements—as Merivale suggested—and institute a system of free trade, how then were political connections to be maintained with the colonies? Was it possible to “[draw] the bonds of union closer, and [give] each member of a great colonial empire a greater sympathy with the mother country” without trespassing upon the territory of colonial representative institutions (2: 290)? Merivale’s answer to these questions was *affective*. Despite his analytic approach in his lectures, he resorts to pathos in the final moments when he points out that “domestic freedom” and “continued dependence” are not necessarily mutually exclusive (2: 291). Rather, forced political and economic connections can be superseded by a unity rooted in sentiment. As I have discussed above, Merivale imagines—in an admittedly “speculative” and “extravagant” way (2: 292, 293)—a loosely “federative” Greater Britain, and this federation is built on the interrelation of sentiment and politics.

May we not figure to ourselves, scattered thick as stars over the surface of this earth, communities of citizens owning the name of Britons, bound by allegiance to a British sovereign, and uniting heart and hand in maintaining the supremacy of Britain on every shore which her unconquered flag can reach? (2: 292, 293)

Economic strategies of imperial containment as well as military ones are replaced with the notion that an expansive national sentiment can contain Britain’s colonial multitudes and maintain political connections long after the colonies have “acquired sufficient strength to stand alone” (2: 291-2). This type of affective approach, I will argue in the following pages, became central to

both the political writing of Greater Britain, as well as the many fictions of settlement that explore the larger structure of empire.

Duncan Bell traces the interweaving discourses of the economic and the political as well as “the more intangible links of race nationality and sentiment” in conversations about Britain and its settler empire (*Idea* 44). He makes the argument that despite the ubiquitous interest in the economic and political, the language of sentiment—evidenced in Merivale’s appeal to national feeling—dominates the discourse of Greater Britain. Indeed,

Imperial discourse was permeated with maudlin claims about the bonds—of blood and heart, culture, and history—uniting the Anglo-Saxons, but also, and perhaps more intriguingly, it was structured by arguments about the political efficacy of such sentimentality. The cold logic of economic and political “rationality” was bypassed by, or at least subsumed under, unadorned appeals to emotion. (Bell, *Idea* 44-5)

Without such imagined affective relationships, the settler empire threatened to disintegrate. Indeed, Mill writes in *Considerations on Representative Government* that shared language, race and descent, religion, history, as well as a geographical limits provide the building blocks of nationality, but that nationality was crucially evidenced by the unity of shared “common sympathies” (308). According to Mill, the precondition of uniting people under one government is the sentiment of nationality or “fellow-feeling” (310). It makes sense, then, that attempts to maintain connection for political and economic reasons would be expressed through the sentimental language of nationality.

But in keeping with Bell’s suggestion above, I will suggest here, the language of blood, kinship, and feeling serves other ends than the mere disguising of economic and political

rationality. In many cases, it does the rhetorical work that logos and ethos cannot, and appeals to the heartstrings often replace rather than complement these other modes of persuasion. As Ann Laura Stoler writes in *Along the Archival Grain* (2009), the assumption that nineteenth- and twentieth-century empire is based on Enlightenment principles of rationality has been severely undercut by recent historical work pointing toward the functions of affect, which often *overcome* economic and political rationality (57-8). There is no doubt that nineteenth-century knowledge production and its technologies of rationality (including maps, botanical and ethnological texts, as well as museums) legitimized racism, and provided justifications for colonial occupation and settlement. Certainly, one might read the deployments of affect in the political rhetoric of “Greater Britain” as thin veneers over the real economic and political motivations governing empire, where the affective acts as “a smokescreen of rule, as the ruse masking the dispassionate calculations that preoccupy states, the persuasive histrionics rather than substance of politics, the moralizing self-presentation of the state as itself ‘a genre of political authority’” (Stoler, *Along* 60-61). The language of sentiment could, to borrow the language of Mary Louis Pratt, act as a modality of “anti-conquest” by naturalizing hierarchical relationships with the softening language of feeling.

Yet I argue that in some sense, the deployment of affect emerges in the texts of Greater Britain in precisely the moments where political economy fails. As I have indicated above, this is even true in the work of Merivale, a professed rationalist who claimed in 1870 that those who thought emigrants might choose their destinations based on patriotism rather than economic benefits were guilty of reading “the lessons of history by the light of what I must term sentimentalism” (“Colonial Question” 160). Even he insisted that since no effective means of federating Britain’s settler empire was possible, smaller measures to maintain a “sense of

nationality” would have to suffice (172), and that the best means of securing Britain’s close relations with its colonies was to “pass from theories to feelings,” the latter of which are “very strongly enlisted in our favour” (160). It is at moments where political economy fails—is unable to generate solutions to the “Colonial Question” or is unable to sell its “rational” solutions—that the language of affect appears.

Appeals to emotion are perhaps the strongest in the arguments of conservative thinkers, many of whom accused liberals of an unfeeling dismemberment of a “Greater Britain.” The most notable example of such would be Benjamin Disraeli’s portrait of Gladstone, the favorite whipping boy of conservatives in the 1870s. Disraeli accused Gladstone, then prime minister, and liberals more generally in his oft-anthologized speech “Conservative and Liberal Principles” delivered at the Crystal Palace in June 1872 of attempting the “disintegration of the Empire,” and having considered the “Colonies of England [...] a burden upon this country” instead of a boon because they viewed “everything in a financial aspect” (Disraeli 118).⁹ The reason for liberal failure to effect disintegration, he argues, was because of “the sympathy of the Colonies with the Mother Country” (118), and shared feeling was, in Disraeli’s view, more in keeping with conservative principles. Thus feeling was able to trump the more rational considerations of economics.

Where Seeley and Dilke also appeal to a language of sentiment, Froude’s *Oceana* most transparently mapped out the rhetoric of an empire cemented by affective links. Bell suggests that his political affiliations are almost impossible to determine given the variety of positions he

⁹ Interestingly, this speech was in part a response to a radical republican speech given by Dilke (Disraeli, *Select Speeches* 2: 523).

takes (*Idea* 143),¹⁰ and in *Oceana* Froude gave voice to both conservative and liberal perspectives on empire. In his more conservative moments, he critiques liberal materialism and individualism, as well as a “minimalist conception of the state” (Bell, *Idea* 146) by consistently turning to the language of feeling and affect. He argues that the colonists were offended and hurt by the disdain with which they thought separatist liberals in England treat them, such as the withdrawal of troops from the colonies and arguments that colonists should provide for their own military defense. They blame, moreover, the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon on Gladstone because, in their views, the mother country had abnegated responsibility toward the empire (Froude 152). The colonists, Froude argues, have no intention of separating and he points to a national sentiment not expressed in political circles, but by the people, who “always regarded them as our kindred, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh” (15). In fact, sentiment is the lifeblood of the nation, for “Family affection is sentiment; friendship is sentiment; patriotism is sentiment. A nation with whom sentiment is nothing is on the way to cease to be a nation at all” (105).

This language of emotion proves—perhaps as no surprise—eminently flexible in that it could also be a tool of the liberals. Even writers who do not draw heavily themselves on national feeling in their articulations of the future of Britain’s settler empire often attempt to manage the deployment of affect by others. Gladstone, who opposed federating the empire (Ged Martin 68), also draws on such language, arguing that “the sentiment of empire may be called innate in every Briton” (Burton *Reader* 135). No matter which side of the argument, whether in favor of political connection or against it, sentiment seems to have governed the rhetoric of federalists, anti-federalists, and imperialists alike. As J.A. Farrer indicates in 1885, “the Separationist, too,

¹⁰ Bell notes he has been called a “radical Tory, a liberal Carlylean, and (rather more implausibly) a straightforward ‘great Liberal’” (*Idea* 143).

may indulge in his dream of a greater Britain, of an English Empire conterminous with English speech, cemented not by unnatural and galling political bonds, but by the sympathies of free communities, and by the affections of equal allies” (344).

Like the logic of *laissez faire* capitalism, Farrer suggests that political interference disrupts the organic circulation of affect; he instead makes the case for the consolidating effects of a “natural” connection of sympathies. Farrer’s approach—like Merivale’s over forty years earlier—is inspired by economic rationality: an imperial economy of affect. Froude echoes this idea, arguing that “if the natural tie is not strong enough, no mechanical tie will hold” (103), and moreover, “Constitutions, commonwealths, are not manufactured to pattern; they grow, if they grow at all, by internal impulse” (13). Political philosophies about Britain’s settler empire were thus powerless in comparison to the strength of biology and natural affection. Seeley, too, stresses this point when he argues that “The English Empire is on the whole free from that weakness which has brought down most empires, the weakness of being a mere mechanical forced union of alien nationalities” (46). The better approach to conceiving of “Greater Britain,” suggests Froude, is to realize that an “‘empire’ of Oceana [...] cannot be,” but that “a ‘commonwealth’ of Oceana held together by common blood, a common interest, and a common pride in the great position which unity can secure—such a commonwealth as this may grow of itself if politicians can be induced to leave it alone” (12).

P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins suggest that what I have termed an imperial economy of affect was a deliberate strategy developed alongside other economic policies to establish informal ways of controlling the colonies in lieu of the political structures being conceded as the settler colonies increasingly shifted toward responsible self-government (209). This notion is counter, they suggest, to the only recently questioned presumption that when economically

preferential systems enshrined in law were ended between 1846 and 1860, so too were Britain's "interest in controlling colonial destinies" (209). Even consistently liberal thinkers like Gladstone, Dilke, and Merivale who argued for separation were not against settler empire per se, but rather in favor of reconceiving of it in looser terms. If the move toward responsible self-government in the colonies was a "leap into the unknown" (Cain and Hopkins 210), then the expectation of success largely hinged on faith in free trade and, perhaps more importantly, the security of interlocking family affiliations, national sentiment, and Anglo-Saxon blood and culture.

As Seeley argues in *The Expansion of England* (1883), a "Greater Britain" could only be achieved if the bounds of the state and the nation were understood to be coextensive. But shared nationality across the settler empire was not a basic assumption that could be taken for granted. Seeley diagnoses the root of the problem in observing that when Britons talked of settler colonies, they too often asked "What is the good of colonies?" (51). This question is inherently a problem for Seeley because it indicates possession of an object and not "a recognised part of the body politic" (53). Such a position makes it "evident that colonies have never been regarded in England as a simple extension of the English State and nation over a new territory" (51).

The internal divisions of the settler empire were also reflected in the fact that there was some question over whether the settler colonies really did reproduce British culture and race in foreign regions. Settler experience, on close examination, was constituted by the simultaneity of being British and *not* British. Settler subjectivities were defined by a transcultural experience of in-betweenness, by the sense of belonging to Great Britain and, yet, of being excluded from it as well. On the one hand, nineteenth-century settler cultures were imagined by many Victorians as mere transplantations of metropolitan society and culture, and settlers were thought to bring with

them the same language, religion, nationality, and culture. On the other hand, these cultures developed their own institutions in contact zones, responding to the particularities of geographic conditions and encounter with indigenous peoples, as well as settlers from other countries like France, Germany, the Netherlands, and China, among others. As Hopkins argues, settlers did not merely copy and mimic their “mother country,” and Australian, New Zealander, and Canadian scholars have recently problematized histories that have taken this view, showing how settlers responded to distinct local conditions to produce new identities and modify old ones (Hopkins 218). Yet settler innovations could also be the preconditions for their rejection by the “mother country.” Catherine Hall has suggested, “White skin in itself was not always enough to secure full belonging whether to the nation or the Empire” (“Of Gender and Empire” 49). As such, the idea of a “Greater Britain” held out the possibility of integration but the reality was not so inclusive.

Dilke’s views provide an excellent case in point. On the one hand, he argues that Britain’s settlers may have “modified the blood,” but that they were all essentially “one” (vii), implying that colonists merely reproduce metropolitan identity. On the other hand, Dilke describes an emergent Australian “type” that is distinct from Britain’s (see also chapter four). In fact, the discourse of “Greater Britain” can, in at least some small part, be attributed to the metropolitan need to flatten out difference and articulate sameness, and to resolve the complications posed by distance and colonial cultural evolutions. As admirable studies like Angela Woollacott’s *To Try Her Fortune* (2001) and Tanya Dalziel’s *Settler Romances and the Australian Girl* (2002) have shown, colonials were caught between the constant oscillation between inclusion and exclusion, which might be figured through the opposition of familiar domestic forms transplanted to the colonies versus the exoticization of settlers and settler space.

Yet the study of settler identities should not center the colonists to the exclusion of indigenous peoples and their relation to the fantasy of Greater Britain. As I will discuss in my concluding Coda, the operations of settler colonialism are alive and well in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand where indigenous peoples continue to exist within socially and politically marginalized positions and where threats to their sovereignty pose an ongoing problem. This current social position is in part a direct outgrowth of the common settler strategies practiced across “Greater Britain,” some of which are generated by the transnational imaginary (see chapter 5). As I’ll discuss throughout the following chapters, aboriginal Australians and their families remain a silent haunting presence in mid-Victorian fictions of settlement and in the rhetoric of “Greater Britain.”

As the following chapters will show, nineteenth-century novels on the British family engage in the ongoing conversation about whether a Greater British family could be effected, and one of the ways they do so is by normalizing settlement and erasing the indigenous family. As such, they are complicit with settler strategies regarding native populations developed in part through the interweaving discourses of ethnology and law. In an endeavor to illustrate British rights to Australian territory, aboriginal peoples were generally represented in ethnographic texts as the developmental antithesis of modern metropolitan Britons (Brantlinger, *Dark* 117). For Seeley, for example, aboriginal Australians existed at the nadir of the ethnological scale, “so low” that the “native Australian race [...] can never give the least trouble” (47). As early as the 1820s, missionaries had described aborigines as the opposite of the family-oriented British and as Hall notes, they reported that aboriginal peoples seemed to have no fixed homes, no clear family structures, and no clear tribal organizational structures (“Of Gender and Empire” 64). Metropolitan representational strategies tended to emphasize the view that aborigines were

rootless and nomadic (Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism” 396). All of the values, then, that Britons held most sacred—home, hearth, clearly delineated gender roles within the family—were rhetorically stripped from aboriginal Australians. Seeming lack of geographic fixity provided precisely the basis desired by settlers to justify the legal doctrine of *terra nullius*, a policy by which Australian settler territory was defined as having no legal ownership. Though not officially enshrined in law until 1889 by the British Privy Council, this concept of “nobody’s land” had a wide cultural resonance and, following from a Lockean view of property, meant that aboriginal failure to recognize the rights of individual property ownership and clear, fixed boundaries meant that the land effectively had no owner, whether individual or communal (Wolfe, “Land” 869).

An Anglo-Saxon “Greater Britain” could not exist without the erasure or violent displacement of indigenous populations. Where territorial expropriation left off, violence and the expectation of inevitable aboriginal extinction (if not self-extinction) began. Literary and ethnological representations of aboriginal Australians created what Patrick Brantlinger has termed in *Dark Vanishings* the “discourse on the extinction of primitive races.” By the mid 1840s, books, essays, and government reports argued that aboriginal extinction could not be prevented, and many believed that natives would gradually and naturally fade from the earth (Brantlinger, *Dark* 123). Some of these depictions were sympathetic to the aboriginal plight, yet if there was some sentiment enlisted on behalf of indigenous Australians, there were other texts—especially as the nineteenth century advanced—calling for the destruction of aboriginal peoples (see chapters two and five). Even attempts made to “civilize” aborigines might have outright genocide in mind. The Sydney *Bulletin*, for example, reported in June 1883 that “The statistics of all attempts to civilise and convert the savage show that the savage dies out sooner

through civilisation and conversion than by the more straightforward method of lead and rum. Only the master-races of the world are fit material for the ordeal of civilisation” (qtd. in Ellinghaus 59).

The genocidal approaches to aboriginal populations cultivated throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries included more than simple killing. Despite the early missionary discourse emphasizing the virtual non-existence of aboriginal family structures, one of the striking features of what Patrick Wolfe terms “structural genocide” is that it occurs through an assault on the indigenous family and an attempt to disrupt genealogical and cultural continuity (“Settler Colonialism” 403). This occurs through such mechanisms as assimilative race-mixing encouraged by the state, child abduction, and the resocialization of aboriginal children in boarding schools and missions (Wolfe, “Settler Colonialism” 388). Some scholars have questioned the use of the term “genocide” with respect to assimilation projects instead using “ethnocide” and “cultural genocide,” yet it is clear that these projects intended the eradication of all indigenous culture and community through biological absorption.¹¹ Though the heyday of these practices is within the twentieth century, most notably in the case of the Stolen Generations, this dissertation will demonstrate that the privileging of Anglo-Saxon, heteronormative families (even in their domestic difficulties) over aboriginal families began much earlier in the insistence on the integrity of Anglo-Saxon family as a necessary feature of imperial integrity in the political writing of “Greater Britain” and in fictions of settlement. The emphasis on Anglo-Saxon families comes with the corollary erasure of indigenous families.

II. Affect, Family, and Empire

¹¹ See Katherine Ellinghaus’s “Biological Absorption and Genocide” (2009) for a discussion of the debates around using “genocide” to describe settler colonial Australia and the United States.

Seeley argues in *The Expansion of England* that in light of British attitudes toward the colonies, “We have not really then as yet a Greater Britain” (51). Instead, he says the foundations of such a global polity exist and can still be realized. In order to create a “Greater Britain,” it was thus necessary to reimagine the British national identity as coextensive with the “boundless space” of the settler empire and unified as “a great homogeneous people, one in blood, language, religion and laws” (126). The fact that writings of Greater Britain are so overladen with the language of affect is a testament to the impossibility and untenability of actually realizing any concrete political restructuring of empire along federative lines, but it is also a testament to the faith Victorian writers had in sentiment to surpass the limits of political possibility. Sentiment, patriotism, and nationalism are not, however, the only terms associated with considerations on Britain’s settler empire. A settler imperial economy of affect, like the idea of “Greater Britain” itself, could be built quite easily on an existing model of circulating affect that already was built into Victorian ideas of Englishness: the normative family. That is, the most important expression of affect in the language of Greater Britain by far appears through metaphors of kinship, including brotherhood, sisterhood, parent-child relations, and cousinship. These metaphors were used to frame a diverse range of contemporary issues, including that of a proposed imperial parliament to handle imperial matters and external threats to Britain’s national sovereignty from competing world powers like Germany, Russia, and the United States.

The language of family as a way to understand political and social questions proliferated over the course of the nineteenth-century, though it also has significant antecedents. Indeed, one significant explanation of this relationship that continued to be felt in the next century appeared in Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), which noted that “the spirit of philosophic analogy” figures English constitutional liberties and privileges as an “entailed

inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity” (49, 47). The result of such metaphor is to figure national unity of purpose across time, enabling social and material progress to appear in the form of a “family settlement” bestowed on the next generation. Burke also writes:

[W]e have given to our frame of polity the image of a relation in blood, binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties, adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections, keeping inseparable and cherishing with the warmth of all their combined and mutually reflected charities our state, our hearths, our sepulchres, and our altars. (49)

For Burke, nation and family were intricately linked and family became the paradigm *par excellence* through which to justify traditional hierarchical structures. In Burke’s conservative rejection of social change, English readers would see that democracy and revolution would inevitably threaten the family by overturning the traditional gender relations embodied in the chivalrous “spirit of a gentleman” (117).

In the nineteenth-century texts I discuss, family as metaphor for national polity is extended beyond the bounds of the English or British metropole. For early-nineteenth-century students of ethnology or for the religious-minded, all peoples were unified in one “family of man,” a figure of speech through which “family” articulated a global consciousness and suggested natural relationships between Britain and its others. But as scholars like Anne McClintock have pointed out, the traditional British “family” invoked in this metaphor is not an egalitarian institution, but was instead symbolic of naturalized hierarchies. She writes, “The family offered an indispensable metaphoric figure by which national difference could be shaped into a single historical genesis narrative” (“No Longer” 91). In such a model, family structure

corresponds with a narrative of historical progress such that some nations might be figured as parents and others as children. The result is a paternalistic model of benevolent imperial governance.

Amit S. Rai extends McClintock's claim by suggesting that European subjectivity itself is formed "through discourses of colonial paternalism" (8). He argues:

in the colonial ordering of the West Indies and India, paternalism as a model, the family as an object, and 'domestic affection' as an instrument were all central to the practices of governing populations. [...] [P]aternal sentimentality demarcated an entire field of global intervention through a taxonomy of the affections, and this discursive practice was itself a pedagogy of colonial subject formation. (8-9)

John Stuart Mill's discussion of India, for example, was largely characterized through the developmental language of family, with Indians characterized as children unable to effectively use their rights to democratic institutions and in need of the caring paternalism of Britain (Mehta 32). Uday Singh Mehta has suggested that on one level, this characterization by liberal thinkers is an attempt to make the unfamiliar—the stranger—knowable through metaphorical incorporation, and in that sense, suggest a measure of toleration (that of course problematically erases difference). But he also shows that family metaphors do *not* extend British affections outward to a "family of man." Rather, Mehta explains, metaphors of kinship prove less constrained by political limits, and brutal imperial agendas become justifiable because the hierarchical structure of the family demands the exercise of authority (33). Perhaps because the familial relationship was imposed by political theory and rhetoric, the familial language characterizing liberal discourse on India was a "cold and corseted language of kinship, having substantially eviscerated that language from one of sentiments" (Mehta 33).

Extending the language of a family of man also posed a seeming threat to domestic affections in their more literal forms, making imperial philanthropists subject to criticisms of their own. Familial relations could be paradoxically described as expansively global and all-encompassing, and as limited to the genealogical connections derived from more immediate shared ancestry. The Great Exhibition in 1851 reinvigorated the language of global kinship (P. Young 26), and as I'll suggest in chapter two, this language became the target of Dickens's ire in *Bleak House*. Dickens alludes to the famous phrase "Am I not a man and a brother?" used by abolitionists since the eighteenth century to generate and extend British sympathy toward enslaved Africans in Britain, the West Indies, and the United States, but responds redefining the parameters of brotherhood around racial lines. Why, he suggests, should Britons invest more energy upon Africans, indigenous peoples from settler territories, and the "Brotherhood of Humanity" (58) than on their "brothers" at home? Clearly, the "family of man" was subject to critique, and the rhetoric of "Greater Britain" acts as just such a critique in centering the Anglo-Saxon family.

When comparatively applied to colonies of settlement and colonies of conquest, the unifying function of familial metaphor breaks down in part because the familial rhetoric of an Anglo-Saxon "Greater Britain" was underwritten by the perception of more proximate family connections. The familial language attached by "Greater Britain" writers to the settlement colonies was similar in structure to the language describing Indians and other colonized subjects I have discussed above, though I argue that it operates on a different register in part because of the racial assumptions about settler spaces and the articulations of blood relationships that Indians could never partake in. In the Australian context, as we shall see, the kinship metaphors and rhetoric in political writing presupposed continuing, not new, familial obligations to

emigrant Britons, and as such this rhetoric had to be underwritten by a verisimilitude of sentiment distinct from the “eviscerated” language of sentiment Mehta identifies.

The one constant in Greater British discourse is the narrativization of settler colonial relations with metropolitan Britain through the language of family: sometimes through the literal language of shared blood, sometimes through metaphor. For J.R. Seeley, this language had somewhat limited utility, for while the comparison of a “distant dependency” to “a son who had left home and so practically passed out of the family” made sense at the time of the American Revolution, the inventions of the modern world “have drawn the whole globe close together” (268) and overcome the problems caused by discontinuous land spaces. As much as such a metaphor has only limited use, Seeley nevertheless claims that Greater Britain enjoys “ethnological unity”¹² and explains that in spite of the example of separation presented by the American colonies, Greater Britain (which in Seeley’s version does not include the U.S.) will be able to overcome disparate interests because they are “united by blood and religion” (60). The 1860s and 1870s marked a period in which the concept of “Greater Britain” began to more firmly circumscribe the language of family to the Anglo-Saxon race. Indeed, the intertwined function of family relationships and racial sameness are of “vital kind” (61) that “will only give way before some violent dissolving force” (61).

Froude, in many ways less rigorous and scholarly than Seeley, made more extended use of familial metaphor in *Oceana* to render the settler empire intelligible to metropolitan readers. He couched the possibilities of colonial independence in terms of child abandonment:

Parents and children do not enter into articles of compact. If the natural tie is not strong enough, no mechanical tie will hold. And it is on account of this existing

¹² He discounts Caffre, Maori, French, Dutch, and Celtic presences as “admitted without marring the ethnological unity of the whole” (60).

relationship between us that the sting has lain of the late suggestion of parting with the colonies. They have felt as a child would feel who was trying to do his best, and was conscious that he was no discredit to the family, yet was told by his father that the family had no wish to keep him, and that the sooner he took himself off the better. It was treating close kinsmen as if we acknowledged no relationship with them except of interest, and kinsmen are apt to resent such *unhuman* indifference. (103)

This metaphor of child abandonment was, as I will discuss in chapter four, fairly pervasive.

Yet paternalist metaphors as applied to settlement colonies were anything but stable. Froude was more ambivalent than most in rendering metropolitan-colonial relations as strictly hierarchical, instead equivocating between relations of “parents and children” and “brothers and sisters” (103). “Separation” is also characterized in the sensational and sentimental language of unnatural and indecent domestic behavior—that of throwing off family members, of desertion, and of divorce (103, 356). At one point, Froude explores the extended metaphor of metropolitan-colonial relations as marriage,¹³ describing intrainperial disagreement and conflict as little more than domestic squabbling: “They have as little thought of leaving us, as an affectionate wife thinks of leaving her husband. The married pair may have their small disagreements, but their partnership is for ‘as long as they both shall live’” (390). Then, “Man and wife may be divorced in certain eventualities, but such eventualities are not spoken of among the contingencies of domestic life” (394). If such acknowledgment of possible separation becomes a regular part of the discourse surrounding Britain’s settler colonies, the metaphorical

¹³ See an earlier application of marriage metaphor to the Union of Britain and Ireland in Mary Jean Corbett’s chapter on “Allegories of Prescription: Engendering Union in Owenson and Edgeworth” in her *Allegories of Irish and English Writing, 1790-1870: Politics, History and the Family from Edgeworth to Arnold* (2000).

Greater British family will be, moreover, “a family [...] fit for an asylum of idiots” (357).

Froude’s metaphoric ambivalence is significant because it prefigures some of the intrinsic difficulties of metaphorizing the relationship between settler colonies and Britain through the family. Paternalism was certainly operative in the rhetorical relations between Britain and Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, but “familial” relations were just as often articulated in terms of horizontal kinship as they were in terms of hierarchies. A rhetoric of horizontal kinship—colonies as brothers, sisters, cousins, and children who have reached adulthood—existed alongside the dominant vertical rhetoric regarding the “mother country” and her infant colonies. The confusion of contradictory metaphors testified to the fact that the degree of independence, development, and closeness to the “mother-country” were all in question, as was the timeline for “separation.”¹⁴ The ubiquity of familial metaphor for all humanity was further fraught by the fact that settlement colonies fit uncomfortably within a national-historical narrative of progress. Parent-child metaphors as applied to India carried with them the theoretical possibility of colonial subjects reaching eventual maturity, but this maturity inhabited a murky, distant future. How far along were the white settler colonies on a narrative of developmental progress? If compared to the life of an individual, were the colonies small children in need of constant supervision? Or were they closer to adulthood? And to what degree had the “mother country” ensured that the character of the colonies would resemble “her” own and keep “family” interests in mind? As chapter four will indicate, this last question was one that continues to undermine the fantasy of a global “Greater Britain” throughout the period

¹⁴ As Anne M. Windholz suggests, metaphoric ambivalence was also built into the United States’s incorporation into “Greater Britain.” In the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, the U.S. was frequently associated with the language of cousinship, which carried with it “uncomplimentary connotations” (651). Yet when deployed in Greater British discourse, it increasingly conveyed friendly affection in order to promote Anglo-Saxon bonds (651).

examined in this dissertation. When metropolitan and colonial writers articulated racial sameness and developmental unity, they challenged hierarchical language and demanded these horizontal affiliations.

Of course, these horizontal adult affiliations could nonetheless be cut across by the metaphorical significant of gender and age. In advocating separation, Anthony Trollope's *Australia and New Zealand*, another "Greater British" travel narrative, alternates between representing the Australian colonies as a dependent daughter and an independent son who will "take his place among men" (1: 359-60). Trollope's text in particular reveals the conflicted use of family metaphor through the proliferation of variations. It also suggests that colonial writers were just as capable of capitalizing on the infantilizing metaphors of parent-child, deliberately challenging Britain to not push her "children" away by requiring settlers to pay for their own military protection, or conversely, responding to "unnatural" rejection by responding in kind. On the one hand, Trollope suggests that colonials resist separation because, in keeping with Froude's metaphor of child abandonment, Britain would be committing "infanticide" (1: 358). On the other, he argues that Britain's behavior to Australia, in the minds of Australians, "show[s] the heart of a step-mother rather than a parent. Her statesmen—or at least some of the chief among them,—have declared their opinion that the links should be broken which bind Australia to the mother country" (1: 359). Describing Britain as "stepmother" rather than the natural and biological "mother" indicates that the family metaphor had been stretched to a breaking point, since it no longer reflected the real connections between colony and "mother country." As I will suggest in chapter 3, Trollope fiction similarly questions whether cultural connections are real or fictive.

Both familial metaphor and the workings and affections of literal families are used to

negotiate the delicate political tensions created by a colony becoming more distant, though they also exist in tension with one another. For example, a mock letter, published in *Punch* the same year as the publication of Dilke's *Greater Britain* and modeled on the international family letter—a genre that will feature heavily in the following chapters—points to the irony that parent-child analogies consign Britain to old age and irrelevance in the modern age (a concern that is also evident in Trollope's *The Fixed Period* [1882, see chapter 3]). In this letter, celebrating Prince Albert's journey to Australia (prior to his attempted assassination), "Britannia" addresses her daughter "Australia," making a clear correlation between the familial literal register and the global metaphorical in figuring Australia as a teenage girl who has "come out" and who greatly resembles her mother despite having a "figure rather fuller than mine" ("Britannia to Australia" 44). Crucially, Britannia responds defensively to her own obsolescence:

My Daughter, do not listen to those who will tell you that I have seen my best days and that there is no prospect for me but decrepitude and decay. I mean to be the Methuselah of nations, the evergreen of kingdoms. I have no intention, at present, of dismantling London Bridge, or converting St. Paul's into a picturesque ruin.¹⁵ I mean to live to see your future prosperity as far exceed your present, as your present does that forlorn time of COOK and BANKS from which our own is separated by such a scanty handful of years. You, in your turn, will have to colonise and emigrate, and you will bless me with lusty and vigorous

¹⁵ As I'll discuss in chapter four, the reference to London in decline makes a mockery of contemporary discourse on the future "Coming Man" who engages in a reverse colonialism. Popular depictions of this discourse include Thomas Babington Macaulay and Marcus Clarke. See Francis Jacox's 1866 "About the Coming Man from New Zealand: A Forecast Shadow (and Irrepressible Bore)" for an extensive exploration of this popular trope.

grandchildren. Your stride will lengthen, your pace will quicken; but don't make the running too soon, don't go too fast.

Britannia goes on to echo liberal approaches to the settler empire, saying that she has no wish to “part company” with her maturing daughter, though “there will be no feeling of displeasure at your independence, no thought of resistance to your wishes” (44). But more importantly, the paternalistic tones of an aging, proud mother are balanced with Britannia's defensive declaration that she will remain the matriarch; thus the metaphor acknowledges but bucks the assumption of a generational change and an end to Britain's dominance.

Clearly, the family metaphor applied to settler Greater Britain was unstable and vastly overdetermined. Burke's “philosophic analogy,” when applied to a nation expanding its borders, could only go so far, and this in turn implies some question about the degree to which biological relations underwriting them were considered literal, real, and continuing.¹⁶ Adele Perry, for one, has suggested that familial and developmental metaphor was inadequate to the task of managing contradictions within the empire—of contradictory claims toward colonial subjection and colonist's claims to citizenship, of the limits on representative colonial government versus the assumption that colonists had “responsible” self-government (par. 2). In this view, the constant appeals to sentiment, feeling, family, emotion, and kinship in the language of “Greater Britain” operated in the negative, invoked to compensate for their perceived absence.

As I will stress in the following chapters, every appearance of family metaphor in the

¹⁶ According to Bernard Porter, a Burkean “frame of polity” when applied to the global settler empire was more rhetorical than real. Porter's controversial *The Absent-Minded Imperialists* (2006) argues that the “relationship between the majority of the British people and their empire [...] was not *necessarily* either close or obvious, or—as we shall see shortly—particularly warm” (26). The oft-repeated arguments by colonists about how they felt abandoned by their mother country—the claims Trollope notes about Britain's “infanticide” and her stepmotherly behavior—indicate that this very well may have been the case.

discourse of “Greater Britain” strains under the weight attached to the changing idea of the Victorian family in the wake of settlement. Indeed, Francis William Newman, moral philosopher and younger brother of Cardinal John Henry Newman, wrote in an 1867 essay for *Fraser’s* (at the time edited by Froude) that “the English race” had become “preeminently migratory” (177), and that this migratory nature was working against “the influence of *collateral families*” and leading to the destruction of the institution of marriage (178, Newman’s emphasis).¹⁷ As such, the operations of individual families had distinct consequences not merely for those self-same families, but for a larger concept of community including that of “Greater Britain.”

III. The Literature of Greater Britain: Poetry and Fiction of Settlement

What, if any, role did fiction and poetry play in relation to the imperial economy of affect taking shape in the fantasies of a “Greater Britain”? The discourse on family and empire exists on at least two distinct registers—the material and the metaphorical—and they converge in the fiction of settlement. A range of recent historical studies have traced the circulation and operations of emotion within empire,¹⁸ and as I argue in this dissertation, Britons were not unaware of ways discourses on family, love, intimacy, emotion, and friendship informed and structured political ideologies, and especially metropolitan-colonial relations. Australia’s position as a nearly grown daughter who has “come out” in the *Punch* mock letter, as well as Froude and Trollope’s shifting metaphors, strongly imply that conceptions of settler colonialism

¹⁷ Similarly, George Behlmer notes that family connections were difficult to maintain in “declining rural communities prey to migration and emigration” (25).

¹⁸ See, for example, Stoler’s *Haunted By Empire* (2006) and *Along the Archival Grain* (2009), Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton’s edited anthology *Moving Subjects* (2009), and Elizabeth Povinelli’s *The Empire of Love* (2006).

and theories of history and progress were embedded within the family story and narratives of individual development. As I've suggested above, metaphor in its various forms—analogy, personification, allegory, simile, etc.—overdetermines the political possibilities for Britain's future, though it also capitalizes on naturalized affective family relationships and individual life-stages in structuring arguments about "Greater Britain."

Texts like Dilke's popular travel narrative and Seeley's influential published lectures had a considerable impact on political discourse, but as Bell suggests, their popularity was limited to audiences interested in contemporary political issues. It is, as well, quite difficult to extrapolate the degree to which such texts affected less academic audiences, and, Bell notes, intellectual and political historians have at times made unwarranted extrapolations from individual theorists to broader claims about Victorian culture (Bell, "Empire and International Relations" 292). Yet I would argue that the ideas surrounding the fantasy of "Greater Britain" do find their way into a public consciousness through a more popular and ubiquitous medium: fiction. As this dissertation argues, contemporary Victorians did have access to these kinds of ideas through the realm of the aesthetic. In the following chapters, I will trace the links between such popular metropolitan novels as Dickens's *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House* and Anthony Trollope's *John Caldigate* and *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil*, as well as some lesser-known colonial novels and romances, including Catherine Helen Spence's *Handfasted*, Marcus Clarke's *His Natural Life*, and Henry Kingsley's *Recollections of Geoffrey Hamlyn*.

Before introducing these fictions, I want first to open up this discussion by describing some of the more direct literary conversations about the politics of settlement and the idea of a "Greater Britain" in fiction and poetry by looking briefly at three prominent Victorian writers who treated this subject: Edward Bulwer Lytton, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Rudyard Kipling.

Because Bulwer Lytton served as Secretary of State for the Colonies from May 1858 until June 1859 during which he oversaw the creation of British Columbia in 1858 and the separation of Queensland from New South Wales in 1859, he was particularly well positioned to write about Britain's settler colonies. But Bulwer Lytton is perhaps more widely known as one of the most prolific novelists of the Victorian period, and his popularity in his lifetime was surpassed only by Dickens himself (Brown). He explores Britain's relation to Australia briefly in one of his most successful novels, *The Caxtons: A Family Picture* (1849), which depicts Pisistratus Caxton regaining his family's fortune in Australia before returning triumphantly to England. In this novel, Bulwer Lytton critiqued the ignorance of metropolitan theorists (specifically targeting Edward Gibbon Wakefield), on colonial affairs.

His later *The Coming Race* (1871) explored in more depth the global politics of settlement by theorizing the possibility of a loosely-federated empire, and ran through eight editions in eighteen months despite having been published anonymously (Brown). Its narrator, an American global wanderer explores a mine in an undisclosed location and discovers a subterranean race of colonizers who evolved along a different trajectory than the rest of humanity after a flood (ostensibly the biblical one). Nonetheless, the narrator considers them to be of the "Aryan family" (Bulwer Lytton 195). The "An" are far more advanced than humanity above, especially through their technological mastery of flight and an energy-form known as "Vril," a word that also means "The Civilised Nations" (55). Like British colonial expansion, the An establish colonies in a seemingly unending number of adjacent underground caverns where they eradicate societies deemed less civilized. The level of advancement the An represent is exemplified for Bulwer Lytton in the larger structure of the An's empire. Like the loosely affiliated, closely filial "Greater Britain" Dilke wrote of, the An's empire is not precisely an

empire at all, but rather a network of linked but politically autonomous settlements in “constant communication” with one another (129). The success of this governmental structure models the viability of a “Greater Britain” united by common race and language, while at the same time it dismisses the notion of a more rigidly federal or centralized government since the distance between colonies means political unity can only come as a result of force. Through the appeal to the shared racial characteristics of Anglo-Saxons and the An, Bulwer Lytton predicts the success of “Greater Britain,” though *The Coming Race* also demonstrates an unsettling awareness of the genocidal nature of settlement. In a moment expressive of colonial guilt, the close of the narrative warns that if the An ever rediscover the world above, it may very well spell the end of all Anglo-Saxon civilization.

Though I emphasize novels of settlement in this dissertation, two notable Victorian poets engage quite directly with the issue of “Greater Britain.” The first, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom from 1850 until his death in 1892, proved another important proponent of “Greater British” unity. As I argue above, even writing as early as 1835, Tennyson depicts a youthful poetic speaker in his dramatic lyric “Locksley Hall” who imagines a global future with “the Parliament of man, the federation of the world” (line 128). Though not clearly an exclusively British federation of the world, Tennyson’s later “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After” (1886) questions global political unity, writing “Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now, / Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow” (117-18). The problem, the speaker seems to suggest, is an unsolvable one. He calls into question his youthful vision of a suggestively Anglo-Saxon world peace united under the English tongue and the assimilation of all races into Anglo-Saxonism—asking “All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth? / [...] Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single

tongue—/I have seen her far away—for is not Earth as yet so young?” (162, 164-5). The speaker’s tone is disillusioned, and he seems to think this “Greater Britain” far from inevitable.

Tennyson’s most potent expression of views on the settler empire comes in his expansive *Idylls of the King*, its individual component poems published between 1859 and 1885. In these poems, Tennyson constructs a romantic Arthurian national history and in the epilogue “To the Queen” appended to the 1873 Imperial Library edition of his *Works*, he closes the collected *Idylls* with a critique of Britain’s colonial present. As his wife Emily’s journal indicates, Tennyson had read a number of pro-federation articles in *Fraser’s* in 1871 and these arguments acted powerfully on his understanding (Devereux 227). Responding to a recent publication in the *Times* advocating the Gladstonian Liberal government’s view that Canada should move toward complete political independence, Tennyson stresses in “To the Queen” the affective and genealogical connection of Canada to its “mother country”:

And that true North, whereof we lately heard
 A strain to shame us ‘keep you to yourselves;
 So loyal is too costly! friends—your love
 Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and go.’
 Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
 That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
 And meaning, whom the roar of Hougoumont
 Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
 What shock has fool’d her since, that she should speak
 So feebly? wealthier—wealthier—hour by hour!
 The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,

Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas?
There rang her voice, when the full city peal'd
 Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their crown
 Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
 Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
 For ever-broadening England, and her throne
 In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
 That knows not her own greatness: if she knows
 And dreads it we are fall'n. (14-33)

In this poem, Tennyson gave sentimental poetic voice to the opinions being expressed at the time by Canadians and Australians alike that failure to recognize and consolidate a familial, settler “Greater Britain” would prove disastrous for Britain. As Cecily Devereux suggests, Tennyson may not have been a straightforward apologist for empire, but when it came to Britain’s settler colonies filled with “brother Britons,” he was “not nearly so ambivalent” (228). As such, “To the Queen” was gratefully received by many Canadians, and one must imagine Australians as well.

Though never officially recognized as a laureate, Rudyard Kipling, famous for literary works set in British India, developed a reputation in the United States as the “Laureate of Greater Britain,” dubbed so by American poet and critic Edmund Clarence Stedman in an 1896 review of Kipling’s *The Seven Seas* (598).¹⁹ Though Kipling is a veritable poster boy for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century jingoistic imperialism, texts like his *The Five Nations* (1903) suggest that irrespective of actual political connections, “Greater Britain” did and would continue to exist

¹⁹ For other contemporary references, see “Her Last Appearance” 6, “The British Empire” 18, and B. Perry 846.

even as Britain's settler colonies continued to move toward full independence. In perhaps the purest expression of this view, *The Five Nations*, which pulls together several poems Kipling had written previously, draws its title from Britain and its four major settler colonies: Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and Canada.

In *The Five Nations*, Kipling's version of the current status of settler Britain stresses family metaphors for empire. "Our Lady of the Snows," which was written in response to the Canadian Preferential Tariff of 1897, testified to Canadians' continuing devotion to Britain despite independence and, moreover, Canada's continuing desire to participate in Britain's wars. Perhaps more importantly, Kipling's "Lady of the Snows" engages not in a mere exchange between "herself" and Britain, but also asks to "Carry the words to my sisters—/To the Queens of the East and the South./ I have proven faith in the Heritage / By more than the word of the mouth" (lines 33-36). Thus, Kipling suggests that the "Five Nations," settler colony sisters, will continue to work in concert as a testament to their shared genealogy and in service to their mother. The personified Canada defines this relation as simultaneously founded on horizontal equality and subordinate dedication to a hegemonic maternal authority: "*A Nation spoke to a Nation, / A Throne sent word to a Throne: / 'Daughter am I in my mother's house, / But mistress in my own! / The gates are mine to open, / As the gates are mine to close, / And I abide by my mother's house, / Said our Lady of the Snows'*" (l.41-48, Kipling's emphasis). In another poem from *The Five Nations*, Kipling marks the inaugural day of the federated Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 by depicting the coronation of the Australian "Young Queen" by the motherly British "Old Queen" in the "Hall of the Five Free Nations" (4-6). Crowned with a circlet decorated with a "Five-starred Cross...for sign of the Nations Five" (20) and with the Old Queen's blessing, Australia becomes "Daughter no more but Sister, and doubly Daughter so—/

Mother of many princes—and child of the child I bore” (26-27),²⁰ charged with the task of multiplying Britain’s empire all the more.

Bulwer-Lytton and Tennyson model the structure of a “Greater Britain” through, respectively, shared race and affect. Kipling’s poems operate within the realm of metaphor and analogy, using family and affect to render structural and political relations intelligible to Victorian readers. Stoler rightly points to the dissonance between such usage and the material ways governments “directed and reworked the affective bonds within families themselves” (*Along*, 63). As I have begun to suggest above, when it applies to settler colonies, familial metaphor ceases to be entirely metaphor and enters the realm of synecdoche. Thus, “mother” and “child” do not merely act as vehicles for the tenors “Britain” and “colony,” but also refer to a contiguous genealogical relation.

Because the Victorian family was in theory what Hall has termed the “keystone of [...] civilization,” Britons asserted their right and privilege to dominate through deployments of family (“Of Gender and Empire” 51). George Behlmer has argued that “when we talk about the family in terms of tradition we necessarily conjure up a static image. [...] a frozen social form” (318). The advantages of this static family were that, as McClintock suggests, it could bear the weight of the myriad metaphorical purposes for which it was used, including hierarchy within unity (*Imperial Leather* 45). These articulations of family also depend on normative articulations of familial relations—separate spheres ideology, conventional domesticity, etc.—but as I will show in the following chapters, fiction could also depict family structures as dynamic and evolving. As such, the conflicts of individual families in fictions of settlement have significant implications for the metaphoric family of “Greater Britain.”

²⁰ The “child of the child I bore” references Australia as a new “child” made by the older children of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.

The importance of family metaphor and emotion in the language of “Greater Britain” cannot be fully understood or realized without understanding the ideals of Victorian family life expressed in fictions about settlement. I take my cue from Stoler’s introduction to *Haunted By Empire*, which argues that it is necessary to trace the “distribution of sentiments,” and ask “how habits of the heart and comportment have been recruited to the service of colonial governance but never wholly subsumed by it” (4). As I will suggest, depictions of family in fictions of settlement do perform the work of colonial governance, but they are also resistant to such use at times. On the one hand, fictions of settlement attempt to shrink the English-speaking world by illustrating personal relationships between people from different geographies. The far-flung reaches of the British settler empire become intimately knowable in the family stories from fictions about emigrants, correspondents, and returnees, and these often reinforce the familial ideologies propounded by theorists of a “Greater Britain.” On the other hand, when fiction writers and poets represent family relationships structured in part through the settler empire, they often question the imperial economy of affect that “Greater Britain” depends upon by showing families disintegrating or modifying traditional relations.

Here it is important to stress the way in which the affects and the intricacies of intrafamilial relations speak to larger structural issues. Sara Ahmed’s “Affective Economies” argues that emotions are not merely “psychological dispositions.” Rather, they bind individuals together into a collective by “mediat[ing] the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective” (119). For Ahmed, affective economies tend to serve the interests of exclusive nationalisms and racism. As I will suggest later in this chapter and throughout the following chapters, fictions of settlement perform this same work and are

strongly implicated in affective economies. They both question and concretize a notion of a global Anglo-Saxon community of Britons.

Marilyn Lake has recently argued that scholars must begin to address the relations between individual subject formation, the affective rhetoric of empire and internationalism, and emergent transnational racial identifications:

One [suggestion for the project of historicizing whiteness] is that we bring historiographical domains previously kept separate—global politics and the production of personal subjectivities—into the same analytical frame and bring research in these fields into connection and conversation; and second, that in historicizing whiteness we analyze the dynamics of emotional identification that animate the formation of racialized subjectivities. (“White is Wonderful” 132)

Fiction provides just such a way to address the relation between the macropolitical, the creation of individual subjectivities, and public consciousness. The consumption of literature, a national pastime in the Victorian era, provides one of the most crucial ways of shaping perceptions of the empire, and it stands to reason that it plays a crucial role in shaping the perception of a possible “Greater Britain” even before Dilke coined this term. Ultimately, both the rhetoric of “Greater Britain” and fictions of settlement narrativize Australian experience through a globality discourse on kinship and its attending emotional valences.

The following chapters build both on the shift toward the study of emotional identification that Lake and Ahmed advocate for, as well as the shift toward transnational studies in imperial history and literary studies. While my chapters focus chiefly on nineteenth-century fictions of settlement written about Australia or by Australian writers that theorize metropolitan-settler relations, I will also discuss other colonial geographies—some settler, some other—which

provide important context for understanding the particularities both of settler colonialism itself and the fantasy of a “Greater Britain” I have discussed above. I show how many of the representations of settler Australia depend on connections (1) among the colonies of the Australian group, (2) between Australian space and other British territories, including Scotland, Ireland and Africa, and (3) between Australia and the United States. These other kinds of colonial locations serve as important contrasts to Australian settler colonies or, in some cases, as tools with which both metropolitan and colonial writers oriented themselves toward a possible “Greater British” future.

Chapter two addresses “Greater Britain” by investigating the professional relationship between Charles Dickens and Caroline Chisholm, a mid-century proponent of family and women’s emigration to Australia. Though Dickens ostensibly supported her agenda in articles published in *Household Words* and in *David Copperfield*, he also caricatures Chisholm in *Bleak House* where he blends her family emigration schemes with details from the failed Niger Expedition of 1841. In so doing he reveals Chisholm’s own understated investment in Australia as a *terra nullius*. Dickens’s elision of the difference between Australia and Africa also suggests that an emergent idea of a familial “Greater Britain” was still merely nascent in the early 1850s.

My chapter on Anthony Trollope’s *John Caldigate* and the crisis of marriage law in the United Kingdom in the 1860s and 1870s will show how marriage practice, law, and sexual norms became an integral part of the ways Victorian Britons understood both their “domestic,” colonial, and territorial empires. I demonstrate that in many ways these differences in structuring intimate and familial relations pose a challenge to ideas of a homogeneous “Greater Britain.” Trollope’s *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* envisions Australia as a space ready for the replication of British domestic norms, but *John Caldigate* depends on the idea that settler colonies were spaces

where colonists might engage in deviant sexual behaviors and non-normative marriage practices based on primitive sexual relations. Crucially, Trollope uses marriage law differences between England, Scotland, and Ireland as an interpretive paradigm by which British readers might understand the modified and multiple forms of relationships within the settler empire. Bigamy in particular comes to signify the doubling of national interests as opposed to the singular national interests of a “Greater Britain.”

Chapters four and five move into a consideration of the ways colonial writers—or writers who resided at least for a time in the colonies—engage the “Colonial Question” in relation to metropolitan ideas. Chapter four examines a constellation of novels including Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, Henry Kingsley’s *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* and *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, and Marcus Clarke’s *His Natural Life* by looking at the interplay between nineteenth-century anticipations of Australia’s racial future and its convict past. All of these novels feature fraught relationships between fathers and sons that metaphorize the repercussions of the convict transportation system, as well as the ongoing problematic relationships between settler colonies and their “mother country.” I argue in this chapter that the figure of the convict must be understood relationally as imbedded within family structures, and it also serves as an exemplar for settlement itself, and the contradictions intrinsic within a “Greater Britain” that has historically discarded its social refuse—convicts, the poor, the Irish and Scottish—abroad.

Chapter five presents a reading of Catherine Helen Spence’s feminist utopian *Handfasted*, which offers a stark contrast to Caroline Chisholm’s attempts to replicate domestic ideology and family structures in the Australian colonies. Using a fictional lost settler colony located somewhere in North America, Australian-writer Spence reworks British gender relations, family structures, and social polity with a “Columban” return to a Scottish primitive form of trial

marriage. “Handfasting” proves revolutionary and begins to suggest a way for settler innovations to productively contribute to a global Anglo-Saxon “Greater Britain” that includes independent former colonies like the United States. As I will further show, such revolutionary developments depend on the suppression of indigenous peoples and assimilative technologies that resonate powerfully with the history of Australia in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Chapter 2:

Colonial Relations: Dickens's *Bleak House*, Caroline Chisholm and Family Settlement

Since the inception of family history studies in the 1970s, “the family” as an autonomous analytic category has systematically been challenged through studies about, among other things, gender difference, sexuality, marital tension, the role of cultural, juridical, and neighborhood norms, and relationships outside of family (Ross 537). Yet the destabilization of “family” as a lived experience and historical reality within Victorian Britain is countered by the fact of its rhetorical power in nineteenth-century writing. As a constitutive part of the Victorian cultural imaginary, “family” came to be understood as the glue that held society together, offering an imagined cooperative model of social organization counter to the competitive, antagonistic reality of nineteenth-century social and political transformations (Gallagher 115). Anne McClintock has argued that in the nineteenth-century, “family” became an ahistorical, anachronistic abstraction detached from historical reality, and simultaneously its metaphorical importance increased exponentially as the “filiative image of the family was projected onto emerging affiliative institutions as their shadowy, naturalized form” (*Imperial Leather* 45). As a technology of affiliative institutions, “The family image came to figure *hierarchy within unity* as an organic element of historical progress, and thus became indispensable for legitimizing exclusion and hierarchy within nonfamilial social forms such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism” (45). Burgeoning nationalisms, capitalist expansion, class and gender tensions, and racial differences could all be discursively managed and negotiated through the universal, liberal notion of “family.” As I suggest in my introductory chapter, since at least

the 1840s, this family imagery was increasingly applied to a global settler empire that would later be known as “Greater Britain.”²¹

The language of family was applied to a variety of different contexts, many of them international. On the one hand, it might refer to the discourse of the great universal “Family of Man.” This terminology had eighteenth-century roots, but crucially the 1851 Great Exhibition revitalized this global mentality with its attendant assertions of fellowship with Britain’s trading interests (P. Young 29). On the other hand, the “Family of Man” might refer to a paternalistic approach to subject peoples, where Britain figured as “mother country” and natives as her primitive, undeveloped children in need of instruction and assistance. As I argued in my introductory chapter, the application of filiative language to settler colonies was no exception. “Greater Britain,” as distinct from territorial domination on the Indian subcontinent and slave-holding colonies in the West Indies, depended on the rhetorical construction of colonial territory as empty space or as land occupied by nearly extinct “primitive” races. Seemingly ripe for settlement, these colonies could be defined as either exotically other or as virtual replicas of metropolitan space. To combat othering language, writers in the late 1840s and early 1850s articulated metropolitan-settler colonial relations through the consolidating language of family and affect, and particularly in the Australian context I address here. With the convict transportation system near its end and emigration on the rise, the increasing legitimacy of Australia warranted reimagining, from a giant prison and wasteland for Britain’s refuse to an inviting space with close ties to its “mother country.”

²¹ To reiterate a point I make in my introduction, though the phrase “Greater Britain” was coined in 1868 by Charles Wentworth Dilke, it has important antecedents in much earlier work, including Herman Merivale’s *Lectures*. Here, “Greater Britain” serves as shorthand for the complex issues concerning metropolitan-settler colonial connection that I sketch out in my introduction.

Settlers in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada were geographically distant from their “mother-country” with no means of rapid transit or communication, and a nascent language of imperial family feeling began to emerge to forestall a “separation” like that of Britain and the United States following the American Revolution. By the late 1860s and 1870s, Charles Wentworth Dilke began to codify this language, reinvigorating the understanding of the white settler empire as a “Greater Britain” united in blood, kinship, and sentiment. In the 1840s and 1850s, though, such writing was in its early stages, articulated chiefly by colonials themselves and their advocates. I argue here that Caroline Chisholm—a Victorian emigration proponent and philanthropist who lived in England, India, and New South Wales—mobilizes “family” as metaphor to articulate an affective, familial agenda for the white settler empire. As metaphor, “family” clarifies Britain’s obligation to found a “sister nation” with the obligations inspired by family feeling, and correlatively the well-being of individual emigrant families and bush bachelors in need of wives is contiguous with the nation’s well-being. In Chisholm’s view, family and women’s emigration promises to root developing Australian colonies in domestic ideology, which in turn will cement national and imperial sentiment.

Narratives of family separation and emigration offer a view of the effects of settlement on both individual families and the national-imperial family. Because “family” extends beyond the bounds of Britain as a transoceanic, imperial structure—held together by letters crisscrossing the Atlantic and snaking around the South African coast toward New Zealand and Australia—it seemingly offers a viable model for the imperial economy of affect I discuss in my introduction. Yet I argue that fictions of settlement also index the conflicts between metaphorical understandings of an imperial family and the realities (or fictions) of family life as interrupted by the experience of settlement.

Dickens, who supported Chisholm in a series of articles in *Household Words* and who used the basic tenets of her emigration project as the model for the emigration of the Peggotty and Micawber families in *David Copperfield*, rejects the possibilities of familial metaphor and metonymy for an understanding of the settler empire in *Bleak House*. Where *David Copperfield* hesitantly supports Chisholm's agenda, Dickens models the hypocritical philanthropist Mrs. Jellyby of *Bleak House* loosely on Chisholm in order to critique the use of family as justification for empire-building. Jellyby's project for family settlement in African Borrioboola-Gha, ultimately a failure, comes at the cost of Jellyby's own family well-being and thus her domestic space acts as a national critique of colonial philanthropy. Family instead stands in for national concerns, Jellyby's domestic disorder and child neglect illustrating how colonial philanthropy occludes the needs of English families. As I argue below, the African settlement becomes a parody of multiple types of colonialism, including the settler colonialism that Dickens supported in *David Copperfield*.

The contradictory visions of emigration in *David Copperfield* and *Bleak House* expose conflicting ideologies of kinship respecting the settler colonies. According to *Bleak House*, emigration advocates like Chisholm too readily obscured the dangers of colonial settlement in favor of domestic and familial imagery. Dickens and Chisholm offer competing models of the settler colonial process. Where Chisholm saw emigration and settlement as a solution to national crises like poverty and class unrest, Dickens saw them as outright avoidance of the measures necessary to address metropolitan crises. Where Chisholm's writing highlights the similarities and continuities between colony and "mother country," Dickens's vision of settler colonialism in *Bleak House* stresses difference, evidenced in local complexity, violence perpetrated on settlers, and the racialization of settler space. As I will discuss below, Dickens had multiple reasons for

using an African settlement instead of Australian settlement (including his strong opinions on the failed 1841 Niger Expedition). Yet I also argue that with his strategic choice of articles on the violence of Australian life in *Household Words* and the strong links between Jellyby's African project and Chisholm's philanthropic work, Dickens critiques settler colonialism and "Greater Britain."

This chapter describes an emergent discourse on kinship and settler empire. Both Dickens and Chisholm invoke family in their treatments of settler Australia, mapping out the terrain that later arguments about "Greater Britain" would traverse. Dickens had the more powerful position as a literary and cultural mediator, but it was Chisholm who anticipated the mid-Victorian rhetoric of "Greater Britain." Where later writers like J.A. Froude would attempt to reinvigorate the understanding of the white settler empire united in blood, kinship, and sentiment, Dickens's emphasis on family and family welfare exposed the limits beyond which the "family" image could not be extended—never at the cost of literal families, and never beyond the bounds of the nation itself.

I. *David Copperfield* and Emigration as Narrative Solution

For Dickens's views of emigration to settler colonies, critics have consistently turned to such texts as *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843-44) and *David Copperfield* (1849-1850).²² In the former, Martin Chuzzlewit's emigration to the United States allows Dickens to expound upon the critiques of American culture and character that he had developed during his travels there in

²² See, for example, Robert E. Lougy's "Nationalism and Violence," Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness*, Grace Moore's *Dickens and Empire*, Shannon Russell's "Recycling the Poor and Fallen."

1842.²³ Martin's eventual return to England after near death from malaria and economic failure advertises Dickens's own disappointment with the U.S. after his first reading tour, testifying to his belief that the young republic was too uncivilized for Britons. As I suggest in my introductory chapter, the U.S.'s place in a transnational imagined community of English-speaking people was sketchy at best after political separation from Britain, and Dickens depiction of the U.S. reflects this view. The American character and landscape transform Martin into a better man, but the U.S. was little more than a temporary purgatory. Instead, *Martin Chuzzlewit* presented the former colony as a space of renewal where truly British character comes to be understood through its contrast with American character; it was not, however, a place of permanent settlement.²⁴

David Copperfield's Australia offered the opportunity for economic and moral stability missing from the satirically-titled American "Eden" of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, as well as a place within an imagined community of emigrant Britons. The closing chapters of the novel include the emigration of two families, the Micawbers and the Peggottys, whose respective difficulties are resolved in an unspecified Australian colony. For Patrick Brantlinger, the Australian solution for the Peggottys and the Micawbers contrasts starkly with the problematic penal history of Australia reflected in several of Dickens other early novels. Instead of beaten-down returned ex-convicts like Alice Marwood in *Dombey and Son* or John Edmunds in *Pickwick Papers*'s "The Convict's Return," *David Copperfield* offers up "numerous, optimistic figures of colonial

²³ Though no longer part of the British Empire, the United States continued to be the most popular destination of British settlers in part because of its proximity, as well as the fact that it was far less expensive to emigrate to than Australia.

²⁴ Also, Tom Gradgrind in *Hard Times* (1854) escapes prosecution and imprisonment for theft through emigration to the U.S., and he dies a broken man after three years there. Notably, his emigration signifies his expulsion from the family and he dies writing to his sister asking her for forgiveness.

progress, prosperity, and happiness” (*Rule 121*).²⁵ On one hand, for the transported thief John Edmunds, Australian convict labor offers neither financial gain (as it does the later Abel Magwitch of *Great Expectations*), nor the opportunity for penitence and a fresh start. The penniless and insolvent Micawbers, on the other hand, emigrate in order to find new avenues for Mr. Micawber’s unique rhetorical “talents to develop themselves” and “find their own expansion” (Dickens, *David Copperfield* 642). Where Alice Marwood is made hard and unwomanly by her experience as a convict in Australia, Emily Peggotty, a fallen woman, finds peace and redemption in selfless labor and the obscurity of the Australian bush. Both John and Alice return to England after their time is served, but in *David Copperfield*, the Australian colonies are seemingly transformed from a giant prison into open space that holds out at least the suggestion of permanent settlement. While Mrs. Micawber expresses her desire for return to England—whether her own or that of her descendents—in the end the Micawbers and the Peggottys have rooted themselves in the colony, with Mr. Micawber’s success registered in his new role as magistrate.

These “optimistic figures” can be attributed in part to Dickens’s introduction to emigration proponents Samuel Sidney and his protégé Caroline Chisholm, the latter having lived and worked in Australia from 1838 until 1846. Sidney’s influential *Sidney’s Australian Handbook* (1848) co-written with his brother John became the basis for many of the Australian scenes of Edward Bulwer Lytton’s *The Caxtons* (1849), reimagining Australia as far from a haven for lazy convicts, but as a place where industriousness might yield fortune. Dickens quickly familiarized himself with Sidney’s views on emigration and theories of colonization, and having heard through Sidney of Chisholm’s work, arranged to be introduced to her. Chisholm was

²⁵ I will discuss John Edmunds and Dickens’s most famous convict character, Abel Magwitch of *Great Expectations* in chapter four.

quickly beginning to make a name for herself as the “Emigrant’s Friend” (Bogle). She had careered across the empire alongside her husband, an imperial officer, living in England, India, and New South Wales. In India she ran a school for the daughters of colonial soldiers training them in domestic tasks and had gone on to found a home for new female emigrants in Australia. Her experience and drive lent her emigration projects credibility, and quickly garnered Dickens’s support. Dickens agreed to publish a series of articles in support of Australian emigration and her Family Colonization Loan Society in *Household Words*, to be written collaboratively or individually by Chisholm, Dickens, Sidney and his subeditor.²⁶ In the inaugural issue of the new family magazine, an article called “A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters,” co-written by Dickens and Chisholm, describes what Chisholm elsewhere proclaimed as the most pernicious evils of emigration and transportation schemes as they currently existed: “the disruption of families—in their making and in their already existence [sic]” and “the separation of families” (Chisholm, *Emigration* 20, 13). As I will suggest below, Chisholm argues that this disruption posed a threat to “Greater Britain” because it undermined both social structures and the sentiment that held the vast reaches of the settler empire together. Indeed, these letters detail the painful plight of emigrants separated from spouses, children, and parents by the age and gender discrimination of government-sponsored emigration.²⁷ At the same time, “A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters” offers

²⁶ The articles referencing or alluding to Chisholm’s project include the following: Dickens and Chisholm’s “A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters” (1850), Chisholm and Richard H. Horne’s “Pictures of Life in Australia” (1850), Sydney’s “An Australian Ploughman’s Story” (1850), “The Family Colonisation Loan Society” (1850), “Two Scenes in the Life of John Bodger” (1851), “Better Ties Than Red Tape Ties” (1852), “Three Colonial Epochs” (1852), and “What to Take to Australia” (1852).

²⁷ These include, among other things, limiting the number of children under ten allowed to accompany their parents or charging an extra L7 for those children, and disallowing patriarchs over the age of 40 (*A.B.C.* 5). As Eric Richards argues, “assisted emigration to Australia was primarily and formally limited to healthy young working people in the prime of life (categories that were in any case likely to be among the more mobile elements in the British population),

up a taste of Australian possibilities—high pay, cheap and abundant food, available land, and independence. To Chisholm, the material conditions of emigration had a direct impact on a “Greater British” imperial economy of affect, and the best way to benefit from Australia’s abundance was to secure the connections of individual families—and through them “Greater Britain.”

Of the many circulating theories of settler colonization in the late 1840s, Chisholm’s was probably most aptly suited for Dickens’s commitments to domesticity, women’s virtue, self-reliance, and relief for the working poor. Though thoroughly conversant on economic and political justifications for emigration and settlement, she focused her contributions to *Household Words* and other publications on the effects of settler colonialism on individual sexual behavior and sentimental attachments. Chisholm characterized the state of bachelorism in Australia as “demoralising,” alluding vaguely to the proliferation of prostitution, the sexual abuse of indigenous women, and situational homosexual behavior (*Emigration* 20). Relying heavily on her own observations and experience, she lobbied for chaperoned female emigration of working-class women to provide wives for single men since women and children were more likely to “chain a man to hard work and to probity” (Dickens and Chisholm, “Bundle” 24).²⁸ Her goal was consolidation of the patriarchal, heterosexual family to underwrite the social respectability of the Australian colonies.

As a solution to unwholesome bachelorism and the strife of separated families, Chisholm also supported a liberal ethic of self-reliance and volunteerism that must have sat well with the mainly liberal-minded Dickens, advocating privately run emigration schemes instead of state-

unburdened by dependents, and suitable for immediate induction into the Australian work force” (263). Large group emigration was, moreover, prohibitively expensive and Australasia was the most expensive destination for emigrants.

²⁸ See also *Female Immigration Considered* (1842).

sponsored or parish-run emigration. In particular her arguments pointed toward the effects of government-sponsored female and orphan emigration particularly, where ships sending female emigrants became veritable floating brothels and both children and women became the victims of molestation (Chisholm, *A.B.C.* 10-11). If emigrants organized themselves according to her criteria, they would generate arrangements best situated to produce moral uprightness and family well-being both onboard ships and in the colonies themselves.

Chisholm's and Sidney's model for emigration were specifically offered up in opposition to those of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, whose emigration plan not only privileged the wealthy at the expense of the working class, but circumscribed the possibilities for the upward mobility of working-class emigrants through restrictive pricing of land. According to *Sidney's Australian Handbook*, this discouraged emigration to Australia and led to emigration to the United States instead, where emigrants were left "with embittered feelings" and Britain's "most frugal and industrious mechanics [would] renounce their nationality, and become hostile citizens of the United States" (5). For Chisholm, though, the end result was problematic because where the United States was the final destination, "the separation of families will in hundreds of cases become final" (*Emigration* 25).²⁹ As in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the U.S. signifies a space outside of the "Greater British" family, thus the political separation of the U.S. from the settler empire entails the separation of both metaphorical and literal families. Though she supported Sidney's views on enabling working-class emigrants to hold small farms, she implied that the future macropolitical structure of "Greater Britain" could best be anticipated through an examination of the effects of legal and economic restrictions on affective bonds between family

²⁹ Chisholm argued as well that emigration to Canada was also qualitatively emigration to the United States, for settlers more often than not emigrated again to the United States after encountering the hardships of Canadian life (*Emigration* 25-6).

members separated by emigration and sexual matters. For her, consolidating family sentiment through a “wholesome system of national Colonization” was the best way to avoid the “embittered feelings” of emigrants to the U.S. that Sidney writes of (*A.B.C.* 30).

In making family the unit of emigration rather than the individual, Chisholm’s project takes theories of emigration like Wakefield’s, based in the logic of political economy and rewrites them for audiences who were more responsive to an emigrant experience rendered through the lens of the intimate, affective, and familial. While her pamphlets—generally published letters dedicated to Earl Grey and Lord Ashley—contain complex analyses of and proposals for economic and national problems—“A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters” conveys to middle-class readers the personal, heartfelt testimonies of emigrants and would-be emigrants. The various narrative conflicts evident in “A Bundle of Emigrants’ Letters” are produced by financial and agricultural crises in England, Scotland and Ireland, but their problems are not conveyed with the analysis of economic crises. Rather, the poor grammar and spelling of emigrants’ letters details emotional distress over working-class families’ separation, suggestively advocating for whole family emigration. This, perhaps more than anything, suggests the reason why Dickens’s *Household Words* comes to include so many pieces on Australian life, letters of Australian emigrants, and articles on the Family Colonization Loan Society. Because the basis of the Society is rooted in family strife—loss, pain, love, and reunion—it lends itself well to the act of story-telling, as well as Dickens’s own favorite themes. Descriptions of the colonial abundance that could support large families starving in England suggest the possibilities for happy resolution in family emigration facilitated by the Society.

This narrative strategy also becomes the basis for Dickens’s *David Copperfield*, which makes family cohesion an integral part of the narrative closure for the Peggottys and Micawbers.

Indeed, the reunion of the shamed runaway Emily Peggotty with her devoted uncle and the resolution of Mr. and Mrs. Micawber's marriage problems coincide with their plans for family emigration. In fictional narratives like Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and Anthony Trollope's *Lady Anna*, emigration serves strictly as a narrative device, a means to escape problems such as poverty, a damaged reputation, and the prejudice against interclass marriages. By contrast, *David Copperfield*, a novel inflected by Dickens's interest in Chisholm, is as interested in the *mode* of emigration as in its expediency for narrative closure. The conclusion of *David Copperfield* builds carefully on Chisholm's own emigration schemes as developed in *The A.B.C. of Colonization* (1850), advocating both the central tenet of her system and its supporting strategies. These, in turn, become the basis for *David Copperfield*'s distinct visions of the effects of emigration and settlement on metropolitan-settler affective relations.

The central object of the Family Colonization Loan Society was to prevent "separation or breaking up of families" through whole family emigration, except in extreme circumstances (*A.B.C.* 11). One of the central reasons for separation, Chisholm writes, had been the lack of financial resources for the emigration of whole families, for often the parish or the government would not fund emigrants over the age of forty (heads of family) or thirty-five (single men), nor families with a certain number of children under the age of ten (*A.B.C.* 11). With whole family emigration, small children would not be separated from parents and grandparents, nor wives from their husbands, and the cohesion of these families would in turn work to consolidate "Greater Britain."³⁰ While most of Chisholm's emigrants funded a portion of their own

³⁰ Interestingly, Catherine Helen Spence's *Handfasted*, written in the late 1870s refers specifically to whole family emigration. In her view, however, transoceanic family relationships were a boon instead of a problem since they tied "Greater Britain" together and whole family emigration threatens to dissolve these relationships. In *Handfasted*, Spence attributes the loss of

journeys, in order to pay for such large groups the Society made private loans with money from individual donors who would be repaid over time. In *David Copperfield*, a private loan from Betsy Trotwood funds the Micawber family's emigration. Though Mr. Micawber emerges as quite notorious for defaulting on loans, leaving small tradesmen in difficulty and his sometime co-signer Thomas Traddles in the lurch, the loan he receives from Betsy Trotwood is the first loan that he pays back in full, and the first of many debts settled from the colony. Chisholm fought an uphill battle trying to convince would-be donors that their loan money would be paid back despite the enormous distance between England and Australia; a transoceanic sense of shared interests—a "Greater Britain" in fact—could not exist if emigrants did not respect their financial obligations to those left in the "mother country." *David Copperfield* affirms Chisholm's efforts, as well as the fantasy of a transoceanic "Greater Britain" by suggesting that even such a confirmed debtor as Micawber would reward the generosity of those interested in forwarding his family's interests. This, she suggests, is the value of a privately run charity organization, for borrowers would certainly never repay government loans, but they would feel a sense of personal obligation since repayment would enable other families to take advantage of the Society's help. Thus, an imperial economy of affect was not contingent on the imposition of the state; rather, the circulation of sentiment among private citizens who equally value family could reinforce connection between the Australian colonies and the "mother country."

Another significant part of Chisholm emigration scheme was the "group system," the "key-stone of the Society" (*A.B.C.* 12). The Society introduced prospective emigrant families to each other so that they would work together for their collective interests both onboard ships and in the colonies. The system made groups collectively responsible for debt so that individual

a group of eighteenth-century Scottish settlers to the fact that whole family emigration meant that no one "at home" missed them and then sought them out.

defaulters would receive pressure from their peers to repay loan money. Failing that, other more faithful members of the group might still repay the defaulted loan so that a new group of emigrants might benefit from the Society's help. Beyond financial matters, however, the group system was also intended to "raise the character and moral standard of the people" (13) through the protection of women's sexual virtue. Families might work together, protecting each other's daughters from unwanted male attention. Single women too might find safety in being attached to a family unit, for as Chisholm argued, married men's family responsibilities would make them sure protectors of feminine virtue. In this way, whole family emigration and the group system provided the mechanism for social control and the reinforcement of the gender order, simultaneously foreclosing the possibility of women's victimization and women's independence. As such, the maintenance of "Greater British" ties entailed the corresponding maintenance of Britain's gender norms. In Chisholm's version of emigration, British family values could be conserved and transplanted to the colonies.

Given Dickens's familiarity with Chisholm's plan, the concurrent immigration of the Peggottys and the Micawbers can be read as more than coincidence. Indeed, David makes every effort to have the Peggottys and the Micawbers work in concert:

I added the suggestion, that I should give some explanation of [Micawber's] character and history to Mr. Peggotty, who I knew could be relied on; and that to Mr. Peggotty should be quietly entrusted the discretion of advancing another hundred. I further proposed to interest Mr. Micawber in Mr. Peggotty, by confiding so much of Mr. Peggotty's story to him as I might feel justified in relating, or might think expedient; and to endeavour to bring each of them to bear upon the other, for the common advantage. We all entered warmly into these

views; and I may mention at once, that the principals themselves did so, shortly afterwards, with perfect good-will and harmony. (656)

Mr. Peggotty and Mr. Micawber thus become tied by their knowledge of each other's personal and financial concerns, and responsible for each other's well-being. The imbrication of their interests begins when Peggotty pays off Micawber's debts when officers come to arrest him. David later informs Micawber of the death of Ham Peggotty so Micawber can help conceal the information and the Peggottys leave in the "happy ignorance" that David argues is in their best interests (675). Much as Chisholm suggested, David increases the likelihood of the families' success onboard ship and in the colonies by facilitating their familiarity prior to their departure.

Chisholm and Dickens similarly link the success of individual families in the colonies to the success of a metaphorical "Greater British" family, though Chisholm expressed the link far more unequivocally. Chisholm wrote in a letter to Lord Ashley in August 1849 that it was the duty of Britons to found a "sister nation" (*A.B.C.* 34), and, thus, lay a foundation of "gratitude and justice; for these are the qualities that should constitute the bond which is to unite the vast Continent of New Holland [Australia] to Great Britain" (34). Here, Chisholm seems to see Australia on a path to some form of independence, as a "sister" nation horizontally affiliated with Britain, yet the connection is characterized as a union and "bond." Later writers like Froude would emphasize shared culture, language, and blood as a means of creating a "Greater Britain," but Chisholm's earlier attempts at suturing colonial and metropolitan feeling stressed that the colonies and the "mother-country" had the same investment in family structures. She fervently supported British national-imperial feeling, arguing that "[t]he spirit of patriotism is excited, and the credit of the mother country becomes involved in the character of her children" (27). For Chisholm, the British press voiced the feeling of the public in writing about a system of national

colonization; “Let us have something national,” journalists wrote, “something worthy of the name of England” (*A.B.C.* 27). If, as she suggested, it was possible for “a Government [to] gain and hold the affections of a people the same as [a] parent does of his children” (*A.B.C.* 6), then it was certainly possible to extend the bounds of that affection to include settlers through a “wholesome system of national Colonization” premised on women’s sexual virtue, family unity, and volunteerism (28). Paradoxically, such loyalty to government could only be effected through Chisholm’s privately organized philanthropy and the “voluntary national feeling” that inspired it (28).

The interests of the “mother-country” were in turn best realized through the concurrent emigration of families and single women:

It would be an act of national blindness to imagine that forced bachelorism can engender loyal feelings; it is preposterous to suppose, and the height of infatuation to expect men to be loyal subjects when the system of Government emigration pursued, has deprived them of the prospect of every domestic blessing. Give them help-mates, and you make murmuring, discontented servants, loyal and happy subjects of the State. (*A.B.C.* 30)

Even in her advocacy of single female emigration, Chisholm’s objective is the formation of new families that will cement the “Greater British” family. Chisholm argued to statesmen that serving the interests of present and future families—helping whole families to emigrate and facilitating the emigration of single women—also served the interest of the contiguous national family. Colonial unrest (characterized as a working-class problem), she suggested, can easily be suppressed by imperial technologies designed to cater to men’s sexual desires and reproductive

needs. Thus, her philanthropic charitable work shored up class and gender norms, the family and “Greater Britain.”

Dickens similarly gestures at the role emigration played in shoring up national and imperial sentiment in the concluding chapters of *David Copperfield*, though his views are in some measure satirical. Dickens’s Peggottys and Micawbers solve their individual family problems with emigration, but they do not wholly lose sight of their nationality. Mrs. Micawber’s loyalty is articulated through the combined metaphors of family and plant growth in a telling passage:

“What *I* chiefly hope, my dear Mr. Copperfield,” said Mrs. Micawber, “is, that in some branches of our family we may live again in the old country. Do not frown, Micawber! I do not now refer to my own family, but to our children’s children. However vigorous the sapling, [...] I cannot forget the parent-tree; and when our race attains to eminence and fortune, I own I should wish that fortune to flow into the coffers of Britannia.”

“My dear,” said Mr. Micawber, “Britannia must take her chance. I am bound to say that she has never done much for me, and that I have no particular wish upon the subject.”

“Micawber,” returned Mrs. Micawber, “there, you are wrong. You are going out, Micawber, to this distant clime to strengthen, not to weaken, the connexion between yourself and Albion.” (679-680)

The paradoxical combination of emigration and strengthened “connexion” testifies to Mrs. Micawber’s economic and affective solidarity with Britannia, and the organic metaphor of the

trees points toward the naturalness of the relation. Similarly, the notion of a future familial return proposes a continuing relation of intimacy and exchange.

Yet where Chisholm unequivocally argued that emigration strengthened national sentiment, *David Copperfield* is more ambiguous. In truth, the slippage between the vehicle and tenor of Mrs. Micawber's metaphor unintentionally exposes the very constructedness of the imperial connection she wishes to portray as organic. For nineteenth-century readers, "connexion"—a term Mrs. Micawber reiterates three times—could mean a "relationship by family ties, as marriage or distant consanguinity" and as such implied familial intimacy (OED), but it also pointed toward family ties that were fashioned rather than intrinsic, and remote rather than immediate. Even Mrs. Micawber's organic plant metaphor fails to convey a sense of unity in this way; the advantage of plant metaphors over familial ones in the rhetoric of "Greater Britain" is the biological sameness—and therefore the implied racial, cultural, and linguistic unity—of being part of the same plant. Indeed, as Duncan Bell has argued, organic metaphors for empire—either plant or body metaphors—would later become a dominant way of metaphorizing a "Greater Britain" after transoceanic cables and steamship transportation "shrank" the planet, allowing Victorians to "envision the empire as one, as intimately linked together and capable of functioning as a living being" ("Dissolving" 557). When Dickens's Mrs. Micawber articulates her organic metaphor for Britain's settler empire, however, it is not as one integrated unit, but as two separate plants, related but not conjoined. These point to the elective quality of close imperial ties, and the very fact that she leverages an argument against her husband at all admits the fact that close "connexion" is not a given. Mrs. Micawber's tendency to wax eloquent on family connections throughout the novel—especially when speaking of her estranged extended family, who had tired of Mr. Micawber's requests for money—adds an ironic

flavor to her proclamations. Buried within her rhetorical stylings—almost as complex as her husband’s verbal pyrotechnics—are the elements of imperial disintegration, and certainly not the “national” feeling Chisholm spoke of.

Indeed, despite Mrs. Micawber’s assurances of a strengthened “connexion,” the Australian success of the Peggottys and the Micawbers is achieved through isolation and obscurity. Emily and Mr. Peggotty move to Port Middlebay Harbor (a fictional Melbourne, says Coral Lansbury) only after the “Bush” has provided a “kiender [sic] a blessing [....] That is, in the long run” through labor and care of others (Lansbury, “Terra Australis” 15, Dickens 729). Emily’s service to others is valuable insofar as she is penitently silent around her neighbors and she is willing to travel long distances in the Australian bush bereft of all human companionship in order to teach a singular child or care for the ill. The emphasis on Australian isolation appears even more overtly for the former prostitute Martha Endell, who marries in the bush and lives with her husband four hundred miles “from any voices but their own and the singing birds” (731). As such, Emily and Martha’s fates conceptually link to those of transported British convicts I discuss in chapter four, who are expelled from Britain’s metaphoric “family.” The “connexion” of “Greater Britain” in this respect seems impossible if Australia simultaneously serves as redemptive Arcadia and space for social exclusion.

Consolidating “Greater Britain” through the extension of British family values to the colonies becomes even shakier given Dickens’s treatment of women’s sexuality. Chisholm’s system stressed a need for emigrants of high moral character, particularly where women were concerned, and the shared sexual mores of colony and “mother country” becoming the basis for a common “Greater British” domestic ideology. In Dickens, *separation* between metropolitan and colonial societies is the basis for redemption, a view very much in keeping with Dickens’s own

work with his wealthy friend Angela Burdett-Coutts at Urania Cottage. There, he helped prepare Magdalene women for emigration, as the literal realization of their social ostracism. *David Copperfield* similarly depicts the moral fall of half of his women emigrants. The particular virtues of the Australian landscape are found in its *lack* of connection from Britain, then, in that it could quarantine these dangerously sexual women far from their “mother country.” As such, family values are not shared across a transoceanic imagined community, and the Australian colonies are defined by their difference from Britain rather than their similarity.

Dickens’s emphasis on Australian isolation and difference is shown most potently in Mr. Micawber. Mr. Micawber is a failure in England because his peculiar “talents” can find no apt employment, but his letter-writing skills and ornate, overblown language find a lucrative, salutary resting place in the Australian Port Middlebay. In what Grace Moore terms a “colossal bluff,” he acquires respectable standing there after years of hard labor in the bush, working as both a magistrate and a journalist for a Port Middlebay newspaper (12). When Mr. Peggotty visits David in the concluding pages of *David Copperfield*, he brings with him a folded colonial newspaper documenting Micawber’s success in Australian society—a far cry from his status as debtor and sponge in England. Yet his letter to David in the pages of the newspaper reveals the geographic and cultural distance between provincial colony and cosmopolitan England. His letter reads as an apology for his distance and isolation, in stark contrast to David’s international fame. Where David has managed to secure a position “now familiar to the imagination of a considerable portion of the civilised world,” Micawber’s “fame” can only be shared through a dated local newspaper (733). Micawber builds his sense of connection to David and the rest of the world largely through his belief that he participates in a society of letters through his

consumption of David's renowned literary works. Yet, his sense of connection is expressed largely in the negative:

But, [...] though estranged [...], I have not been unmindful of [David's] soaring flights. Nor have I been debarred, "Though seas between us braid ha' roared" from participating in the intellectual feasts he has spread before us. [...] Go on, my dear sir! You are not unknown here, you are not unappreciated. Though "remote," we are neither "unfriended," "melancholy," nor (I may add) "slow."
(733)

The sheer number of double negatives (four), the repetition of the qualifier "though" (three), combined with the contrasting conjunctions "But" and "Nor" all point to the fact the Micawber sees himself in a negative position that he seeks to repress.

Mrs. Micawber prophetically forecasts her husband's colonial success, suggesting that it will strengthen connection between him and Britannia. Before their departure, she argues that Micawber will be recognized as "an important public character arising in that hemisphere," who "wield[s] the rod of talent and of power in Australia," and whose "influence" must in consequence be "felt at home" (680-81). But her claims toward a strengthened connection also pointedly attempt to defray a truth already understood by Victorian Britain that emigration to the settler colonies entails extraction from the quickly-moving stream of metropolitan history itself to the slow periphery. She anticipates counterclaims by arguing that in "feeling his position" as a successful man in one of the colonies, he will be a "page of History" (681), but the Micawbers' emigration coincides with their virtual excision—save Micawber's published letter in a colonial newspaper—from the novel. In that obscure newspaper, he quite literally becomes merely a page of history, only read by David, Agnes, and the distant, imaginary colonials themselves. In

including that page in his novel, Dickens reminds his readers of their distant kinsmen but simultaneously invokes a sense of separation through their distance. Colonial difference is figured as both spatial and temporal, and thus the “connexion” Mrs. Micawber alludes to remains a fantasy, as does a sense of a larger “Greater Britain.”

Caroline Chisholm had imagined the possibilities of family emigration as a means of alleviating national ills and solving domestic poverty, but more importantly, she saw it as a way to consolidate transoceanic national sentiment, but Dickens’s fictionalization of emigration consistently undermines her cause. Where Chisholm extended domestic ideology to the colonies, Dickens exiled domestic failures—including his son Alfred Tennyson Dickens—to Australia. In this way, the settler empire quite literally provided a space where failure and weakness, like those of Micawber and Emily, could be disposed of and success achieved through isolation and lack of competition. If, as Patrick Brantlinger argues, empire in narrative served as “a shadowy realm of escape, renewal, banishment, or return for characters who for one reason or another need to enter or exit from scenes of domestic conflict” (Brantlinger, *Rule* 12), then prior to the discovery of gold in 1851, the settler colonies served chiefly as a realm of banishment. In *David Copperfield*, narrative closure thus has the effect of cutting the connections Chisholm sought so determinedly to forge. Indeed, Mrs. Micawber’s constant toasts to her neglectful Devonshire family reflect her desire to reassert a family relation that had been severed long before she left England. The connections left to reinforce are merely those of friendship—like those of David and Mr. Pegotty—not kinship, and no matter what claims toward family feeling are made by Mrs. Micawber.

II. From *Copperfield* to *Bleak House*

If *David Copperfield* expresses reservations about the existence of a settler-imperial economy of affect, *Bleak House* rejects the imperial connection outright through a parody of Chisholm's scheme for family settlement. Chisholm becomes the model for the caricature of Jellyby, and similarly her investment in an expansive national family solidified by emigration and settlement becomes subject to critique. I will also show how Dickens's portrayal of settlement in *Household Words* testifies, moreover, to Dickens's increasing skepticism in settler colonial imaginaries invested in domestic ideology like Chisholm's. Thus, he undermines the theoretical basis behind Chisholm's emigration schemes.

Outside of Dickens's *Household Words*, Chisholm maintained a modest public profile in the late 1840s and early 1850s to such an extent that her name became virtually synonymous with "family emigration." In addition to her pamphlets, *Emigration and Transportation Relatively Considered* (1847), *Comfort for the Poor!* (1847), and *The A.B.C. of Colonization* (1850), Chisholm's ideas appeared frequently in newspapers and news magazines. Dickens's *Household Narrative of Current Events—Household Words'* accompanying account of news—frequently referred to her activities in its sections on "Colonies and Dependencies." Her most frequent appearances, however, were in popular family magazines. *Eliza Cook's Journal* serialized Eliza Meteyard's novella *Lucy Dean, the Noble Needlewoman* in March and April of 1850, which featured Chisholm in the thinly veiled guise of fictional emigration proponent Mary Austen (Rendall 114). Austen is the epitome of domestic virtue, supporting female immigration, encouraging the development of domestic skills (as Chisholm's work in India had emphasized), and insisting that prospective emigrants raise a substantial portion of the funds for their passage to Australia. Later, Cook's magazine would also include the biographical article "Mrs.

Chisholm” by Samuel Smiles. Samuel Sidney’s *Emigrant’s Journal* had several articles about her between 1848 and 1850 (Stinson 10), and his later *The Three Colonies of Australia* (1859) would devote a chapter to Chisholm’s colonial work.

Dickens supported Chisholm’s Family Colonization Loan Society in a number of articles over the course of the first several years of *Household Words*’ publication, from 1850 to 1852, in which he stressed her arguments about the shared interests of colonists and metropolitan Britons. Some of these articles simply detailed the Australian landscape and daily life in addition to describing the economic benefits of the colonies. While they may have been less overt about the importance of emigration, they nevertheless advertised the possibilities of the Australian bush—benefits and pleasures that could only be enjoyed by emigrants—and occasionally invoked a “Mrs. C.” who distributes domestic bliss in the form of wives for bush bachelors. Crucially, these articles emphasized continuities between the Australian colonies and Britain through their shared domestic ideology and heteronormative family values. In February of 1852, Sidney lauded Chisholm’s project in yet another *Household Words* article called “Better Ties than Red Tape Ties,” the title of which alluded to the importance of securing affective relationships between the colonies and Britain through other means than politics. He sketched out the specifics of the Family Loan Colonization Society and offered a brief biographical sketch of Chisholm. Chisholm and her theories of a relationship between domestic ideology and a nascent “Greater Britain” were thus fresh in the public consciousness—and perhaps Dickens’s as well—when, one month later, Dickens introduced Mrs. Jellyby in the first number of his new serial novel *Bleak House*.

Jellyby, a well-known philanthropist, whose energy matches Chisholm’s, employs her time devotedly on her African project for the fictive Borrioboola-Gha, dictating letters to her

eldest daughter Caddy Jellyby imploring wealthy English citizens to invest. When Jellyby is introduced in the chapter entitled “Telescopic Philanthropy,” readers learn from Mr. Kenge that “[s]he has devoted herself to an extensive variety of public subjects, at various times, and is at present (until something else attracts her) devoted to the subject of Africa; with a view to the general cultivation of the coffee berry—and the natives—and the happy settlement, on the banks of the African rivers, of our superabundant home population” (49-50). She seeks to aid the “Brotherhood of Humanity” (58), a goal clearly informed by the patriarchal universalist language of global kinship repopularized in the wake of the Great Exhibition (P. Young 26). Although her work is seemingly laudable, Esther Summerson, the first-person narrator whose authoritative feminine voice trades off with Dickens’s more typical omniscient narration, can’t help but note that the Jellyby home is a disaster area populated with drunken servants, filthy, neglected children, and a scrambled assortment of household objects out of place.

Many critics have noted the fact that Mrs. Jellyby was modeled on Chisholm, though it is unclear to what degree contemporary readers might have recognized the similarity.³¹ The association between the character and Chisholm has been based chiefly on an excerpt from one of Dickens’s letters to his friend and business associate Coutts, where he writes, “I dream of Mrs Chisholm, and her housekeeping,” and “[t]he dirty faces of her children are my continual companion” (*Letters* 6:53). Esther Summerson finds the Jellyby disorder equally haunting, awaking after her first night in the Jellyby home to the image of Jellyby’s son Peepy, a “dirty-faced little spectre” (Dickens, *Bleak House* 63). As previous critics have suggested, the stark contrast between Chisholm’s worldly benevolent philanthropy and the apparent disarray of her

³¹ See, for example, P.A.W. Collins’s “*Bleak House* and Dickens’s *Household Narrative*” (1960), Robert Tracy’s “Lighthousekeeping: *Bleak House* and the *Crystal Palace*” (2003), Eric Lorentzen’s “Obligations of Home” (2004), Grace Moore’s *Dickens and Empire* (2004), and Timothy Carens’s *Outlandish English Subjects* (2005).

household inspired Jellyby's home. But there is more to connect the two women than housekeeping; personally and professionally, Jellyby parodied Chisholm. Jellyby, like Chisholm at the time *Bleak House* was written, was a middle-aged woman and both women had distinctive eyes, Jellyby's "seeming to look a long way off" (*Bleak House* 52), and Chisholm's, according to the *Illustrated Magazine of Art*, "seem[ing] to look you through whilst addressing you" (qtd. in Kiddle 165). Both Chisholm and Jellyby made use of the free labor of their family, Jellyby employing her daughter Caddy³² as amanuensis, and Chisholm used her husband and sons' energies on her project as well and publicized as much (Kiddle 166, Collins 349). P.A.W. Collins has noted the similar mannerisms of Jellyby and Chisholm as well: "they shared also an attitude and tone of voice, which must have been recognizable to attentive readers who had never had an opportunity to view the domestic squalor of the great original" (348).

Jellyby's and Chisholm's professional projects further link Dickens's fiction to reality. Just as Chisholm did, Jellyby's activities largely consist of paperwork involving the sorting of letters, writing up of emigration lists, and the distribution of literature about her projects. Mrs. Jellyby prides herself on her public role, corresponding with "public bodies" and "private individuals" (53) and similarly Chisholm was an avid correspondent and prominent public figure, frequently in the midst of writing new letters to be published and dedicated to well-known politicians, or writing articles for publication in support of her project. Jellyby's associate, Mr. Quale notes that she sometimes receives between 150 and 200 letters per day and has been known to distribute 5000 circulars through the post office at one time. Likewise, Eneas Mackenzie's *Memoirs of Mrs. Caroline Chisholm* (1852) bragged that Chisholm had been known to receive "eighty letters and forty calls on the subject of emigration in one day" (185),

³² "Caddy" is a derivative of Caroline, and Chisholm named one of her daughters Caroline after herself (Kiddle 166).

and Dickens's *Household Words* had also noted Chisholm's large correspondence (Sidney, "Better Ties" 533). Even more telling is Jellyby's plan for the settlement of "a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families" on the banks of the Niger (*BH* 53). Family emigration was the constitutive component of Chisholm's emigration scheme, and Humphrey House has noted, "the very character of the philanthropic scheme itself" (qtd. in Kiddle 166). In a time where single male emigration was the dominant mode of emigration—especially after the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851—Chisholm's strident voice still expounding upon the civilizing effects of family emigration made hers a strikingly distinct point.

Jellyby and Chisholm were both associated with feminist causes or behaviors denigrated by Dickens though Chisholm would have likely rejected such associations. Jellyby is one of several women in *Bleak House*, including Miss Wisk and Mrs. Pardiggle, who devote themselves to charitable causes outside the home in spite of the ungrateful recipients of their charity and unhappy husbands and children. This final point of comparison between the fictional character and Chisholm is realized best when Jellyby abandons her African project after its failure for a new mission, the championing of "rights of women to sit in Parliament" (987). Chisholm herself espoused a conservative domestic ideology, but her public role conflicted with the popular ideal of women as feminine angels in the house. Whether coincidence or not, Lord Shaftesbury had described Chisholm as having attained "the highest order of Bloomerism" despite her lack of trousers, in that she had "the heart of a woman, and the understanding of a man" ("Real Bloomerism"). Dickens, in contrast, filled *Household Words* with invectives against women like Chisholm, as in his articles on "Sucking Pigs."³³

³³For example, he had argued in an article "Sucking Pigs" that a woman following in the footsteps of the American Mrs. Bloomer insists on becoming "a public character" who works away at a mission, just as Chisholm had done (146).

Though numerous scholars have noted that Jellyby was based on Chisholm, none have offered a sustained reading of Jellyby's relation to Chisholm, nor suggested why Dickens chose to substitute West Africa for Chisholm's Australia. The following pages will offer such a corrective in arguing that the changes Dickens made to Chisholm and her project index his discomfort with the nascent idea of "Greater Britain" and with a settler imaginary stressing Australian domesticity, which some of his *Household Words* articles reveal as a half-truth at best. Dickens supported Chisholm quite publicly, and he chose to disguise his critiques of her in the modified form of Jellyby and by allowing contributors to *Household Words* to speak for him.

For the purposes of my chapter, Jellyby's philanthropic labor is especially significant in elucidating the relationship between gender and colonialism. I stress here that *family settlement* is crucial to a reading of Chisholm's career for, the understanding of family as vital to nation-building offered a way for women like Chisholm to participate in imperial culture and empire-building without forgoing a commitment to domestic ideology. *Bleak House*, however, was clearly critical of women's imperial work. Ironically, Chisholm's work specifically set out to bridge the gap between colonial and domestic ideologies, to reify the family through women's imperial work because of the symbolic and ideological work of the family. *Bleak House* does the opposite, instead imagining an English family crisis as a result of Jellyby's investment in global kinship. But as Martin Danahay argues, women's labor has status only insofar as women "help reproduce and maintain the Great British Family" (417). The crucial question in comparing the depiction of Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House* to Chisholm's career, then, is whether the "Great British" family extends to a "Greater Britain," and I argue here that in *Bleak House*, it does not.

Dickens eschews this nascent idea by conflating two different kinds of imperial projects, a civilizing mission that seeks to “cultivate the natives” and a family settlement project. Dickens depicts Jellyby’s work as a form of telescopic philanthropy that privileges racialized colonial others. Indeed, Sir John Tenniel’s 1865 rendering of “telescopic philanthropy” in *Punch*, apparently inspired by *Bleak House*, represents the Mrs. Jellyby figure as Britannia herself replete with Roman helmet, trident, and shield. She looks through a telescope across to Africa, ignoring a “Little London Arab” who says, “Please ‘m, ain’t we black enough to be cared for?” (89) Like Mrs. Jellyby’s own children who are represented as dirty little savages, the small group of street “Arabs” are forgotten and ignored in favor of the distant African “savages.” Yet misguided telescopic philanthropy is seemingly quite distant from emigration projects like Chisholm’s, which seemingly serves only white British would-be emigrants.

With Mrs. Jellyby, however, Dickens associates emigration and settlement projects with the failure to address domestic problems “at home,” and he attempts to circumscribe women’s philanthropic labor closer to “home.” Esther similarly argues for the primacy of national interests through the language of domestic ideology. In response to Mr. Jarndyce’s queries about Mrs. Jellyby, Esther Summerson asks rhetorically, “We thought that, perhaps [...] it is right to begin with the obligations of home, sir; and that, perhaps, while those are overlooked and neglected, no other duties can possibly be substituted for them?” (*Bleak House* 83). While her words seemingly pertain to the duties of women’s domestic sphere, J. Hillis Miller and David Plotkin have argued that *Bleak House* is structured synecdochically, with home standing in as a part for the whole nation (Plotkin 17). In light of Jellyby’s globalist mentality, the “obligations of home” thus reference not only a woman’s domestic duties, but—as Dickens titles one of his chapters—“National and Domestic” ones as well.

Esther's argument for an English national agenda first also tied domestic ideology to racial discourse. She later adds, "I thought it best to be as useful as I could [...] to those immediately about me; and to try to let that circle of duty gradually and naturally expand itself" (128). As Bruce Robbins notes, Esther's words closely resemble those Dickens had written several years before the publication of *Bleak House* in his anonymous Carlylean review of a new book documenting the failed Niger Expedition of 1841 (214).

The stone that is dropped into the ocean of ignorance at Exeter Hall, must make its widening circles, one beyond another, until they reach the negro's country in their natural expansion. [...] Gently and imperceptibly the widening circle of enlightenment must stretch and stretch, from man to man, from people on to people, until there is a girdle round the earth; but no convulsive effort, or far-off aim, can make the last great outer circle first, and then come home at leisure to trace out the inner one. (Dickens, Rev. 533)

The notion of the expanding circle of influence that begins at home links the novel and review conceptually, amplifying Dickens's critique of Jellyby for her attentions to black Africans before her white husband and children. Hablot Knight Browne's cover for each monthly number of *Bleak House* accentuated this connection, depicting in one of its many vignettes a white woman embracing two black children and a man in a foolscap with a sandwich board reading "Exeter Hall" (Butt and Tillotson 195). "Exeter Hall" stood as a figure for contemporary foreign philanthropy in the 1840s and 1850s (especially abolitionism), and as Thomas Carlyle's "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question" had shown, was criticized chiefly for its attentions to undeserving "negroes." Esther's words imply a similar expanding circle of influence defined in no small part by racial affiliations; she critiques Jellyby's desire to

“cultivate” the black natives of Borrioboola-Gha at the expense of her own children and “home-made” savage Jo. This inversion of the natural order translated into atavistic reversion, Jo and Jellyby’s children made virtually black themselves by accrued filth and grime. The reversal of the “natural” gender order in the Jellyby household also has racial implications; Esther notes that Mr. Jellyby himself might, on account of his silence, “have been a native, but for his complexion.” It is clear that the cost of colonial philanthropy like Jellyby’s might be whiteness itself.

Bleak House’s gendered and racialized critique of Jellyby’s philanthropy has rightly been understood by scholars as part of a larger critique of colonialism. Eric Lorentzen, for one, has argued that *Bleak House* contains Dickens’s most sustained polemic against colonialism, but this argument necessitates the position that for Dickens, nationalism and colonialism were at odds. As *David Copperfield* demonstrates, this was not always the case. Dickens had gone along with Chisholm’s views on settler colonialism as merely an expansive British nationalism at least in part with the Micawber and Peggotty’s emigration. But Jellyby’s African project was also a settlement project despite the fact that scholars have not treated it as such, and its failure reflected back upon the emigration and settlement projects, like Chisholm’s, that inspired it. Jellyby’s and Chisholm’s respective projects were divergent enough that to map Chisholm’s project onto Jellyby’s (and vice versa) would not capture the complexity of Dickens’s views on settler colonialism. Yet a comparison reveals holes in Chisholm’s emigration rhetoric and ties her familial rhetoric to the settler colonial violence she obscured.

Literary scholars have perhaps tended to neglect the aspect of emigration and settlement in Jellyby’s project because it differs so much from the lengthier depiction of emigration and settlement in *David Copperfield*. More intuitively, the simple presence of natives, wholly absent

from *David Copperfield*'s Australia, is inconsistent with more typical representations of settler space as empty, and instead draws the attention of postcolonial scholars invested in race, imperialism, and representations of Africa. Though Borrioboola-Gha was a settler colony, postcolonial critics have tended to see the Jellyby vignettes as a critique of the civilizing mission alone, in part because its failure so closely resembled the disastrous Niger Expedition Dickens had written about. Jellyby's African settlement was also located on the banks of the Niger and Dickens ridiculed the goals of the Niger Expedition and Jellyby's scheme similarly. Dickens exaggerates the superabundance of Jellyby's agendas with "a view to the general cultivation of the coffee berry—and the natives—and the happy settlement." Just as the dashes and italicized "and" extend her mission into exaggerated absurdity, Dickens enumerated the foolish objectives of the Niger Expedition in his *Examiner* review. The expedition proposed to abolish the slave trade with treaties, encourage free trade, institute free labor, introduce an "improved system of agricultural cultivation" with a model farm, abolish human sacrifices, diffuse Christian doctrines, and besides this, Dickens wrote sarcastically, sought to undertake a few other "trifling points." The expedition ended in disastrous illness, combined with what Dickens's described as the traitorous behavior of King Obi, who attacked a British ship and may have been partly responsible for an attack on the model farm. Similarly, Jellyby's Borrioboola-Gha scheme ends in fever and native sedition, "a failure in consequence of the king of Borrioboola wanting to sell everybody—who survived the climate—for rum" (987).

The inversion of the Niger Expedition's abolitionist mission in the Borrioboolan enslavement of the English settlers lampooned abolitionists and missionaries, whose benevolent efforts were, Dickens suggested, equally unappreciated by the slaves and natives they sought to save and convert. The apparent connection between the Niger Expedition and Jellyby's African

project elicited considerable public criticism, not the least from Dickens's old friend Lord Denman who abjured Dickens's caricature of Exeter Hall abolitionists and missionaries in a series of articles in the *Standard* newspaper, later reprinted as *Uncle Tom's Cabin, Bleak House, Slavery and Slave Trade* (1853) (Butt and Tillotson 183). The criticisms were strong enough to garner a response from Dickens in a letter dated December 20, 1852 to Denman's daughter, Mrs. Edward Cropper where he backtracked, writing that he did not ridicule the objectives of missionaries themselves so much as the tendency "to neglect private duties associated with no particular excitement, for lifeless and soulless public hullabaloo with a great deal of excitement, and thus seriously to damage the objects taken up." Dickens further emphasized to Cropper that "lest I should unintentionally damage any existing cause, I invent the cause of emigration to Africa. Which no one in reality is advocating. Which no one ever did, that ever I heard of" (*Letters* 6: 825-6). Though the Jellyby project is clearly modeled in part on the Niger Expedition, Dickens detaches it enough to implicate settlement projects like Chisholm's.

Scholars have rightly emphasized the Niger Expedition in order to trace out Dickens's position on race in colonial politics.³⁴ Yet in their attention to this crucial historical context, critics have not given as much attention to the settlement portion of Mrs. Jellyby's African project, not to mention the relation between settlement and race *Bleak House* explores. Too often scholars' incomplete view of colonialism is exemplified in an abbreviated quotation of Jellyby's "view to the general cultivation of the coffee berry—and the natives," leaving out "— and the happy settlement, on the banks of the African rivers, of our superabundant home population."³⁵ Despite the supposed invention of a non-existent cause, Jellyby's plan broke down into constituent parts consisting of elements from the Niger Expedition and Chisholm's

³⁴ Scholars also turn to Dickens's "The Noble Savage" (1853).

³⁵ See, for example, Lorentzen 158, Gribble 91, P. Young 161.

own family emigration schemes. Just as Dickens's critique of the Niger Expedition is clear despite his disavowal, so too is the embedded critique of emigration as a scheme for the saving of the British and Irish working classes. Though the Niger Expedition had established a "Model-Farm" that Dickens referred to as a settlement in his review, no permanent settlement of English people was ever intended for the banks of the Niger. Settlement sat specifically within the purview of emigration proponents like Chisholm, with Canada, Australia, and New Zealand as the key destinations. It is not merely the civilizing of the natives that employs Jellyby's time; *family settlement* is a constitutive feature of her project as she hopes to settle "a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families" (53).

III. Cultivating the Natives: Family Settlement and the Politics of Race

The issue of settlement and emigration, a constitutive part of Jellyby's project, is lost in analysis of Dickens's "obvious attacks on privileging colonial philanthropy before obligations of home" (Lorentzen 162). But as I've shown, "colonial philanthropy" and the "obligations of home" were united in Chisholm's scheme for settler colonization. If we are to take Lorentzen seriously, what was the "colonial philanthropy" Dickens critiqued? To what degree were projects like Chisholm's Family Loan Colonization Society grouped in the public consciousness with those like the Niger Expedition? To what degree were such agendas as the civilizing mission and settler colonialism understood as part of the same colonial project, and simultaneously supported or rejected? And to what degree did such associations undermine the efforts of emigrators like Chisholm? As this section argues, Dickens's editorial choices for *Household Words*'s first few years and *Bleak House* offered a more complex view of settler colonialism than Chisholm's writing, and ultimately undermined her work with the somewhat

comic demise of the Borrioboolan settlers. I also argue that the racialization of settler space in *Bleak House* complicated *David Copperfield*'s representation of settlement and played a crucial role in defining settler colonies as discontinuous with metropolitan Britain.

Ellen Meiksins Wood has argued that the British Empire depended on its white settler colonies more than any other imperial power (73), yet criticism on mid-Victorian literature and empire has focused largely on representations of India and the West Indies in texts like Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, generalizing out to other imperial locations. Indeed, as Duncan Bell argues, studies of Victorian political thought have patently failed to acknowledge that for many Victorians, there were multiple empires "viewed through different moral and sociological lenses" ("Empire" 296). Settler colonies, as opposed to the West Indies, India, and Africa, pose a number of analytical problems. For one, Tanya Dalziel argues, settler cultures "threaten to disrupt the binary relations between coloniser and colonised, first world and third world," and moreover, "postcolonial theorising threatens, at best, to flatten out the complexities of settler colonialism and at worst, to ignore these formations altogether" (13, 16). Though every colonial space has its own local complexities, settler colonies became the contact zones for a vast array of religions, classes, ethnicities, and nationalities. Nineteenth-century Australia, for one, drew Irish, Scottish, English, and Chinese emigrants into a space that already contained multiple aboriginal groups. Transported convicts mixed with natives and free emigrants, men vastly outnumbered women, and Irish Catholics threatened to assert dominance. Yet settlers themselves are too often assumed to be what Chisholm and Dickens's *David Copperfield* represented them as—merely displaced copies of metropolitan subjects (Woollacott, *To Try* 11).

I argue that Dickens and Chisholm both participate in the production of settler colonial imaginaries, both in process and in product. In Chisholm's rhetoric, the melodrama of family

separation and reunion eclipsed competing colonial dramas of class and religious tensions, but more importantly settler violence toward aboriginal peoples. She convincingly rewrote colonial Australia for prospective emigrants and investors as a domestic extension of England, rather than as a site of individual adventure and risk. *David Copperfield* followed suit, for if it showed emigration and settlement as difficult and the colony as distant, the novel also nevertheless represented settlement as uneventful and Australian life as not wholly dissimilar from British life. Dickens's Borrioboolan invention countered this image, representing the white experience of settlement as contested, radically violent and painful, and settler space as alien and uninviting. We might attribute the differences in these two texts' representation of settlement to distinct imperial locations; however, the treatment of Australia in the first several years of *Household Words*—contemporaneous with Dickens's publication of articles in support of Chisholm's Society—more closely linked the failure of Borrioboola-Gha to the settler experience of Australia. As this section argues, though Dickens was outwardly supportive of her project, Dickens used his editorial position at *Household Words* and *Bleak House* to offer a competing view of Australian experience—one counter to Chisholm's unified and happy image of colonial Australian domesticity.

Dickens's satirization of Chisholm exposes one crucial element of settler colonialism that Chisholm left out of her family colonization rhetoric. In representing settlement and natives concurrently, *Bleak House* admits the existence of natives—and resistant ones at that—in settler space. Chisholm's rhetoric depends on the legal precedent of *terra nullius*—"nobody's land"—which suggested that aboriginal peoples had no developed concept of property, had moreover not cultivated the land at their disposal, and therefore had no legal right to the space they inhabited. In her published writings, Chisholm never indicates that settlement and the cultivation of natives

are related endeavors, and instead ignores the very presence of aborigines, asking rhetorically, “For whom?” is England “keeping this continent as a sort of preserve” (*A.B.C.* 26). Her work emphasizes the benefits that would accrue to the growing colonies from emigration, but she also stresses emigration as a solution to Great Britain’s ills and not a boon to natives. Her work always focused on the welfare of specifically white—Irish, Scottish, and English—families. At least one popular representation of Chisholm sought to vindicate her work by stressing its *lack* of interest in indigenous conversion and education. An 1853 anonymously published poem “A Carol on Caroline Chisholm” from *Punch* rejects the civilizing mission in favor of settler colonialism that benefits working-class families:

Converting of the heathen’s a very proper view,
By preaching true religion to Pagan and to Jew,
And bringing over cannibals to Christian meat and bread—
Unless they catch your parson first, and eat him up instead.

But what’s more edifying to see, a pretty deal,
Is hearty British laborers partaking of a meal,
With wives, and lots of children, about their knees that climb,
And having tucked their platefuls in, get helped another time.

Beyond the roaring ocean, beneath the soil we tread,
You’ve English men and women, well housed and clothed and fed.

[...]

The Reverend Ebenezer, I'd not deny his dues,
 For saving Patagonians, Bosjesmen, and Zooloos;
 But Mrs. Chisholm's mission is what I far prefer;
 For saving British natives I'd give the palm to her. (5-14, 41-44).

The singular “heathen” is quickly replaced with the cheerful and fecund image of working-class families in the antipodes who had also been in need of salvation. The poet aligns Chisholm’s work with a Dickensian critique of telescopic philanthropy, the “British natives” she saves comparable to Jo, “the ordinary home-made” savage of *Bleak House*. The poet of “A Carol on Caroline Chisholm” saw a clear distinction between civilizing and settler colonial projects, and argued that interest in emigration and settlement were integral to nationalism. In fact, it seems self-evident that the solution to most of England’s domestic ills—job shortages, expensive food, lack of space—might in fact be emigration and settlement projects like Jellyby’s and Chisholm’s. Characters like *Bleak House*’s Jo, who can find no place in Tom-All-Alone’s, might instead find their homes in as-yet vacant colonies, as the Peggotty and the Micawber families do at the end of *David Copperfield*.

Chisholm characterizes Australia as empty land ready for new occupancy, and *David Copperfield* reifies this rhetoric with the empty territory that Emily Peggotty traverses in penitential service to others. While *Bleak House*’s Borrioboola-Gha is no replica of Australia, it defines settlement as a process whose idealistic intentions can be foiled easily by natives who are far more ingenious than the settlers give them credit for. Clearly, the natives are in no need of help from Jellyby, Pardiggle, or any other European. Where Dickens attributes some intellect to the natives, he does not, however, support native resistance. Rather, Dickens’s representation does far more to justify further settler violence. Indeed, in an 1853 essay “The Noble Savage,”

he wrote “I call a savage a something highly desirable to be civilized off the face of the earth” (337). *Bleak House* does, however, indicate with its ironic statement about the “cultivation of the coffee berry—and the natives—and the happy settlement” that multiple agendas for the imperial project become overzealously combined, their progress retarded by the unpreparedness of colonizers for local complexity. In Jellyby’s African project, the extraction of wealth, the expansion of Britain’s trading and manufacturing interests (exemplified in Mr. Quale’s plan to have the natives learn how to make piano legs), the domestication of subject peoples and territorial expansion of white settler space merge in what Dickens characterizes as a ludicrous project that benefits those outside the nation.

Yet the synthesis of what in Chisholm’s rhetoric were two disparate imperial agendas—settlement and the civilizing mission—proves revealing in that it again reminds readers that family settlement projects like Chisholm’s must coincide with a plan for native removal, assimilation, and/or genocide. Dickens used his position as editor for *Household Words* to consistently present a counterpoint to Chisholm’s own positive image of Australian domestic felicity, rounding it out with images of the violence of settlement, often depicted by Samuel Sidney. Where Chisholm and Richard Horne’s “Pictures of Life in Australia” might offer images of earnest, hard-working bachelors waiting for “Mrs. C.” to bring wives to their “romantic and real” Australian cottages (307-10), Sidney’s “Two-Handed Dick the Stockman: An Adventure in the Bush” and “An Exploring Adventure” depict frequent and bloody native attacks in the bush. These are complimented as well with the negative view of colonial towns where settlers will not find peace, happiness, innocence, or contentment” as in Sidney’s “Chips: Letters of Introduction to Sydney” (188). Where “A Bundle of Emigrant’s Letters” presents the heartfelt pleas of emigrants longing for their families and the colonial abundance they would find if they

came, Sidney's "An Australian Ploughman's Story" represents a transported machine-smasher who becomes a thief and drunkard because of the corruption and violence of convict transportation. This latter piece is clearly influenced by Chisholm's rhetoric if not her direct input, concluding that the ploughman's plight might be solved if the "great gentlemen who rule" facilitated the emigration of men's wives" (43), yet it also showed the transportation system as broken, and the colonies as far from the domestic bliss of "Pictures of Life in Australia." In the introductory comments to "Two Letters from Australia" by Frances Gwynne and W.H. Wills another narrative of violence between Australian aborigines and settlers, Dickens seems to offer his editorial opinion on such inclusions:

Correspondents, to whom emigration is a subject of vital importance—inasmuch as they appear to be resolved to leave kindred and home for "pastures new"—have written to us, with a hope that we will continue to give, as we have done hitherto, the dark as well as the light side of the Colonial picture. Not a few of the dangers and privations of Australian life we have already laid before them. (475)

Clearly, both Dickens and many of his readers recognized Chisholm's vision of Arcadian Australia as selective. Her writing downplayed the presence of natives, representing them as non-existent—as silent as the African natives Mr. Jellyby, the "nonentity," resembles. Dickens offered a counterpoint that resonated, both in *Household Words* and in the triumph of the Borrioboolan king. In this counterpoint, the muted hint that emigration might end in violent death counters Chisholm's cheerful accounts of happy settlers in the Australian bush.

Given Chisholm's perceived role as an authority on settler life, the absence of aboriginal peoples from her project discourse is striking, though perhaps unsurprising. As the long line of emigration proponents who came after her would do, Chisholm left a crucial portion of settler

experience out of her didactic narratives of settlement. As Lisa Chilton writes, “emigrators” like Chisholm “literally wrote other racial and ethnic groups out of the colonial setting, their unsettling presence in the colonies symbolically denied” (12). Yet Dickens exposes an issue that Chisholm must have considered even if she never publicized her views in print. In an 1845 “Prospectus” for an unpublished piece noted in Mary Hoban’s biography of Chisholm (provisionally entitled *Voluntary Information from the People of New South Wales*), she wrote the following:

May many thousands yet find their way there—may British habits of industry, frugality and care find a shelter and protection in the far bush—may the impediments that have been thrown in the way of the moral advancement of this colony meet with the grave consideration which the subject claims from a British nation. If her protection is extended—if her moral banner is unfurled in the interior—if, like a just parent, she distributed her favours *impartially amongst her children*, thousands of peaceful and thriving homes will be found in the wilderness! Civilization and religion will advance, until the spires of the Churches will guide the stranger from hamlet to hamlet, and the shepherds’ huts become homes for happy men and virtuous women. The money now spent in rum and champagne will be expended in purchasing clothing for children. If the happiness of her own children does not induce England to adopt prompt measures to secure this blessing to the Colony, the gradual destruction and extermination of the Aborigines DEMAND it from her justice!!! (Hoban 166, Chisholm’s emphasis)

The somewhat ambiguously phrased final line can be read in two quite different ways. On the

one hand, “justice” might demand the “gradual destruction and extermination of the Aborigines” through the emigration of white settlers or, on the other, justice might entail the end to such violent practices. Chisholm can be read to be supporting the inclusion of aboriginal peoples in her plea for British justice and protection “*impartially amongst her children*,” yet Britain’s “own children” are subsequently defined to exclude “Aborigines.” The language of “destruction and extermination” in the Prospectus is in keeping with what Patrick Brantlinger has termed “extinction discourse,” the proliferating and ubiquitous nineteenth-century belief that primitive races were almost inevitably self-extinguishing and that contact with white civilization hastened their demise (*Dark Vanishings* 1-2). Russell McGregor suggests that extinction discourse emerged alongside white settlement as its inevitable corollary, and by the mid 1840s, books, essays, and government reports were already indicating the increasingly prevailing notion that the extinction of Aboriginal peoples could not be prevented (McGregor 13, Brantlinger, *Dark* 123). Thus, for many Victorians, the “gradual destruction and extermination” Chisholm speaks of was not universally seen as a great social evil. Whether lamented or celebrated, indigenous extinction indexed civilizational progress.

W.E.H. Stanner has argued that white Australians were far more likely to sympathize with the aborigines between the 1820s and 1850s than they were likely to condemn them or accept extinction (Brantlinger, *Dark* 119), and this was certainly possible for Chisholm as well. She did a considerable amount of traveling in the Australian interior as she took new immigrants in search of employment, and she was undoubtedly familiar with the dangers of settler-aboriginal violence. If this experience yielded a critique of frontier methods of dealing with natives, it did not, however, make the contestation of such practices a constitutive part of her published rhetoric. It is not unimaginable that Chisholm supported native rights, but if she did so, she did

so privately. The unpublished “Prospectus” instances a pervasive constellation of paternalist colonial rhetoric, domestic ideology, and genocidal racism, illuminating the indigenous absence in her work. Chisholm’s awkward language renders her meaning indeterminate, yet it also points to the way in which her emigration and settlement projects are the logical converse of just such racist proclamations. Like two sides of the same coin, the settlement generally entails its converse: native removal or “extermination.” If not this, it assumes, like *Bleak House*’s colonists, the cultivation of the natives, or in other words, paternalism, assimilation, and cultural if not actual genocide. As such, the indigenous absent presence haunts Chisholm’s published work, the unhappy present counterpoint to her happy future families.

Dickens’s editorial position for *Household Words* does not align Dickens with an indigenous perspective. Indeed, *Household Words*’ articles on Australia do not concede white superiority and settler supremacy, which *Bleak House* does. Rather, where “Two-Handed Dick the Stockman” includes the deaths of most of the white men, the narrator notes that “I went back afterwards with the police, and squared accounts with the Blacks” (144). “An Exploring Adventure” relies on extinction discourse, saying that “the blacks soon tame or fade before the white man’s face” (418), replaced with “white men, women, and children” (420). Dickens’s review of the Niger Expedition and later essay on “The Noble Savage” confirmed his racism. For Dickens, indigenous absence, it seems, is the natural endpoint of colonialism to begin with. If Chisholm saw family and domestic ideology as an intrinsic part of colonial ideology, Dickens reveals that it necessitates the rule by force and/or killing of indigenous aboriginal peoples. In this light, Jellyby’s African project becomes a way for Dickens to explore not only his dissatisfaction with efforts toward civilizing uncivilizable indigenous peoples and the price the people “at home” pay for such telescopic philanthropy, but also his dissatisfaction with reductive

settler colonial projects like Chisholm's as a solution to the problems "at home."

IV. Saving British Natives: Eschewing Familial Metaphors

By examining the aspects of Chisholm's rhetoric that are reproduced in Mrs. Jellyby's project, the connections between emigration projects, settler colonialism, and race are exposed. Dickens provides a distinct image of settler colonial discourse in introducing settlement and the civilizing mission as counterproductively combined colonial agendas. These connections in some measure complicate Lorentzen's pronouncement that *Bleak House* contains an unalloyed argument against colonialism. Indeed, Dickens's own overt racism coupled with his support of Chisholm's emigration project would seem to suggest that he might uncomplicatedly support settlement. But Jellyby's own settlement project is the recipient of considerable scorn, both in the similarities between Chisholm and Jellyby and in the ironic contrast of the plan for "family settlement" against Jellyby's own family failure.

Bleak House does not offer up a critique of Australian settlement in particular. Instead, it is critical of settler colonialism itself, which as I've argued, failed to address the national problems exemplified by the homeless English Jo. The problematic aspects of emigration presented in *David Copperfield* take on a more powerful force and are transformed in *Bleak House*. As Grace Moore has argued, "Dickens's need to confront social problems in his fiction led to his speedy dissatisfaction with a solution that could, by its very nature, only aid a select few and which was not permanent" (2). *Bleak House* thus attempted to reveal emigration as a mere distraction from the structural and systemic causes of poverty (Moore 2). To the more globally-minded, he also suggested that emphasis on emigration and settlement might have dire consequences for the civilizing mission in the longer run. In a letter (9 July 1852) to the

Reverend H. Christopherson, who had criticized his representation of Mrs. Jellyby, Dickens wrote:

I have very grave doubts whether a great commercial country holding communication with all parts of the world, can better christianise the benighted portions of it than by the bestowal of its wealth and energy on the making of good Christians at home and on the utter removal of neglected and untaught childhood from its streets, before it wanders elsewhere. For, if it steadily persists in this work, working downward to the lowest, the travellers [sic] of all grades whom it sends abroad, will be good, exemplary, practical missionaries, instead of undoers of what the best professed missionaries can do. (*Letters* 6: 707)

Dickens refers not merely to foreign philanthropists like Jellyby, but to the “neglected and untaught childhood” who will “wander elsewhere” to spread the cycle of neglect and ignorance—both the literal English children like Jo and the metaphorically childlike (because undeveloped) emigrants bound for foreign climes. In this response, emigrants forced out by poverty and lack of opportunity become “undoers” of Christianity abroad by virtue of the fact that they are not ready to go out in the world. This type of representation, paradoxically, explains why Dickens never offers emigration up as a solution to Jo’s problems despite the fact that he can find no place in Tom-All-Alone’s.

Significantly, the very name “Tom-All-Alone’s” points to the absence of family cohesion and community support in the wake of colonial philanthropy that professes to the love of the global “family of man” or “Brotherhood of Humanity.” The derelict neighborhood is filled with isolated individuals like Jo and outside of Tom-All-Alone, working-class families like the brickmaker’s are disintegrating. Indeed the entire English landscape is what James Buzard has

termed an “anticulture” (110). *Bleak House*, he writes, seeks to “redress the dissociative and evacuated character of imperial Britishness by evoking the culture of the British” as intimately connected (107-108). As becomes clear, though, the “intimately connected” everything cannot go beyond national borders, because when it does, it loses all meaning and coherence. As I argue, Dickens puts an ethic of family in stark opposition to colonial ideology, whereas Chisholm had sought to align the two. Where Chisholm sought to associate the settler colonies like Australia with the same domestic ideology that informed British identity, *Bleak House* suggests that “family” as such cannot be extended to the colonies when it only exists in a healthy form sporadically within the metropole itself. What is at stake, then in Dickens’s rendering of families in *Bleak House* is not the solvency of the monolithic category “family”—which D.A. Miller notably addresses (59-89)—but rather the privileging of some types of family relationships over others. *Bleak House* circumscribes family in a more confined sphere, even as “family” threatens to extend to the farthest reaches of the empire and to England’s own settler antipodes.

In fact, *Bleak House* uses Mrs. Jellyby’s African project to disavow all metaphorizations of family that stretch beyond the immediacy of the immediate/national family. He overtly satirizes the notion of “the family of man” that guided philanthropic projects like abolitionism and social reform movements like Chartism and defined the rhetoric of the Great Exhibition. Caddy Jellyby appeals to the popular abolitionist slogan that exists alongside the image of a black slave, saying “I have no peace of my life. Talk of Africa! I couldn’t be worse off if I was a what’s-his-name—man and a brother!” (217). Though Caddy is familiar with the popular phrase denoting the victimization of slaves “Am I Not a Man and a Brother?”, she appropriates it to indicate that her own subordinate status is an ironic reversal of racial hierarchies, Africans

privileged and acknowledged by philanthropists as “brothers” while she is a virtual slave to her mother. Her unnatural exclusion from a family circle is moreover emphasized when her mother admits that the African project has taken the emotional place that her daughter should fill:

“Now, if my public duties were not a *favourite child* to me, if I were not occupied with large measures on a vast scale, these petty details [regarding Caddy’s choice to marry someone other than Mr. Quale] might grieve me very much, Miss Summerson” (383, my emphasis). Caddy is cognizant of this misapplied metaphor; in response to Esther’s remonstrations about her “duty as a child,” she argues “O! don’t talk of duty as a child, Miss Summerson; where’s Ma’s duty as a parent? All made over to the public and Africa, I suppose! Then let the public and Africa show duty as a child; it’s much more their affair than mine” (65). In such evocations, the parent-child metaphor for colonialism comes expressly at the cost of the basis for the comparison—the literal parent-child relationship.

The effect is made perhaps even more complete by the presence of one of Mrs. Jellyby’s associates at Caddy’s wedding: “A very contentious gentleman, who said it was his mission to be everybody’s brother but who appeared to be on terms of coolness with the whole of his large family” (482). As becomes clear from this passage, the inappropriate privileging of external metaphorized “family”—“the Brotherhood of Humanity” that Mrs. Jellyby is invested in—is not limited to women, but is in fact constitutive of most philanthropic subjectivity. Such telescopic views are also extended even to the non-philanthropists who eschew familial obligations. Harold Skimpole, the self-identified “child” who claims an “incapacity for details and worldly affairs” and consequently sponges off John Jarndyce, professes to his own deep admiration for the “human family” (91-92). Skimpole claims to have a “cosmopolitan mind,” and yet as far as Esther can determine, Mrs. Skimpole and their children “rarely presented themselves at all” in

his thoughts (295). Skimpole's domestic disorder rivals Mrs. Jellyby's own—and like her, he professes to an abundance of sympathy for others, even claiming it as his “family department.” It is clear from the singular glimpse of his family in *Bleak House*, however, that if such sympathy exists, it is not applied to Skimpole's home. His children have suffered from a lack of practical education and are formed expressly for his own entertainment, to be his “playthings in his idlest hours.” In his frequent and lengthy absences from home, Skimpole entertains himself with a telescopic global imaginary designed to gratify his own sensibilities, even professing his own admiration for Mrs. Jellyby and the African natives she seeks to aid and seeing the hard-working American slaves as a landscape for the peopling of his imaginative life. Much as Jellyby's dedication to her cause is qualified by the parenthetical “until something else attracts her,” Dickens renders Skimpole's cosmopolitan interests as self-serving as his familial ones.

In ridiculing the “family” feeling of *Bleak House*'s philanthropists, Dickens critiques the instances of the same in Chisholm's work. If “family” can be said to be an imagined community—as indeed John R. Gillis has argued—*Bleak House* argues that “family” must become considerably more circumscribed than it is for philanthropists or for Britain's imperial interests. The metaphor of family and brotherhood for humanity itself or for the settler empire confronts the reality of the metonymic relation of family to society in *Bleak House*. The “ever widening circle” articulates the two, insisting that for the “family of man” to be a healthy, Christianized entity, it must first entail the metonymic health of strictly English families first. Ironically, Dickens's use of the colonies for plot devices imitates Skimpole's, for the settler colonies are little more than what Bruce Robbins has termed “a distraction, an ineligible elsewhere,” whose existence plays little to no role in English daily life, except as a drain on the resources that could ameliorate national problems (Robbins 214). Yet if, as Robbins suggests,

“Nothing could be more distant than the allusion to Africa in *Bleak House*” (Robbins 214), then *David Copperfield*’s Port Middlebay settlement was nearly so. Though Dickens was willing to view family as a metaphor for nation (fraught, as it were, with difficulty), he was not willing to extend it throughout the settler empire.

V. Conclusion

Both Chisholm and Dickens were in the business of creating notions about the settler colonies and “Greater Britain,” and both have had a long cultural afterlife. Dickens’s fame is well-known, though Chisholm’s fame largely remains circumscribed by the Australian national imaginary. She was commemorated on the Australian five-dollar note from 1967 until 1992 (the first woman other than a monarch to appear on Australian currency), appeared on a stamp, had a Hall at LaTrobe University named after her, and inspired monuments at Kyneton among other things (Hoban ix). More recently, Catholic Australian supporters of Chisholm have been putting a case together for Chisholm’s canonization (“Chisholm, a woman of note”). Such claims have relied heavily on details from Chisholm’s biographies, yet these modern representations of Chisholm have often been driven by uncritical adoration. The two most oft-referenced biographies³⁶ of Chisholm portray her as a tireless, driven proponent of family values who worked against near insurmountable obstacles, including fellow Australian settlers afraid of the increased competition of new emigrants, Australian and English politicians hesitant to provide money, and critics of her religious views.

What these have failed to notice is that Chisholm’s settler ideology, based on family well-being and national sentiment, obscured the plight of the aboriginal peoples or “blacks” that

³⁶ Mary Hoban’s *Fifty One Pieces of Wedding Cake* (1973) and Margaret Kiddle’s *Caroline Chisholm* (1950).

her settlers displaced. This aspect of Chisholm's familial rhetoric was hugely influential, and can be traced in the familial rhetoric of "Greater Britain," linked perpetually to colonial progress. Anthony Trollope notes this discursive tendency in a letter to the Liverpool *Mercury* in 1875. He writes that it was a tragedy that colonialism necessitated the deaths of the Maoris, the "blacks of Tasmania," and Australian aborigines, yet the British convince themselves that "the manifest general improvement effected on the world's surface" is evidenced by the fact that "[t]housands live where only tens lived before" (*The Tireless Traveler* 125). The solitary image of the native is replaced by fecund white multitudes:

The poor wretch who has perished was an abject, idle, useless creature, hideous to our eyes, a cannibal perhaps, low in intellect, and incapable of being taught.

Where the wretch was, a dozen men and women, beautiful to look at, are bringing up their children in the fear of the Lord. With this, perhaps slightly exaggerated, estimate of our glories, we keep down our remorse, and the world is peopled.

(124-125)

In this self-conscious piece delineating the means by which Britons articulate a vision of settler colonial progress, Trollope shows how integral the family story and the image of human fertility—the "dozen men and women [...] bringing up their children"—became to settler colonial discourse. Rhetoric like Chisholm's—though not explicitly anti-native—advocated so potently for British families that it left little room for aboriginal families to coexist. The displacement and erasure of aboriginal families can be traced further, perhaps, in the egregious history of aboriginal child removal, a practice that lasted for approximately 100 years, and first became legally possible in the Australian state of Victoria in 1869—less than two decades after the publication of *Bleak House*. While Chisholm and Dickens may not be directly responsible

for this history, their participation in the imbricated discourses of kinship, race, and settlement continues to provide scholars with new way to understand how Victorian fiction silenced indigenous voices and justified their marginalization and dehumanization.

Chisholm's role as an empire builder did not go unremarked in her own lifetime. The poet Walter Savage Landor (who coincidentally provided the literary basis for the contentious Boythorn of *Bleak House*) writes in the *Examiner* of Chisholm:

[...] sages in their histories will record,
 That the most potent empire of the earth
 Was planted, some five centuries before,
 Under God's guidance, by his Chisholm's hand. (517)

Chisholm anticipated the project and rhetoric of an imperial "Greater Britain," the consolidation of national-familial sentiment, and its underlying racial assumptions through her family emigration project. If her views on a settler "Greater Britain" were not as fully sketched out as in Dilke's *Greater Britain*, they nevertheless provided a clear basis for later expostulations on the glories of white settler propagation.

Chapter 3:

Anthony Trollope's "Greater Britain":

Bigamy, Imperial Marriage Law Reform, and *John Caldigate*

Though Anthony Trollope was a respected and prominent Victorian novelist, J.H. Davidson has argued that his "unique claim to fame" rests not in the forty-seven novels he wrote over the course of his career, but rather in the travel books he wrote on Britain's settler colonies (305). His earliest travel narrative, *The West Indies and the Spanish Main* (1859), firmly established him as an interlocutor between the settlement colonies and metropolitan Britain,³⁷ and he capitalized on this renown with his subsequent *North America* (1862), *Australia and New Zealand* (1873), and finally *South Africa* (1878), all of which went through at least four editions (Davidson 305). For the British reading public, Trollope ethnographically described emergent settler cultures distinct from Britain's own, explained the befuddling angry responses of colonists to imperial policies, and predicted the future for the Empire.

As he indicates at the beginning of *Australia and New Zealand* (1873), that future would chiefly be defined by fragmentation. The vast distance between England and Australia heightened Britons' sense that the colonies and metropolitan England were two separate worlds. Though the introduction of new technologies like ocean-going steamships and telegraphic cables in many ways made interconnection more possible, both Trollope and liberal British statesmen in the 1870s assumed that "Separation" was inevitable. Just as the North American colonies of Britain's first empire had gained their independence, so too would the Australian.

³⁷ Many colonials responded skeptically to his depictions of them. See my discussion of Marcus Clarke's satirical rendering of Trollope as "Mr. Cackleby Twaddle" in Chapter 4.

In *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope understands colonial relations through familial metaphors, recasting the negatively understood, violent and antagonistic family relations (c.f. chapter 4) as mutually beneficial. Trollope rejects the supposed accusations of conservatives and colonists against Gladstonian liberals (which I discuss in my introductory chapter). In these accusations, the “mother country,” under liberal policies, is accused as having “the heart of a stepmother rather than a parent” (1: 359), and as guilty of “infanticide... in her desire to repudiate and put away from her her own children” (1: 358). *Australia and New Zealand* instead suggests that the relationship between Britain and the Australian colonies is more like that of a father and grown son, or a parent and a grown daughter. Separation would be effected, Trollope writes, “with a proud feeling that we are sending a son out into the world able to take his place among men” (1: 360). Though this assertion assumes separation, the familial metaphor of father and son reserved the semblance of connection between the colonies and the metropolitan Britain. He thus recuperates an increasingly distant political affiliation by articulating a hierarchical, affective, and biological connection.³⁸ Family connections, he suggests, do not necessarily require political connections. This was precisely the view that liberal proponents of an imperial economy of affect proposed in their version of “Greater Britain.” In this model, sentiment circulates without the trappings of state controls and connections are maintained by shared culture and language (c.f. Chapter 1).

As I show in chapter one, the utility of the family metaphor for understanding colonial relations could flexibly conform both to a liberal and conservative agenda, and in *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope leans toward a liberal view. Yet Trollope considered himself a

³⁸ Trollope represents present Australia as the “daughter” who “has had her dowry given to her,—and should now pay her own way” (1: 359), though the references to Australia in the future are gendered male as the “son” (1: 360). Trollope’s gendering of the colonies (present female, future male) similarly implies a progressive notion of degrees of independence.

paradoxically “advanced Conservative-Liberal”: a liberal who “knows that he must be hemmed in by safeguards, lest he be tempted to travel too quickly; and therefore he is glad to be accompanied on his way by the repressive action of a Conservative opponent” (*Autobiography* 245). In *Australia and New Zealand*, Trollope may have defended liberal statesmen, but he does not push for separation, deferring it to “some future day” (1: 356). Indeed, as Davidson has argued, Trollope’s faith in the ability of the colonies to responsibly govern and legislate waned in his later years (314). Though his beliefs when it came to settler empire were ostensibly liberal in that he expected separation, Trollope’s *fictional* rendering of colonial relations in *The Fixed Period* (1882) and *John Caldigate* (1878-79) are more ambiguous. Both *The Fixed Period* and *John Caldigate*, like other nineteenth-century fictions of settlement, interrogate the family problems that stem in no small part from geographic and emotional distance between colony and “mother country.” While Trollope’s own representation of “Greater Britain” might blur these problems with sentimental language and familial metaphors, Trollope’s fictions of settlement couldn’t help but expose the fact that British morality was not reproduced in full in the colonies.

Indeed, *The Fixed Period* and *John Caldigate* stress significant cultural differences. In the former, colonists’ attempts to be hyper-modern destroy the hierarchical intergenerational family relations that provide the theoretical grounding for colonial respect for the “mother country.” In the latter, which will be the focus of most of this chapter, the colonists revert to relationships outside the sanction of the church. The effect of both novels is a kind of colonial doubling, where alternatives to the ideal Victorian family and British cultural norms multiply in settler space. But whereas such alternatives might be powerfully liberating, as they are in Catherine Helen Spence’s *Handfasted* (see Chapter 5), Trollope’s colonial alternatives operate in the negative. His travel narratives celebrate colonial prosperity and Australian opportunity, but

The Fixed Period presents colonial innovation as dangerous and *John Caldigate*—one of Trollope’s “Australia novels”³⁹— transposes his ambivalence about the ethics and culture of white settler colonialism onto a sexual plot. In *John Caldigate* in particular, the effects have a clear effect on metropolitan Britons, posing a threat to the normative value of the Victorian family.

I. Colonial Connections: Settler Empire and the Failure of “Social Restraint of Selfish Libertinism”

In *The Fixed Period*—written in 1882, the year of his death, and one of his last novels—Trollope reveals a belated skepticism in the readiness of the settler colonies for full independence. There, he imagines the fictional former British colony of Britannula in the year 1979, in which legal differences and a too-early separation prove disastrous. For the most part, Britannula seems to fit well within the parameters of a liberal, loosely-confederated “Greater Britain” like the one Charles Wentworth Dilke, Herman Merivale, and William Gladstone advocated, and Britannulans even name their capital Gladstonopolis.⁴⁰ Unlike its “elder sister New Zealand,” Britannula “had its period of separation from the mother country, though never of rebellion” (5) in a peaceful mode quite similar to the one Trollope anticipates for the colonies in *Australia and New Zealand* and as part of a larger twentieth-century sea-change in the settler empire. Britannula’s colonial “separation” supposedly mimicked that of the “Australias, which, when they set up for themselves, did so with the full co-operation of England” (5), and Britannula’s independence ushered in thirty years of prosperity as it became the “rising Empire

³⁹ I discuss another of these, *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* in chapter 4.

⁴⁰ As I note in Chapter 1, Gladstone was a well-known proponent of settler independence and separation.

of the South Pacific” (11). Thus, Trollope sets up Britannula at first as the ideal of successful colonial separation.

The colonists maintain their affective connection with their “mother country.” Britannulans still refer to England as “home” (121) and English visitors don’t think of Brittanulans as foreigners, but as Englishmen (66). Cricket games between English visitors and the Britannulans demonstrate their shared culture, and close racial similarity is also a key component. In keeping with settler imaginaries of empty space, the only previous inhabitants of the island colony are the “marsupial races” (142), and the Britannulans clearly realize the objectives of expansive global Anglo-Saxonism. As such, Britannula participates in an interconnected society of “Greater Britain” based on racial, cultural, and linguistic identification, and moreover seems to maximize its potential. Trollope’s Britannulans are, in fact, defined as ultra-white, for they are the “*élite* of the selected population of New Zealand” and the “very cream, as it were, that had been skimmed from the milk-pail of the people of a wider colony, themselves gifted with more than ordinary intelligence” (16). This white imagery associates the newness of the immigrants with the purification of an already white transnational identity.

Yet the supposedly progressive “Fixed Period” compromises the idea of a transnational community of emigrants Britons who share race, culture, and language since the colonists institute a law requiring the euthanasia of all citizens who reach the age of sixty-eight. Decided on by the young settlers several decades prior to the events of the novel, the policy is intended to prevent the elderly from becoming an economic or emotional burden on the young nation and at the outset of the novel, the first “deposit” of Britannula’s oldest citizen is imminent.⁴¹ As such,

⁴¹ *The Fixed Period* is in part a critique of colonial democracy, since the novel attributes legal differences between colony and mother country to the fact that Britannula has no House of Lords

The Fixed Period strongly indicates that the distant friendly relationship of an imperial economy of affect is not enough to secure British norms. Even the English language—to which Dilke appealed as a unifying global force—is inadequate to the task of securing transnational shared interests. President Neverbend argues that, like the Americans, “Our language is spreading itself over the world,” but English “is no sign of nationality” (67). Indeed, he asks, “if the Americans [were foreign to the English], why not the Britannulans?” (66).

Though the only real proponent of the Fixed Period is the unreliable narrator, Neverbend, Britain re-annexes the former colony under the threat of military attack in order to end the practice and consolidate Greater British morality, for it “cannot and will not permit the Fixed Period to be carried out among any English-speaking race of people” (147). Thus, in his description of reasserted imperial dominance over its newly reclaimed crown colony, Trollope invokes the one of the most common synonyms for “Greater Britain”—“English-speaking countries” (c.f. Chapter 1). *The Fixed Period* seems to indicate that separation has allowed misguided social philosophers, invested in the “politico-economical view” at the expense of the individual, to realize monstrous laws (7). That, in turn, compromises the larger loosely-confederated “Greater British” polity Trollope’s English characters believe in.

At the same time, Trollope does not present the British as the unalloyed heroes of the day for reclaiming Britannula as a crown colony. Even the Brittanulans who wanted the British to come to stop the Fixed Period from being enacted do not want their colony to lose its independence, and are critical of Britain’s officiousness and violence in the takeover. Though Neverbend is treated with considerable irony in order to alienate readers from his position, Trollope nevertheless leaves room for readers to agree with Neverbend’s declaration that “I say

to keep the House of Commons in check. This mode of governance, in turn results in rules made for the community that obscure the importance of the individual.

that the English Government is a tyrant, and that you are the instruments of its tyranny” (134). In a manner quite distinct from his treatment of the same subject in *Australia and New Zealand*, *The Fixed Period* indexes a degree of ambivalence about the settler colonies and their role in “Greater Britain.”

Trollope experimented with the utopian mode that was increasing in popularity in the 1870s and 1880s (c.f. Chapter 5),⁴² and it allowed him the opportunity to project a possible future for contemporary liberal ideologies as they applied to the settler empire. Yet the speculative *The Fixed Period*—Trollope’s “only exercise in extended Swiftian irony” according to David Skilton (vii)—is not characteristic of Trollope’s writing. Realism, by contrast, was far more typical of Trollope and as I will suggest, his earlier *John Caldigate* similarly shows concern over the relationship between “mother country” and colony, though it does so through an investigation of the effects of bourgeois individualism associated with settler space on English family life. The effect of this individualism on Victorian norms for gender and sexuality are extensive, and settler colonial difference is figured in the failure of English marriage.

Part of the problem, it is revealed, is the cultural imaginary of Australia as a space for the free expansion of bourgeois, individualist “energies.” Long before Trollope had visited Australia, his *The Three Clerks* (1858) had envisioned this settler colony as a place where Alaric Tudor might find a place more welcoming to his “talent” (501). Alaric’s talent had found expression in England through his speculation in risky stock-market investments, made possible by the embezzlement of his ward’s trust. After serving his six-month prison sentence, he and his family depart for Australia, and his wife Gertrude imagines Australia as the ideal space for her family because:

⁴² *The Fixed Period* specifically references an important precedent, Edward Bulwer Lytton’s *The Coming Race* (11), which I discuss in chapter 1 and briefly in chapter 5.

England to her was no longer a glorious country; for England's laws had made a felon of her husband. She would go to a new land, new hopes, new ideas, new freedom, new work, new life, and new ambition. Excelsior! there was no longer an excelsior left for talent and perseverance in this effete country. She and hers would soon find room for their energies in a younger land; and as she went she could not but pity those whom she left behind. Her reasoning was hardly logical, but, perhaps, it was not unfortunate. (501)

As with Mr. Micawber's plan to use his "talent" in the fictional Port Middlebay in *David Copperfield* (c.f. Chapter 2), the vision of Australia in *The Three Clerks* is not without a tinge of irony. Trollope evidences a degree of ambivalence even in this early depiction of possible Australian success, by linking it to Alaric's speculations and crime, which is described by the judge at his trial as "one most prejudicial to the interests of the community" (481). At the same time, Australia seems to hold out the possibility of tempering Alaric's selfishness with familial obligations; his only real objectives for his Australian life are to feed and clothe his children.

John Caldigate heightens the association of the colonies with bourgeois individualism, in part by focusing on the Australian gold diggings where a man like Caldigate might make both himself and his fortune. Alaric's involvement in speculation in *The Three Clerks* parallels Caldigate's involvement in gold speculation and similarly, Caldigate's emigration to Australia near the beginning of the novel is a result of his selfish gambling and spending habits. Caldigate is forced to sell his inheritance and spend what little remains after clearing his debts on the outlay for a journey to the diggings. Like many upper-middle class younger sons who would not inherit significant property, Caldigate envisions Australia as the ultimate capitalist gamble, where his personal energy might yield a fortune quickly and without obligations to his father or

Folking, the family property. Caldigate learns otherwise in New South Wales. The few Australian scenes of the novel stress Caldigate's hard physical labor, as well as his newfound fiscal prudence. Having earned his money himself rather than inheriting it, Caldigate better appreciates the value of money, which is all the more impressive because he learns this lesson in diggings populated by extravagant speculators who spend their money gambling and drinking. The Caldigate that returns to England years later is not the same one readers left in Sydney; this Caldigate is decisive now with an "air of power and self-assertion" (101), and has clear ideas about politics and economics, "social, religious, and literary subjects" (101). The stunning transition he has made has the aspect of a Cinderella story and is a conventional account of how the colonies forges manly, self-reliant men.

But Caldigate's emigration serves to emphasize rather than detract from the importance of inheritance, family lines, and ancestral property, though at first Trollope's characters seem opposed to these ideas in favor of individual responsibility. John Caldigate's father, the Squire, considers himself an "advanced Liberal" who abhors the system of entail because it is "the source of all the ignorance and all the poverty and all the troubles by which his country was inflicted" (4). The Squire feels that his own spendthrift father should have sold Folking so that a more responsible landlord could care for the tenants' needs, but his father instead leaves the estate and the Squire with "encumbrances" (2) that require years of economy to clear away. The Squire's story makes a strong argument against entail and collective ownership, but Caldigate's choice to sell his ancestral right to Folking sits uncomfortably with all of the characters involved. The beneficial effects of liberal self-reliance seem to hit their limit point when they extend to family, for the Squire cannot quite be happy with his son's alienation from his ancestral right of

inheritance. It signifies a break within the family, which is only mended when Caldigate returns from Australia with a fortune and buys back his ancestral right:

His father, with all his political tenets as to land, with his often-expressed admiration as to the French system, with his loud denunciations of the absurdity of binding a special family to a special fraction of the earth's surface, did sympathise with him so strongly, that he at once accepted the arrangement. (96)

The father-son relationship is mended, but is also infused with a few new elements derived from Caldigate's colonial experience. In his recuperation of the system of entail, Trollope suggests that the middle-class manly drive and individual responsibility cultivated by Australian colonies is most productively actualized when coupled with English family responsibility and a longer sense of family (and national) history. Where Caldigate generates his own wealth by the dint of his effort in New South Wales, the wealth is best used when Caldigate takes an interest in becoming a member of the upper-class respectable and paternalistic landlord class. As in Henry Kingsley's *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859, c.f. Chapter 4), Australia serves chiefly as a capitalistic haven intended to shore up the upper classes financially.

But the kind of individualism Caldigate maximizes in the settler colonies has a darker, more selfish side, and *John Caldigate* does not limit the effects of such selfishness to its threat to the system of entail. Trollope calls this bourgeois individualist narrative into question by depicting it as detrimental to English marriage and sexuality morality. Indeed, the "energies" that Trollope suggests can find expression in the Australian colonies include not only the capitalistic and individual, but sexual as well. Though Caldigate seeks to build a normative English life after his return from Australia by taking on responsibility for the family property and by marrying Hester Bolton, this ideal life disintegrates as the nature of his Australian relationship

with a woman known variously as Euphemia Smith, Madame Cettini, and Euphemia Caldigate is gradually exposed and he is imprisoned for bigamy.

Trollope anticipates this difficult situation by showing Caldigate working up this illicit relationship through his promiscuous flirtations with various women even before his departure for Australia. Before setting foot aboard the *Goldfinder*, Caldigate has his sights set on two separate women, Maria Shand, the sister of his good friend Dick Shand, and the very young Hester. He catches a glimpse of the virtuous Hester and proceeds to fantasize about marrying her in the future, but his interest does not stop him from flirting with other women to a dangerous degree. His Aunt Babington's family, for one, considers him to be engaged to his cousin Julia, though Caldigate does not and seeks to extricate himself from this association. The social constraints that limit his interactions with these women keep his obligations to them somewhat tenuous, and Caldigate is barely able to escape Julia and her family, as well as the affections of Maria.

As for Hester, Caldigate carries the memory of her in his heart and she provides extra motivation for his Australian labor. Yet when finally aboard the *Goldfinder*, Caldigate is quickly attracted to Euphemia Smith and begins to engage in the same flirtatious behavior as he did in England. Within the claustrophobic space of the ship, however, the repercussions of his behavior prove unavoidable. Despite warnings from fellow passengers, the captain, and his friend Dick—all of which imply she may be technically virtuous, but is clearly an adventuress—and despite his own misgivings, he becomes inextricably involved with her. Caldigate is resistant to being told what to do and becomes so embroiled in the flirtation that it culminates in their implied engagement.

Trollope's few Australian scenes in the novel focus on Caldigate's time in the diggings, and readers see little directly of his relationship with Euphemia after they arrive in Australia. But as Trollope reveals later in the novel, the two set up house together after Caldigate agrees to marry her. While scrutiny from fellow passengers in the *Goldfinder* reins in Caldigate's behavior to some degree since the ship acts as a microcosm of England, no such outside pressures, whether legal or social, exist to keep him from the relationship that develops in the seemingly unregulated Australian space. Caldigate's multidirectional sexual impulses are not a product of the colonies. But if Australia allows for the maximization of bourgeois individualist "energies" as it did for Trollope in *The Three Clerks*, it does so without the constraining communal pressures that direct such sexual energy into socially acceptable relations—namely marriage. Caldigate and Euphemia's relationship and its unregulated, sexual nature also testifies to the types of degeneracy produced in colonies. As such, *John Caldigate* engages with the question of cultural and ideological continuities between Britain and the colonies by investigating whether sexual norms were being reproduced in the colonies. Australia becomes the locus for non-normative gender and sexual morality, which certainly has a precedent in Dickens's representation of settler Australia as an ideal setting for the disposal of fallen women (c.f. Chapter 2).

It was becoming increasingly clear to the British public that the failure of marriage as an institution would have wide-ranging consequences, not merely for the United Kingdom but also for the empire as a whole. As Francis William Newman writes in his article condemning a new theory of "free love," in the new "migratory state of [the English] population the influence of *collateral families* is all but annihilated; and therefore it is, that the loss of legal sanction to marriage becomes more than ever felt" in the absence of "social restraint of selfish libertinism"

(178, Newman's emphasis). The crucial tension in *John Caldigate*, then, is between the "collateral" influence of family and community and the kind of selfishly sexual individualism that Caldigate's Australian life exemplifies. As *John Caldigate* suggests, the danger posed by settler space—and more particularly the mostly male, loosely-constrained gold diggings—is its detachment from English domestic life.

Caldigate's Australian sexual morality is linked closely to economics, in a perversion of Victorian marital ideals. As revealed during his bigamy trial, Caldigate's relationship with his English wife Hester may have been premised on mutual love and confidence, but his relationship with Euphemia is premised on sexual attraction and economic advantage. While living together, Caldigate and Euphemia become partners in speculation, and Caldigate only manages to extricate himself from the relationship by selling his shares in a mine to Euphemia and his former business partner Crinkett. After the mine dries up, Euphemia and Crinkett later attempt to blackmail Caldigate by threatening to expose him as a bigamist if he does not refund some portion of the money so that he will share in their loss. Trollope's juxtaposition of Caldigate's two "wives" exposes the disconnect between a national investment in family and an imperial investment in bourgeois individualism. Euphemia's relationship with Caldigate is characterized by their mutual involvement in business and monetary transactions, and the novel uses this connection to show that their relationships cannot sustain real sentiment and is transient at best.

Though Caldigate attempts to keep his Australian personal life separate from his English one, the two worlds collide unpleasantly when Euphemia accuses him of bigamy after his English marriage to Hester Bolton. The bigamy trial ensues that highlights the doubling of interests, both marital and national, produced by multiple standards for sexual (and marital) behavior within the empire. By rendering a conservative ideal for family practices in *John*

Caldigate where feminine chastity is at a premium and radical deviations from regular, civilly registered marriage are denounced, Trollope critiques multiple standards for behavior and the concurrent attitude that settler space had no traceable effect on England. Where *Australia and New Zealand* articulates and advocates eventual separation, *John Caldigate* makes the rhetorically familial interconnection of colony and metropole manifest in the fictionally literal web of relationships the titular character forges through his movements between the Australian colony of New South Wales and the “mother country.” To borrow language from Buzard’s *Disorienting Fiction*, these interconnections stress the opposite of the productive imperial economy of affect I have been discussing, instead instancing a Greater British “anticulture” (20-1). As an anticulture, the “Greater Britain” of *John Caldigate* indicates “a state of arid commodification and moral apartness existing among a people whose physical adjacency mocked real community [...] or as a state of disastrous and inescapable *interconnection*” (21, Buzard’s emphasis).

II. Sensational Bigamy and the Empire

As I will suggest here, Trollope links his bigamy case with debates about marriage law in the empire as whole. Trollope specifically points to the inextricability of family practices in colony and metropole by putting into relief the way in which assumed legal differences infringe on English domestic life. As I will show here, a disastrously interconnected settler empire and the trope of bigamy go hand in hand both in 1860s and 1870s historical events and fiction.

Trollope anonymously published *John Caldigate* in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* near the end of a period of marriage law debates and reforms extending throughout the 1860s and 1870s. This novel represents the uncertainties of legal differences within Britain’s settler

empire, and it was not the first text to do so. As the British periodical press had highlighted in the 1860s, disparate marriage laws in Scotland, Ireland, and England produced conflicting definitions of marriage and exposed a still-fragmented imperial union even within the British Isles. The heart of the problem, legal experts argued, was in the manifold legal codes operating in the United Kingdom, which worked against the consolidating effects of the 1707 Act of Union between England and Scotland and the 1801 Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland. The Union of Parliaments had consolidated legislative bodies, but the vestiges of Irish canon law and Scots law pointed toward divergent histories and ways of life—ways that threatened imperial unity and England’s supremacy within the empire.⁴³ These, in turn, were suggestive for the fantasy of “Greater Britain.” If even the continuous land masses of Scotland and England had a fragmentary union, how could a sense of national sentiment and solidarity be extended across the discontinuous settler empire?

Drawing from this recent history of marriage law debates in the domestic empire in the 1860s (and on contemporary discussions about marriage law difference between Australia and England, to which I will return later), Trollope collapses the difference between “Greater Britain” and the United Kingdom. Trollope grafts details from Scottish marriage law onto Caldigate’s alleged first marriage to Euphemia in New South Wales. Trollope’s comparative frame of Australian and Scottish law renders Caldigate morally suspect as it is quite clear that the “marriage” would have held up in a Scottish court, yet Trollope suggests that the kind of flexible law that measures intention in determining marriage would come at the cost of Victorian Englishwomen’s sexual purity and ultimately the English system of male inheritance. Thus, legal difference within the British Isles and between Britain and the colonies threatens the

⁴³ See Rebecca Gill’s “Imperial Anxieties of a Nineteenth-Century Bigamy Case” (2004) for an extensive look at this problem.

reproduction of the Victorian family, and by extension, the rhetorical basis of Greater Britain itself.

When Trollope invoked bigamy as a literary trope in *John Caldigate*, he drew upon a vast wealth of literary treatments of bigamy in 1860s sensation fiction, which were inspired in no small part by questions about the status of marriage in the empire as a whole. These literary treatments were part of an even larger mid-Victorian discourse rehearsed in courts, journals, newspapers, and Parliament about the roles geographical borders played in delineating marriage. Trollope's novel—as well as the bigamy novels that preceded it—must be understood as part of a public dialogue about how settler differences were shaping Greater Britain for better or ill.

The infamous *Thelwell v. Yelverton* bigamy case helped kick off an era of metropolitan and colonial marriage law reform in the 1860s when Maria Theresa Longworth accused Major William Charles Yelverton—newly married to the widowed Mrs. Emma Forbes—of having previously married her in a private exchange of vows in Scotland and a Catholic ceremony in Ireland.⁴⁴ Trollope's bigamy case carries some interesting resemblances to the Yelverton case: Caldigate meets Euphemia on the ship *Goldfinder*, and Major William Charles Yelverton met Miss Maria Theresa Longworth on board a ship. Both matches were between people of different classes, with the gentlemen Yelverton and Caldigate justified in some sense by a kind of “defense of seduction when the one seduced was not of ‘gentle blood’ ” (Erickson and McCarthy 281). More importantly here, Caldigate hopes his indiscretions will never be revealed because Euphemia lives in Australia and similarly Yelverton attempted to convince Longworth to

⁴⁴ See Gill's “Imperial Anxieties” and Arvel B. Erickson and Fr. John R. McCarthy's “The Yelverton Case: Civil Legislation and Marriage” (1971) for extensive discussion of the Yelverton case and its impact on marriage law debates.

emigrate to Australia or New Zealand (281). In both the actual and fictional cases, then, the settler colonies seemed invaluable because they seem discontinuous with the British isles.

But *Thelwell v. Yelverton* made a lasting impression on Victorians in part because it exposed, in Buzard's words, a "state of disastrous and inescapable *interconnection*" (21). To the horror of the English, Irish, and Scots alike, it became quickly apparent that the mechanisms for the regulation and validation of marriage in each of the three kingdoms were substantially different from each other, and it was unclear on which kingdom's terms to judge the validity of the marriage. So much frenzied media had attended the case that it prompted the formation of the Royal Commission on the Laws of Marriage in 1865 to take a closer look at the legal differences between the three kingdoms and throughout the Empire.

Public discourse on legal differences in the United Kingdom followed the publication of the Report of the Royal Commission in 1868, which highlighted competing ideas about the function of marriage. Scottish marriage law in particular was censured in the periodical press for its validation of irregular marriages; in these marriages, even so much as the promise of marriage—with intention behind it—could constitute marriage in the eyes of the law. Cohabitation and the reputation of marriage among family, friends, and community might also constitute marriage (Russell 21). Thus Scottish law on irregular marriage was grounded in private feeling and social custom, not official documentation and civil registration as English marriages were. Scottish laws tended to protect women from unscrupulous men by defining as marriage relationships in which the promise to wed was followed by sexual intercourse; they also legitimized children born out of wedlock once the parents were married.

During his tenure as an editor for *Saint Paul's Magazine*, Trollope had published W.H. Faloon's exhaustive essay on the Royal Commission Report, so he was well aware of the criteria

for these marriages and uses them to frame Caldigate and Euphemia's relationship. As I will stress below, Trollope models the "marriage" between Euphemia and Caldigate very closely on a Scottish irregular marriage. Caldigate is dishonest a number of the times in the novels, but readers have his own admission to the promise of marriage to Euphemia in front of a Wesleyan minister. In Scotland, this alone would have constituted a marriage, but subsequent cohabitation confirms it even more completely. Caldigate acknowledges that he and Euphemia lived together, implying a sexual relation (confirmed by the way Euphemia hardens into a conventional representation of a mistress). Caldigate admits that many people referred to Euphemia as Mrs. Caldigate in front of him, and that he did not correct them.

Most damning of all, however, is a postmarked envelope inscribed with "Mrs. John Caldigate" and written in Caldigate's own handwriting. As the Royal Commission had reported, the basis of Scottish marriage law lay in "the intention with which a certain series of acts were done" (G. Russell 22), and not in the outward civilly-regulated proofs of marriage. To determine validity, one needed access to the interiority of both the man and woman to verify their intent, and this was ultimately not something that could easily be achieved in a court of law. Though the postmark is later revealed to be falsified, even unmailed the envelope constitutes physical proof of Caldigate's former feeling. As Caldigate acknowledges, he had loved Euphemia once and fully intended to marry her. All told, the mass of evidence includes promise of marriage (reconfirmed in front of a clergyman) followed by implied sexual intercourse (the contract *per verba de futuro, subsequente copulâ*), evidence of cohabitation, and the repute of marriage—all of which are read in Scottish courts as (irregular) marriage. This mass of evidence against Caldigate so obviously constituted a Scottish marriage in fact, that in a letter date 11 Jan 1878 about the details of publishing the novel, John Blackwood writes in a brief note after his

signature: “You are no doubt aware that Caldigates [sic] proceedings with the female adventurer would have made a marriage in Scotland” (N. John Hall 2: 750).

In the 1878 Marriage Notice (Scotland) Act—enacted the same year *John Caldigate* began its serialization—irregular marriage effectively disappeared from Scottish law, though the Royal Commissioners had pushed for even more drastic revisions of Scottish family law. Trollope’s use of the features of Scottish irregular marriage are important, for while most literary critics treating *John Caldigate* have assumed Caldigate’s legal innocence of bigamy, this context indicates that such a reading is not so set in stone. For one, these details certainly solidify Caldigate’s moral guilt. But the conflict between Scottish law and English law was, rather, an index of a conflict over the cultural differences in the conceptualization of marriage within the United Kingdom and the settler empire as a whole (the latter of which was also treated in the Royal Commission Report). Far from the fantasy of “Greater Britain,” *John Caldigate* stresses that the far-flung geographies of Britain’s Anglo-Saxon empire did *not* share the same values as they pertained to inheritance rights or women’s sexuality.

Where John Inglis, the Lord Justice General of Scotland pointed both to the modernity and rationality of Scottish marriage law in comparing it to the laws of “other European States” (G. Russell 61), proponents of English legal hegemony portrayed Scotland and Ireland as backward cultures, stuck in an irrational, savage past. As Rebecca Gill has argued, marriage reform functioned as a protection from the corrupting influence of the “barbaric” gender relations within the Celtic peripheries, but also against the heterogeneity of gender, sexual, and family practices revealed by an increasing number of ethnographies of “primitive marriage” (67) across the globe. For both Americans and Britons, so-called primitive marriage practices

threatened to contaminate England's colonial legacy and, as *John Caldigate* suggests, potentially the "mother country" herself.

These legal questions—and Australia as primitive like Scotland—are invoked several times in *John Caldigate*. The Scottish criteria for irregular marriage confirm Caldigate's moral guilt, yet because this relationship takes place in the "wilds of Australia" (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 322)—further from the English metropole than the relatively proximate Scotland—it simultaneously calls those same modes of legal marriage-making into question. The barbaric custom of the Celtic fringe becomes even more alien in the settler colony. When debating the merits of the case against him, Robert Bolton, Caldigate's brother-in-law and lawyer, says:

“...I do not believe the woman's statement. [...] But according to your own showing, there has been much in your life to authorize the statement. I do not know what does or does not constitute a marriage there.”

“The laws are the same as ours.”

“There at any rate you are wrong. Their marriage laws are not the same as ours, though how they may differ you and I probably do not accurately know.

And they may be altered at any time as they may please.” (195)

At least according to Robert Bolton, Australian marriage law is not subject to the same stability and solidity as English law. Capricious, obscure, and inconsistent, this law may protect a gambling adventuress like Euphemia who transgresses the boundaries of the feminine, but it threatens to imperiously extend a barbaric hold over a hard-working family man and his devoted English wife. Many of those attending Caldigate's trial are confident in his guilt but nevertheless expect his acquittal for “[n]o doubt there was a feeling with many that anything done in the wilds of Australia ought not ‘to count’ here, at home in England” (322).

The overwhelming impression of Australian life, custom, and law drawn from these English characters is of their extreme difference. These social arrangements are so transitory that it comes as no surprise that the marriage register where Caldigate's and Euphemia's union is allegedly recorded cannot be found, nor the Wesleyan minister Mr. Allan who could prove Caldigate's innocence (at least to Euphemia's claims about a marriage ceremony). No trace is to be found of Dick Shand, Caldigate's close friend who could also testify to his innocence, and no credible witnesses at all can be found by an agent sent to Sydney on Caldigate's behalf.⁴⁵ All in all, Australia comes to represent an indecipherable morass of corruption, transience, and lawlessness.

Caldigate's own confusion over Australian law is key, however. The negative rendering of Australia is countered by Trollope's critique of the metropolitan lack of interest in and information on colonial affairs—ignorance that Trollope knew stretched from the most domestic, parochial English subjects to “the highest level” of the government (Davidson 308). Indeed, Caldigate's lawyer, Mr. Seely, hopes to predicate his case on English ignorance of Australia, for “[c]ould not the jury be made to think—or at least some of the jury—that out there in that rough lawless wilderness, marriage ceremonies were very little understood?” (285). For Trollope, the problems presented by Scottish irregular marriage were aggravated by the geographic and increasingly emotional gulf between colony and “mother country.” Metropolitan lack of information is emphasized by Hester's unclear ideas about what constitutes marriage outside of England. Certainly Hester reveals an awareness of the possibility that her husband may not be able to escape conviction in an exchange with him:

“I did tell her that I would marry her.”

⁴⁵ Caldigate's former landlady, for example, offers to testify to whatever the agent wants for a price.

“You did.”

“Yes, I did.”

“Is not that a marriage in some countries?” (217)

By predicating his vague conception of Australian marriage law on the common knowledge of Scottish marriage law, Trollope reproduces the sense of difference and hierarchy inherent within that relationship. Because of the relative proximity of Scotland, Scottish marriage law had a greater material effect on English life than Australian, as exemplified by the Yelverton trial. Yet Australian domestic law and practices also made an impact, as debates on the Colonial Marriages Bill, covered in the periodical press, were beginning to indicate.

John Caldigate was not the first novel to address the problems of varying marriage laws. Sensation fiction of the 1860s had paved the way in thinking about marriage, and some literary responses were conceptually complex direct addresses to the legal problems, both domestic and imperial. Wilkie Collins’s *Man and Wife* (1870) and Margaret Oliphant’s *Madonna Mary* (1866) examine the difficulties of different English and Scottish marriage laws (Fahnestock 53) and Dinah Maria Mulock Craik’s *Hannah* (1871) and William Clark Russell’s *The Deceased Wife’s Sister* (1874) critically examined the morality of marriage with a deceased wife’s sister.⁴⁶ For the most part, however, novels responding to debates on marriage law appropriated and exploited details from cases like the Yelverton one, sensationalizing them without seriously advocating legal reform (Brantlinger, “What is ‘Sensational’” 6).

This is not to say, however, that the sensation fiction of the 1860s and 1870s did not call into question gender, sexual, and family norms—far from it in fact. The negative critical

⁴⁶ For discussion of Craik and Russell, see Elizabeth Rose Gruner, “Born and Made: Sisters, Brothers, and the Deceased Wife’s Sister Bill” (1999) and Margaret Morganroth Gullette’s “The Puzzling Case of the Deceased Wife’s Sister: Nineteenth-Century England Deals with a Second-Chance Plot” (1990).

response that sensation fiction received in the press came in part as a result of the fact that the all-too-frequent representations of adultery, bigamy, divorces, and the murder of lovers and spouses pointed to the fact that there was something rotten at the core of English ideas about the family, and also society itself. Indeed, the *London Quarterly Review* noted in 1866 that the new genre of the sensation novel profoundly unsettled “that mutual confidence by which societies, and above all, families, are held together” by pointing out the inability of social forms to fully regulate desire and behavior (“Recent Novels” 108). Novels inspired by the Yelverton bigamy case in particular proliferated to such a degree that Henry Mansel famously labeled them “bigamy novels” in his oft-quoted 1863 essay in the *British Quarterly* (490).⁴⁷ One year later, Geraldine Jewsbury indicated in the *Athenaeum* that the bigamy trope appealed to English readers in no small part because it exposed the disjunctures between law and moral behavior: “This tendency to bigamy in works of fiction points to a joint in our social armour. Our marriage laws are confessedly imperfect, and open to hair-breadth escapes, which offer a fascinating complication, not devoid of probability” (743-44).

Beyond England’s borders, bigamy novels also highlighted the fact that—“Greater British” imaginary to the contrary—colonial expansion made the maintenance and regulation of marriage according to English norms increasingly difficult. These novels frequently predicated their plots on the confusion produced by geographic distance. Separated by oceans, characters remarry thinking their spouses dead or, as in the case of Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*, they assume their first spouses will never return to discover their remarriages. Fahnestock has argued that Australia was a “handy depot for extraneous spouses in bigamy

⁴⁷ For extensive discussion of the Yelverton case’s influence on literary production, see Gill’s “Imperial Anxieties” and Jeanne Fahnestock, “Bigamy: The Rise and Fall of a Convention” (1981).

fiction” (49), but in truth, it was ideal. As popular sensation novels like *Lady Audley’s Secret*, Sir Frederick Charles Lascelles Wraxall’s *Only a Woman: A Story in Neutral Tint* (1860), and Edmund Yates’s *Land at Last* (1866) showed, the expense of the journey to the Australian colonies coupled with the difficulty of communication over so vast a distance made Australia a perfect repository for characters who needed to disappear completely. In Trollope’s own writing, bigamy was connected to Australia even before he wrote *John Caldigate*. The plot of Trollope’s *Lady Anna* (1874) hinges around the legitimacy of the titled character in light of her parent’s allegedly bigamous marriage.⁴⁸ In an apparent escape both from social convention of class and questions of her legitimacy, Lady Anna marries a tailor’s son and emigrates to the Antipodes where such questions become moot.

With no fewer than twelve bigamy novels—and sometimes more—appearing each year between 1862 and 1865 when the Yelverton-Longworth case was in full swing (Fahnestock 55), bigamy became both a familiar trope and a cliché. Narrative use of bigamy was difficult to sustain past these peak years and though it remained part of the stock devices used by sensation novelists, it appeared far less frequently in the late 1860s and 1870s (Fahnestock 67). Thus, when Trollope makes John Caldigate’s allegedly bigamous marriage the center of his novel, he hearkens back to the same questions of legal difference raised by the Royal Commission Report and bigamy novels a decade earlier.⁴⁹

As Eve Sedgwick has argued, bigamy in sensation fiction could function as a readerly fantasy of escape from the rigid confines of English marriage (101-16). Yet all too often bigamy

⁴⁸ Trollope wrote the narrative while in Australia visiting his son Frederic in May and June of 1871. See Hunt 18.

⁴⁹ Indeed, a writer for the *Saturday Review* testified to the belatedness of Trollope’s treatment of bigamy in *John Caldigate*, writing that “instead of regretting that he should have meddled with so questionable a topic now, we may rather wonder that he has not taken it up before” (216).

novels of the 1860s concluded by punishing guilty parties, clearing the innocent of blame, and reestablishing English monogamy and gendered norms. In *John Caldigate* the combination of sensation fiction tropes and Trollope's more standard realist representation produces a gray area by figuring a morally culpable protagonist who escapes a legal charge of bigamy from his Australian "wife." As Trollope himself acknowledged, readers did not often associate his work with sensation fiction, and instead classed him as a realist. Yet Trollope did not see his own work as in such strict opposition to the romance and mystery of sensation fiction. In the essay "Novel-Reading" (1879), he wrote that

Among English novels of the present day, and among English novelists, a great division is made. [...] The novelists who are considered to be anti-sensational are generally called realistic. *The readers who prefer the one are supposed to take delight in the elucidation of character.* They who hold by the other are charmed by the construction and gradual development of a plot. All this we think to be a mistake,—which mistake arises from the inability of the inferior artist to be at the same time realistic and sensational. (129)

The competing generic classifications in the reviews of *John Caldigate* suggest that Trollope succeeded in synthesizing the two genres. He was celebrated for his almost ethnographic representation of the Australian gold-diggings, which reviewers felt gave readers an accurate and interesting view of the colonies ("John Caldigate," *The Spectator* 916-7 and "Recent Literature" 340). Yet the Bostonian *Literary World* reported that "[t]he situation is what sensation novelists might call tremendous" ("John Caldigate" 260) and the *Academy* even described Trollope's resolution of plot as "a long episode in the style of Wilkie Collins" (Purcell 5).

Even without the blackmail, the adventurous journey to Australia, and the prison sentence, the bigamy alone resonated with the sensational treatment of a topic so popular in the last decade. Yet even while using these sensational elements, Trollope treated a sensational topic in a typically Trollopian way—in a realist mode that brought to the fore his “dramatic, many-sided treatment of social questions” (“John Caldigate,” *Saturday Review* 216). One of the effects of this style is that while Caldigate is eventually cleared of wrongdoing in the eyes of the court, the narrator never quite removes all suspicion of his moral guilt. This ambiguity starkly contrasts with the more conventionally drawn lines of good and bad in bigamy fiction of the 1860s. The cases of apparent bigamy in such works are either revealed to be wholly unfounded or as acknowledged bigamy (even in texts that humanize intentional bigamists). While sensation novels played on ambiguity and mystery to create suspense, by their ending the truth is knowable. By contrast, Trollope debunks the notion that Caldigate’s innocence could be clearly determined by lengthening the gap between legality and morality.

The weight of the narrative is heavily on the legalistic side of things—it is clear that Euphemia and Crinkett have fabricated much of the physical evidence used in court, including a falsified marriage certificate. Yet while many of the reviewers of *John Caldigate* clearly were convinced that Caldigate had not committed bigamy in the eyes of English marriage laws—a conviction that most modern criticism concerning *John Caldigate* replicates—many of them were also cognizant of the moral ambiguity of Caldigate’s actions. Certainly Caldigate himself is untrustworthy; “[o]ur hero” (as Trollope calls Caldigate) outright lies to his brother-in-law Robert Bolton and conceals the truth of his relationship with Euphemia from Hester, only revealing details when forced into it by Euphemia’s assertions. As *The Spectator* reported,

The most serious fault of this novel is the sudden change in the character of John Caldigate, which is betrayed by the revelation of his relations with the woman who claims him as her husband, after he has won the sweet girl of whom he had long dreamed. It is a shock to the reader's interest in and sympathy with John Caldigate, to find that while cherishing the idea of Hester Bolton, the briefly-seen vision on whom he sets his heart and his hopes, he was leading a life of deliberate immorality, with another woman whom he had most undeniably wronged. When, on more than one occasion, Mr. Trollope admits that John Caldigate considered himself a scoundrel, the reader feels that John Caldigate had the soundest reasons for so considering himself; and there is the flaw of the book. It would, of course, have been very difficult to get his hero into the scrape whose stages and results he narrates so admirably, by any other means than those which the author adopts; but there is essential coarseness in the infidelity of John Caldigate to his own ideal, and in the matter-of-fact way in which his illicit relations with Mrs. Smith are treated. ("John Caldigate" 917)

The difficulty of rendering a protagonist both flawed and sympathetic is self-evident in both the text and the criticism. Indeed, as an exchange between Trollope and John Blackwood about potential changes indicates, neither *Caldigate's* publisher nor its writer had much sympathy with Caldigate.⁵⁰ In fact, Blackwood asked Trollope to make minor changes to Caldigate—not to the plot, but in minor details that would yield a more sympathetic character

⁵⁰ See John Blackwood's letter to Trollope dated 11 January 1878 and Trollope's letter to Blackwood of 14 January 1878 in N. John Hall's *The Letters of Anthony Trollope*, 749-51.

who was not “too cold self satisfied and self reliant” (N. John Hall 749).⁵¹ Contemporary responses suggest that Trollope’s efforts in this vein were not entirely successful, for according to a writer in the *Saturday Review*, “[W]e regret that [Trollope’s] powers should have been expended on a theme which can scarcely be touched with a free hand without awakening sympathies in a wrong direction” (216). That direction included Euphemia Smith. Trollope’s editor seems to have been fully aware of this problem, as is perhaps best revealed by the title change from the working title *Mrs. John Caldigate*, which ambiguously could refer to either Euphemia or Hester, to the final *John Caldigate*.⁵² Where the first title seemed most likely to refer to Hester who is elevated in contemporary reviews as an ideal devoted wife, its ambiguity threatened to call into question readerly sympathetic identification with Caldigate and fracture it into two directions—toward Hester *and* Euphemia. Though Euphemia is never rendered with the same depth and complexity as Hester, she remains the shadowy, flawed, and somewhat tragic figure of Hester’s colonial double.

Caldigate’s bigamy trial points to conflicted, proliferating national allegiances—both familial and national—in the wake of settler colonial expansion, as indeed does Trollope’s early working title. While having sex with a woman outside of marriage certainly has moral implications, Trollope recasts the conventional literary account of Australia as a space for the expansion of individual energies by implying that in such unmonitored, legally ambiguous space, primitive marital practices resurface. Indeed, Trollope highlights his own obfuscation of three

⁵¹ In full, John Blackwood writes on 11 January 1878, “[H]e shows himself too cold self satisfied and self reliant and it is impossible to sympathise with him. A man who cannot look up or look out for help and does not feel his own weakness and that of all humanity is sure to break down in a pinch as indeed John Caldigate does” (N. John Hall 749).

⁵² For references to the earlier title, see Trollope’s letter to Frederic Chapman dated 21 [22] July 1877, John Blackwood on the same date, and to Trollope’s son Henry Merivale Trollope dated 23 July 1877 in Hall 731-2.

years of Caldigate's life; the narrative tracks Caldigate's every move as he prepares to depart England and as he mines for gold, and yet when he visits Euphemia in Sydney and reconfirms his intent to marry her, Trollope cuts suddenly and glaringly to Caldigate's triumphant return to England years later, no longer focalizing through Caldigate, but instead through his father, the Squire. While Trollope evidently chooses not to directly represent an immoral living arrangement, by *not* doing so, he indicates Caldigate's moral guilt while obscuring his legal position. As such, the bourgeois individualist mythology of Australia transforms and Australia becomes the site of unregulated, unrepresentable sexual desire and alternative, mutable familial relations determined by private practice instead of state sanction. Unmarried cohabitation and flexible, transitional heterosexual relations in the colonies (which are, however, not quite as transitional as Caldigate would prefer in Smith's case) threaten the very basis of heterosexual marriage in the metropole.

Trollope drew heavily on details from marriage law debates of the 1860s and 1870s, suggesting that Caldigate's problematic behavior is in part a symptom of the lack of cohesion within a Greater British imaginary he elsewhere conceived as unified by blood, language and culture. Trollope critiques Caldigate's morality but he also indicts metropolitan detachment toward settler colonies.

III. Inheritance Plots and National Belonging

John Caldigate is a bigamy novel, but it also contains an inheritance plot. The thematic importance of inheritance is apparent through Caldigate's loss and repurchase of his inheritance rights, but more crucially, Caldigate is not threatened with blackmail when he has just married, but instead just after the birth of his and Hester's son. After threatening telegrams and letters,

Crinkett finally physically appears at the christening of Caldigate's child, an event that was meant to solidify Caldigate's relationship with his skeptical mother-in-law. Instead, Euphemia's accusations threaten to bastardize "Baby." Thus, the Australian way of life threatens both the codification of the English family and the legitimacy of the child.

For Trollope, legitimacy is not a new theme; as John E. Dustin has suggested, inheritance plots, illegitimacy, and the difficulties inherent in a system of entail are part of a systematic oscillating thematic pattern Trollope invoked throughout his career (280). I suggest here that this thematic choice resonates strongly with Trollope's consideration of Englishness and Greater Britain by tracing the effects of transfer of property on personal and national belonging (Hepburn 5). As Allan Hepburn has argued, if "inheritance necessitates the transfer of property" (5) and property inserts the owner into a national economy (9), then questions about the rights of inheritance have "ramifications for both personal and national belonging" (5). In a novel where the Australian way of life—unnatural, savage, and unrestrained by law—threatens an English child's legitimacy, the issues underwriting the Colonial Marriages Bill float to the surface.

Upholding English marriage law over Australian lawlessness (as well as Scottish alternatives) became about maintaining the English upper hand in imperial concerns; it guaranteed the economic and cultural interests of English citizens and made these coextensive with imperial interests. English politicians stressed that English law was founded in rationality, religious morality, and perhaps most importantly, modernity itself.⁵³ Colonial marriages, by contrast, posed a threat to the inheritance of English individuals, and by extension British sovereignty. Though Trollope's representation of Australian (marriage law) difference does not

⁵³ For example, John Gellibrand Hubbard (Conservative MP for Buckingham) argued in Colonial Marriages Bill debates that "[t]he laws of this country were founded upon religion, enlightenment, and civilization; and he did not think that we ought to consider either the laws of foreign lands or the laws of the Colonies with a view to changing our own" (Hansard 1182).

obviously draw from the Colonial Marriages Bill debates contemporaneous with *John Caldigate*'s publication, Trollope is at pains to define the threat of unregulated colonial relationships as coming at the cost not only of a woman's virtue, but also an child's legitimacy and inheritance. Thus *John Caldigate* stresses the same issue at stake in the Colonial Marriages Bill debates, though Trollope's novel focuses on the legitimacy of English children rather than colonial children.

The lasting effects of the debate on marriage law and its effect on questions about imperial unity are perhaps most evident in the debates about the Colonial Marriages Bill in the mid- to late-1870s contemporaneous with *John Caldigate*'s publication.⁵⁴ These debates, I argue, are an important context for Trollope's inheritance plot, though Trollope never references these directly. While England honored marriages made in the colonies according to colonial laws, it did not consider legitimate the children of marriages that could not have been made in England itself. As in English rejection of Scottish *per subsequens matrimonium* in which children born out of wedlock could be legitimated after their parents' marriage, the refusal to acknowledge children of a marriage between a man and his deceased wife's sister (considered incest at the time) as legitimate heirs to property suggested that the superiority of English custom and the English priority in rights of succession were at stake. In both of these cases, legal bias preferred not only English citizens but also an English model of reproduction. This bias was so evidently Anglocentric that in debates about the Colonial Marriages Bill in the 1870s, the failure to recognize the children of Australian marriages of a man and his deceased wife's sister was explicitly compared to the marginalization of Scottish children legitimated *per subsequens matrimonium*. As the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported,

⁵⁴ This same bill would come up repeatedly in debates for the next three decades until it was finally passed in 1906 (N. Anderson 84).

If Australians feel it a hardship that the children of marriages with a deceased wife's sister cannot inherit the real property of an intestate in England, Scotchmen must feel it equally a hardship that children who have been legitimized according to the Scotch law *per subsequens matrimonium* are subject to the same disability. ("The Colonial Marriages Bill")⁵⁵

The parallel between the two cases exposed an important rupture between, on the one hand, the ideology of British imperial connectivity and horizontal equality supposedly engendered by the 1865 Imperial Statute's recognition of colonial legislation and, on the other hand, the divisive vertical hierarchy maintained by the practice of recognizing colonial marriages, but not the children of such marriages.⁵⁶

The children of a man and his deceased wife's sister—legally married in Australia but considered incestuous in England—could not inherit English property in cases of intestacy, and the Colonial Marriages Bill would have recognized these children as equal to any other legitimate children. Arguments against the Colonial Marriages Bill stressed that if it passed, Englishmen would lose out to children of incest, a practice of primitive and degenerate societies. Assigning full inheritance rights that might prefer Australian products of degenerate incest to English heirs offered a threat not only to the English legal hegemony, but also England's sovereignty.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See also the *Times*'s "Colonial Marriages Bill," p.7 on the relation of this bill to disjunctures between the marriage laws of Ireland, Scotland and England.

⁵⁶ Scottish responses to the Colonial Marriages Bill suggest that there may have been some level of fellow feeling with the Australian legal marginalization. As the *Times* noted, the magistrates and Council of Edinburgh voted 25 to 10 in support of the Colonial Marriages Bill. See the *Times*'s "The Marriage Law" (1879).

⁵⁷ For an extended discussion of the context of this debate as well as its implications for the settler empire, see Nancy F. Anderson's "The 'Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill' Controversy" (1982), Gruner's "Born and Made" (1999), Gullette's "The Puzzling Case of the

Proponents of the Colonial Marriages Bill dramatized the potential consequences of not passing the bill for “Greater Britain.”⁵⁸ The rhetoric of those in favor of the bill indicated that the connection between colony and mother country hinged on the bill’s acceptance. William Baxter (liberal MP for Montrose) argued that the bill was vital to the maintenance of a “permanent federal connexion,” and that “[i]f the House refused to pass this Bill, it would do more to promote separation than all the arguments of those who were in favour of severing the connexion between the colonies and the mother country” (“Parliamentary Intelligence” 6). There is some indication that the colonists were concerned about the outcome of the bill. In the early 1870s, there had been extensive discussion in the Australian colonies about the legalization of marriage to a deceased wife’s sister, and after a flurry of laws passed allowing it,⁵⁹ many colonists made their interests in imperial recognition of these laws known both in England and their own colonial newspapers. As an editorial in the Melbourne *Argus* reported, the grievance that would continue if the bill were not passed was “particularly well adapted to engender and extend a feeling of soreness, if not bitterness, in the minds of Her Majesty’s subjects residing in this part of her dominions,” the certain effect of which would be to work against the “integrity of the empire, and [...] the consolidation of its somewhat incoherent constituents” (“Colonial Marriages Bill defeated” 5A).⁶⁰

Deceased Wife’s Sister” (1990), and Dianne Reilly’s “La Trobe’s Marriage with His ‘Deceased Wife’s Sister” (2003).

⁵⁸ As many parliamentarians argued, the Colonial Marriages Bill undoubtedly drew much of its support from the Marriage Law Reform Association, which sought the legalization of marriage with a deceased wife’s sister in England and some even argued that the Bill was in fact merely a mask for this group’s interest and that the colonists had no vested interest in the bill.

⁵⁹ South Australia allowed marriage with a deceased wife’s sister in 1870, Tasmania in 1874, New South Wales in 1876, Queensland in 1877 and Western Australia in 1877. Victoria legalized these marriages considerably later in 1893 (Reilly 149).

⁶⁰ Catherine Helen Spence notes this same issue in *Handfasted*. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of her views on marriage.

Where those in favor of the bill framed their argument with sentimental rhetoric, those against the bill argued that sentiment had no place in the discussion, for as Colonial Secretary Lord Carnarvon argued, the “union stood upon much more solid foundation, and no such question as the one before them could affect the feeling of loyalty and attachment of the colonies to this country” (“Colonial Marriage Laws” 5). Instead, opponents emphasized a universal national autonomy—each nation could legislate for itself and none should interfere with others. Implicit within these arguments, however, was the assumed primacy of English laws and custom within the empire. Opponents suggested that any allowance for the legitimacy of colonial law in England’s own inheritance system would cede power to the colonies. As M.P. Beresford Hope, the chief opponent to England’s own Wife’s Sister Bill argued in session, “was it just [...] that [...] any Colony should be empowered to force the hand of the mother country and to regulate for her questions involving moral and social considerations of great importance? Were laws to be made by Tasmania for England or by England for herself?” (“Colonial Marriages Bill,” *Times* 7). The centrality of the familial metaphor of “mother country” and colony insisted that any disruption of English law to accommodate colonial law was simultaneously a disruption of a natural and hierarchical reproductive order. Along with the Wife’s Sister Bill—the “annual blister” according to Gilbert and Sullivan’s *Iolanthe* (1882, 25)—the Colonial Marriages Bill constantly reminded the English of the increasingly divergent marriage practices in the settler colonies and made perceptible the limit point of colonial legislative freedom. Without concretely defined and regulated marriage, the rhetoric of Greater Britain explored in chapter one—one of family and family values—had nothing to rest upon. Moreover, lax laws or simply different ones in the colonies endangered England’s sovereignty.

As the Colonial Marriages Bill had indicated, marriage as an institution governing heterosexual relationships within the empire was only one state-regulated family tie. The Colonial Marriages Bill sought to put the children of legitimate Australian marriages on equal footing with the children of English marriages because, for the purposes of inheriting land, children of an Australian marriage between a man and his sister-in-law were illegitimate if no will specifically left land to such children. Although existing English laws enabled such children to inherit money, a portable form of property, the case differed for land. The result was such that colonial children of these colonial marriages were ineligible to participate in, as *John Caldigate's* Squire puts it, the “binding [of] a special family to a special fraction of the earth’s surface.”

In inheritance law, the junctures between biological reproduction and the reproduction of larger structures—state, nation, empire—became self-evident. In *Reproducing the State* (1999), Jacqueline Stevens has argued that

the exclusions of certain residents from the prerogative to own or inherit land do more than establish the rules for broad economic alliances and antagonisms of class. In addition, the exclusion of aliens from the right to own land and the invocation of sovereignty over ‘subjects’—and other kinds of governments’ sovereignty over ‘citizens’—has the effect of sacralizing the land, and rendering control of it a symptom of the particularity of membership (137).

As such, “membership”—citizenship itself—is limited to those who accept fully English laws governing sex and marriage. No matter how extensive the language of “Greater Britain” in *Australia and New Zealand* might attempt to link settler space with Britain, colonials are ineligible to participate in the same modernity and divergent family trajectories are linked to disparate forms of economic prosperity. In Ian Baucom’s formulation of this dilemma, “‘British’

space was thus read as homogenous, interchangeable, everywhere alike, while ‘English’ space”—the Squire’s “special fraction of the earth’s surface”—remained unique, local, differentiated: a formula which permitted the empire to be that which was simultaneously *within* the boundaries of Britishness and *outside* the territory of Englishness” (10).

Both Trollope and Stevens imply that landed property also facilitates the reproduction of class. While colonially-derived capital might circulate in and out of England, transforming the weak and poor of England into Australian working and middle classes and shoring up the financial resources of the middle- and upper-class English, English land itself is freighted with the special meaning of history, aristocracy, and blood. Trollope emphasizes this point in the reinsertion of Caldigate within the line of inheritance of the ancestral Folking. To disrupt the natural order of inheritance, as the Colonial Marriages Bill threatened to do according to some politicians, would sully aristocratic ancestries—lineages strengthened and reified by centuries of development and association, and hierarchies that seemed the natural endpoint of good-breeding. As such, the double standard produced by the overlap of English law and Imperial Statute pointed to the links between empire, citizenship, and class in the negotiation of family.

Trollope at once highlights colonial difference as it pertains to marriage and evades the problem of the bastardized colonial child by relying on one of the characteristic arguments of opponents of the Colonial Marriages Bill and critics of Scottish *per subsequens matrimonium*: reversal. Where colonial complaints centered on the illegitimacy of colonial children, opponents stressed the *hypothetical* threats colonial children might pose to English children. The invalidation of Scottish *per subsequens matrimonium* and the treatment of children of marriage to a deceased wife’s sister assured that English citizens would never fail to inherit because Scottish bastards superceded them—admittedly remote possibilities, but nonetheless one that

comes up consistently in debates about marriage law difference. In Trollope's reversal, Caldigate and Euphemia's sexual relationship fails to produce a child, and instead it is of particular significance that Caldigate's marriage with Hester bears fruit. As Jeanne Fahnestock notes, anyone familiar with the conventions of bigamy fiction would know that the birth of a healthy child indicated the legality of the marriage was sound (63), and as I suggest in chapter 4, the reproduction of the family was also a signifier of viable social reproduction. Caldigate and Hester's type of family, Trollope indicates, has a future in the empire, whereas the one between Caldigate and Euphemia threatens to overturn the natural ordering of society. Moreover, "Baby" stresses that the primary problem of colonial "marriages" like that of Euphemia and Caldigate is its effect on English heirs. The consolidation of family through the overturning of Caldigate's selfish libertinism is the key to the continuing reproduction of a settler empire based on English morality.

IV. Conclusion: The Post Office and Global Economies of Affect

As bigamy figures the divided interests of metropole and colony, the resolution of the bigamy plot also suggests a solution to the problematic divisions within Greater Britain. As a contemporary review of the novel in *The Saturday Review* notes, "the story is not without its true hero [...] in the person of Samuel Bagwax" ("John Caldigate" 217), the young post office employee and relatively minor character who identifies a problem with the crucial piece of evidence in the case. Caldigate's conviction is overturned when Bagwax reveals that an envelope addressed to Euphemia as "Mrs. Caldigate" in Caldigate's handwriting—proof that he considered her his wife in the eyes of the law—has been tampered with by a postal employee in Australia. Though the loving inscription testifies to his affection for Euphemia, it was, Caldigate

claims, “a foolish joke” and never actually passed through the Sydney post office. But Crinkett and Euphemia knew that state-recognized documentation of the alleged marriage would strengthen their case, and “that if the letter could be got to look like a posted letter—a letter sent regularly by the post—that would be real evidence” (Trollope, *John Caldigate* 405). Bagwax discovers that in fact the stamp used on the envelope did not exist at the time the envelope was supposedly postmarked and a Sydney post office employee has backdated the postmark.

Deviations from standard postal procedures parallel the non-standard form of Caldigate and Euphemia’s marriage, and just as the universality of postal procedure renders the deviation transparent and the envelope innocuous, so too a universal English notion of what constitutes a marriage should render the Australian marriage null and void. In this way, the post office becomes the progressive figure for the structure of empire—its failings can be easily rooted out and its hegemonic systematicity guarantee “justice” and the safety of an idealized, heteronormative family. If the systematicity of the post office guarantees the safety of Caldigate’s English family, it also generates and consolidates the Greater British family. The singular two-penny stamp with the queen’s head that proves Caldigate’s legal innocence unites that empire under one benevolent, maternal gaze symbolic of the “mother country.”

As I stress throughout this dissertation, letter-writing was an important means of circulating sentiment and was seen as a possible cure to the disintegrating family. Bernard Porter has argued that emigrants largely lost contact with family at home. Yet fictions of settlement are dominated by representations of letters home. In this dissertation alone, these include Micawber’s letter to David Copperfield (Chapter 2), the blackmail letters of *John Caldigate*, Caldigate’s letters to the Squire, Caroline Chisholm’s and Charles Dickens’s “A Bundle of Emigrant’s Letters” in the inaugural issue of *Household Words* (Chapter 2), as well as Marcus

Clarke's pessimistic take on letter-writing and connection in "Letters from Home" (Chapter 4). The function of these letters in all of these texts was to explore the differing repercussions of emigration and settlement on real family connections, and to consider the ways in which letter writing contributes to (or fails to contribute to) the construction of a familial, national-imperial "Greater Britain." Their position in the public eye was intended, then, to model or critique the current status of global, Anglo-Saxon kinship networks.

In *John Caldigate*, Trollope represents letter writing as both carrying subversive potential and as capable of solidifying family sentiment. When the post office itself is systematic and follows rules, it is also effective in negotiating desire and even reconstructing broken families. After all, the rift between Caldigate and the Squire begins to mend with surety when Caldigate finally writes home from Australia, his letters "full and cordial—such as any son might write to any father" with "no tone or touch of the old quarrel" (94). After a time, Caldigate has sent so many letters that "complete confidence" is established between father and son and "a chance reader would have thought that no father and no son stood on better terms with each other" (94). As Eileen Cleere has argued in *Avuncularism* (2004), the Victorian penny post that Trollope was instrumental in promulgating in his over thirty-year career as a post office employee can be

imagined as a 'banking agency' that would circulate family sentiment as economic, political, and cultural currency. Functioning as an authoritarian alternative to the hegemonic paternalism and prohibitive monopoly of previous postal regimes, the Penny-Post Office was designed to be an institution that would manage society by managing the family. (174)

While Cleere's view stresses a form of bureaucratic authoritarianism, the real value of the post office in *John Caldigate* is that it operates as an *informal* facilitator of an imperial economy of

affect. If, as Newman wrote, the preeminently migratory mode of mid-Victorians had destroyed the positive influence of the “collateral” family, postal reformers believed that cheap penny-postage could revitalize it by reestablishing “normative tropes of domestic happiness and middle-class sustenance” (Cleere 177), and this is precisely the function of letter writing between Caldigate in Australia and the Squire in England. In *John Caldigate*, the post office crucially enables communication across the space of “Greater Britain” without prescribing or invasively enforcing morality. Instead, family and affect might—in a perfect world—do the heavy lifting of reinforcing English sexual norms.

The exchange of sentiment through letters consolidates the Caldigate family, and also reestablishes the vital link between Caldigate and Folking, the ancestral home that Caldigate had not cared for in his youth. Caldigate’s “years of absence” have made Folking more dear and Caldigate’s correspondence home provides the means to articulate his allegiance to home and secure his return to it. So too, letter writing to Trollope and other postal reformers contributed to and solidified both national and Greater British sentiment, for the “sentimental circulation of letters would maintain national (or racial) communities and prevent the hostilities of war,” not to mention that the post office could “be put to work in the guise of a domesticated imperialism, carrying out colonial imperatives without the oppressive violence and tyranny that traditionally accompanied the promulgation of the British Empire” (Cleere 190, 189). Greater Britain itself was thus forged by the reaffirmation of collective identities—family, national, and imperial—in postal communications.⁶¹ Despite the vast distance between England and Australia, *John*

⁶¹ The narrative also features telegraphic communications, though curiously these are the mode of communication for business and blackmail. Family matters and relationships are chiefly negotiated through the penny post and international mailing.

Caldigate hints at the possibilities for creating and sustaining sentiment and sympathy both for individuals and for Greater Britain.

Yet even while *Caldigate*'s letters home begin to establish a "confidence" between father and son, they fail to make mention of Euphemia, and contain no "reference to any matrimonial projects" (94). If *Caldigate*'s strategic exclusions are any indication, the novel does not instance total faith in the ability of the post to effectively regulate desire and individual behavior. Yet the most blatant subversions of postal procedure and legality—blackmail and postal fraud—are detectable, as well as their subversions of English marriage. Where the disruption of family through postal fraud and blackmail suggests the fragility of both the institution of marriage and the state mechanisms for control in an expanding empire, nevertheless the manipulation of the state-authorized postal service leaves a trace that exposes itself. Individual exclusions like *Caldigate*'s aside, deliberate fabrications that threaten to *legally* transform the English union of *Caldigate* and Hester are subject to legal investigation, and are not merely subject to moral suspicion. The fraud of Euphemia and the Sydney postal employee are revealed by the same basic function of the post: the fact that stamps are made in England and "sent out to the colony" with a careful system of marking that dates them. Though the envelope and signature were real and suggestive of *Caldigate*'s private intention and feeling, in a "Greater Britain" where English law attains priority and morality centrifugally emanates from the imperial "center," postal—and thus legal and civil—validation escapes Euphemia.

Despite the claims by those attending *Caldigate*'s trial that things that happen in the colonies shouldn't "count," Trollope betrays an awareness that promises and practices in colonial space have bearing in English space as well and that there is continuity, legal and moral between these two spaces. As a counter to *Caldigate*'s selfish individualism and promiscuity, *John*

Caldigate reestablishes a normative association between family and the post throughout the novel. If the letter enclosed in the falsified envelope begins with the intimate “Dearest Feemy,” it also refers to “money matters” that a man does not “generally [discuss] with his wife,” including the buying and selling of shares (226). If Euphemia’s blackmail letter to *Caldigate* subverts the role of the post office as a familial and national arbiter, the final judgment in *Caldigate*’s case and the invalidation of the crucial envelope suggests that the post office’s imperial economy of affect has *not* finally authenticated Euphemia’s and *Caldigate*’s relationship. While there have been inconsistencies in postal procedure, Trollope offers a solution through postal reform: Bagwax is rewarded for his good work by a trip to Australia where he will set “matters straight in the Sydney [post] office” (494). In a footnote—the only one in the book, and therefore strikingly anomalous—Trollope apologizes to the Sydney post office, suggesting that he has perfect faith in their good practice. His apology has far more to do with his own consolidation of Greater British sentiment since he knows how ill such a suggestion might be taken; he hopes that his “friends in the Sydney post office will take no offence should this story ever reach their ears” (494). According to Trollope’s *Australia and New Zealand*, Australia has proven ripe for “our multiplying race” (1: 2), but *John Caldigate* suggests that they must be infused with the reproduction of the “collateral” constraints of family life.

Chapter 4:

Unsettling Past and Future Histories: Fictional Convicts and the Future Australian Race

“The word country is the name of an idea of great complexity. In that idea are included all the multitudes of persons, and all the multitudes of positions, in a certain portion of the Globe of the Earth. Nor are these present existences alone included in that idea: the HISTORY of the country is included, that is the whole series of prior existences; and not the PAST HISTORY only, but the FUTURE HISTORY also, or series of future existences, as far as our power of anticipation reaches” (2: 226).

James Mill, *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind* (1829)

As I’ve shown in the preceding pages, nineteenth-century metropolitan novelists and political writers alike map out Britain’s relation to its Australian settler colonies through affective language and representations of family. If political connections would inevitably fall away as these colonies moved toward independence, “Greater Britain” might still be held together through the unifying effects of shared blood, culture, and language. The colonial emigrant writers I examine in the following two chapters, Henry Kingsley, Marcus Clarke and Catherine Helen Spence, explore the nationalist possibilities of Australia and its relation to Britain through the same politics of family and affect. Kingsley’s and Clarke’s novels in particular are read by at least one British writer as contributing to the construction of a “Greater British” literary tradition. In *The Beginnings of an Australian Literature* (1898), first delivered as part of an 1898 London lecture series on what he describes as “‘Greater Britain’ subjects” (7), Arthur Patchett Martin argues that Kingsley and Clarke were part of a small coterie of writers who in “preserving the literary traditions and culture of the mother-land, under novel conditions and circumstances, have been laying the foundations of a fresh branch of English literature in this far-off Austral world” (8). Along with Dickens, who I will revisit in this chapter, these Anglophone writers participate in a transoceanic society of letters that circulates sentiment and

the language of kinship throughout “Greater Britain.” As Tim Dolin suggests (borrowing the language of Mary Louise Pratt), “reading itself became a kind of contact zone: part of the settler’s struggle to stay in touch with the centre” (277). Fictions of settlement in particular function as the connective tissue of the “Greater British” body by narrating the settler empire through popular tropes and conventional family stories.

Yet if colonial writers follow the example of Dilke and Froude in narrativizing the idea of “Greater Britain” as a family story, they are more likely to represent families disintegrating in the wake of historical conditions or families evolving far beyond Britain’s constrictive domestic ideals. In either case, the integrity and transhistorical value of the normative Victorian family is in question. Spence’s *Handfasted*, which I’ll turn to in chapter five, represents settler space as ripe for utopian social experimentation and radically alters British sexual and gender norms in anticipation of an egalitarian modernity. As I will suggest here, two of Kingsley’s novels, *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859) and *The Hillyars and the Burtons* (1865), and Clarke’s pamphlet *The Future Australian Race* (1877) similarly point to the intriguing biological and social evolutions in store for Australia’s future. But Kingsley and Clarke also represent an Australian and Greater British future in tension with a history of convict transportation. Australia’s early history positioned the colony as a giant prison that had come to signify punishment and alienation from family influence and affection. As this chapter will show, Kingsley, Clarke, and Dickens’s representations of convicts problematize the bright future of “Greater Britain” by revealing it to be rife with contradictions. Could an inclusive global community of Anglo-Saxons be built if the purpose of the Australian continent had been and continued to be the expulsion of Britain’s unwanted elements? And how would Australia’s convict past continue to implicate its racial future? Kingsley, Clarke and Dickens ultimately

suggest that the macropolitical viability of “Greater Britain” can be understood through the micropolitics of interactions between generations written into fictions of settlement.

The contested and complex intergenerational relations between fathers and sons figure in the four novels addressed in this chapter: Dickens’s *Great Expectations* (1860-1), Kingsley’s two novels, and Clarke’s *His Natural Life* (1874).⁶² Though the convict figure has been the focus of studies such as Coral Lansbury’s *Arcady in Australia* and Patrick Brantlinger’s *Rule of Darkness*, the role of the convict *within the family* remains undertheorized. As I argue, these Victorian writers consistently link transported convicts to the problem of establishing paternity, the absence or rejection of affective/biological relations, and other familial dislocations produced by penal settlement. Unclear genealogy, in turn, has significant implications for national belonging. These writers take what Georg Lukács terms a “world-historical” view in connecting personal narratives to national identity, and thus their meditations on individual convicts within the family become complex assessments of Britain’s Australian legacy (39). Though mid- to late-Victorian writers explore the potential of the Australian “Coming Man” who would evolve from the traits of contemporary Australians, in true Gothic fashion, fictional convicts interrupt the narrative of evolutionary possibility by returning from the past. As I’ll suggest, they threaten to dissolve the fantasy of a “Greater Britain.”

⁶² Clarke’s novel was first serialized between March 1870 and June 1872 in *The Australian Journal*. Before publication in book form, Clarke made significant alterations in the plot and narrative, including changes to the protagonist’s family background and situation and the conclusion of the narrative. The serialized version and the volume edition differ to such a degree that, practically speaking, they constitute two distinct novels. This chapter will examine the April 1874 volume edition, which, with some stylistic revisions, was also published in London.

I. The Future Australian Race: Travel Narratives and Colonial Evolution

Mid-Victorian Britons were well aware they had an empire upon which the sun never set, and they knew with a certain degree of concreteness its spatial limits despite its frequent expansions and contractions. Temporally, though, the reaches of the empire were less certain. Over the course of the nineteenth century, Britain increased its territorial conquests and forcefully expanded its trading interests, but how long would the empire last? Whiggish views of history prominent in the nineteenth century present history as a forward march toward enlightenment and progress with modern European nations at the vanguard. Yet astounding archeological discoveries of failed ancient civilizations and cyclical theories of history, instanced by texts like Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88)—a popular seller in the nineteenth century—problematize the idea of imperial permanence.

Questions about “Greater Britain’s” “future history” yield literary comparisons with historical empires. More particularly, artifacts retrieved by imperial plunderers and brought to the British Museum function as inspirations for the challenge to Whiggish history. Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s “The Burden of Nineveh” (first published in 1856 though I refer to the 1870 version from his collected *Poems*, which is more serious in tone) depicts a relic of former empires—an Assyrian Bull-god portal guardian statue—and implies that bright future of the empire was no certainty. Near the concluding lines of the poem, Rossetti writes of a future moment when the Bull-god may be rediscovered by yet another future civilization:

For as that Bull-god once did stand
 And watch'd the burial-clouds of sand,
 Till these at last without a hand
 Rose o'er his eyes, another land,

And blinded him with destiny:
 So may he stand again; till now,
 In ships of unknown sail and prow,
 Some tribe of the Australian plough
 Bear him afar, a relic now

Of London, not of Nineveh. (l.171-180)

In Andrew M. Stauffer's reading, "The Burden of Nineveh" explores the problem of interpreting the past given the historical forces that inevitably lead to the fall of societies and cultures, and in so doing indicts contemporary history with its fantasy of explaining an unknowable past (388-9). London's Christian legacy is seemingly forgotten by the Australian tribe, and instead is reconstructed through the Bull-god. Thus while art objects can convey a sense of history, they are also subject to the outside associations impressed upon them by an unknowing alien audience.⁶³

But the problem Rossetti poses about the future legacy of London and by extension the English nation is also one in which time itself is reordered and genealogical certainty is unsettled. Rossetti's speaker considers the possibility that

...it may chance indeed that when
 Man's age is hoary among men, —
 His centuries threescore and ten, —
 His furthest childhood shall seem then

More clear than later times may be: (l.181-5)

⁶³As such, Rossetti's argument is counter to John Ruskin's ideas of art as "a clear embodiment of the historically specific spiritual and moral values of the culture which produced it" (Harrison 755).

The future experience of history may thus throw a clear developmental narrative out of chronological order, such that “some may question which was first, / Of London or of Nineveh” (l.169-70). As in the speaker’s murky imaginings of the past in which Egyptian mummies at the British Museum may be contemporaries of the Bull-god or conversely may be the statue’s “own ‘antiquity,’” the chief defining feature of Rossetti’s history is that in the long term, it produces lack of certainty about the ordering of progress, succession and cultural inheritance (l.105).

The reference to “Some tribe of the Australian plough” casts further uncertainty onto England’s legacy. To which Australian tribe does Rossetti refer? To aboriginal peoples who might advance from metaphorical “childhood” into the adulthood J.S. Mill wrote about in *Considerations on Representative Government*?⁶⁴ To the descendants of Anglo-Saxon emigrants? Rossetti’s lines are perhaps indeterminate but by the mid-1840s, books, essays, and government reports were already indicating the increasingly prevailing notion that the extinction of aborigines could not be prevented (Brantlinger, *Dark* 123). The discourse on the inevitable extinction of primitive races in settler Australia was ubiquitous enough that Rossetti most likely refers to the Australian descendants of British settler colonialism.⁶⁵ Certainly by the time “The Burden of Nineveh” was first published, a discourse on a distinctly evolved “future race of Anglo-Australians” derived from Anglo-Saxon stock was emerging (Mossman 135, W. Hughes 307). When read in the context of this discourse, Rossetti’s poem expresses reservations about whether Britain would be able to establish a cohesive and lasting connection with its settler colonies and whether those colonies would carry on the religious and cultural legacy of their “mother country.” Britain’s own family tree, like Rossetti’s ancient history, proves illegible.

⁶⁴ See chapter one for my discussion of this.

⁶⁵ See Patrick Brantlinger’s *Dark Vanishings* for an exploration of extinction discourse. If read as descendants of aboriginal Australians, the reference to the “Australian plough” indicates that aborigines have advanced from a nomadic, hunting stage to a settled, agricultural stage.

For nineteenth-century Australians, imagining the future Anglo-Australian type presents an important opportunity to weigh Australian political and cultural developments both past and present. Would Australians of the future remain part of a relatively homogeneous “Greater Britain”? Would they diverge racially as well as culturally? And if so, would these divergences be to their advantage or detriment? Nineteenth-century Australia was, in some sense, a place oriented more toward the *future* results of social experimentation than toward the *present*. Where the early-nineteenth-century desire to generate a sense of Britain’s national character yields explorations of its national past (Lukács 25),⁶⁶ mid- to late-nineteenth-century explorations of an emerging Australian national character are conversely built around the renunciation of its tainted past. As both Lorenzo Veracini and Deana Heath suggest, Australia was a “special place where prophecy” more than history was “the essence of its character” (Veracini, “Historylessness” 279, Heath 109). In the 1870s and 80s, this future-oriented perspective finds expression in the public interest in the nature of the future Australian, otherwise known as the “Coming Man” (Williams 134). Predictions about “The Coming Man” from the colonies and his relation to a future declining Britain were in such abundance that at least one British writer argues in 1866 that readers were “in jeopardy of being worked to death by him” (Jacox 286).

Australians, however, were less interested in the future of Britain than they were in their own evolutionary possibilities. Indeed, Helen Irving writes in *To Constitute a Nation* (1999), “The idea of a special, formative relationship between the Australian environment and individuals of the British race, one that gave rise to a new form of person, a new type of society that would be the seedbed of social experiment, was persistent in nineteenth-century Australia”

⁶⁶ As, for example, in Scott’s historical novels or later in Tennyson’s Arthurian poetry.

(Irving 119). Observations about the new kind of “native” engendered by the combination of Anglo-Saxon race and Australian environment appeared as early as the first generation of Australian-born white children and, by the end of the century, “visitors to Australia invariably looked for, found and identified a distinctive ‘native’ type” (Irving 119).

Where Victorian writers like Emily Eden imagine futures in which the “Coming Man” is the descendant of colonized peoples and engages in reverse colonialism (Jacox 282-3),⁶⁷ Australian ideas about the “Coming Man” make little mention of aboriginal Australians in visions of the future. Late-nineteenth-century Australians instead refashion the word “native” to refer to white people born in Australia; indigenous Australians are simply “blacks” and “aborigines,” who simply could not survive in the face of their more advanced colonizers (Irving 124).⁶⁸ Australian natives imagine their “Coming Man” as a vigorous young colonial who continued to advance civilization by conquering “‘uncivilised’ frontiers,” and who maintains a “personal attachment to the environment, and a democratic sentiment of a particular type” (132). This Coming Man is thus an embodiment of the ideal imperialist, though his “nativeness” associates him with a burgeoning Australian nationalism as well.

In straddling this divide between a “Greater British” imperialist and an emergent national identity, predictions about the “Coming Man” strike at the heart of questions of racial and national belonging. If Australian notions of “nativeness” and “The Coming Man” seem

⁶⁷ Eden’s *“Up the Country”*: *Letters to Her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India* (1866) built on Thomas Babington Macaulay’s trope of the future New Zealander who sketches the ruins of St. Paul from the London Bridge. As Francis Jacox writes, this trope, which Macaulay first used in an 1840 article in the *Edinburgh Review*, attracted considerable attention and was rehearsed repeatedly. Eden writes that two thousand years in the future, a “black governor-general of England” may examine picturesque ruins and “feed white-looking skeletons” (I.95-6).

⁶⁸ Given the association of aborigines with such forms as the proleptic elegy Brantlinger discusses in *Dark Vanishings* indicate even further the fact that aborigines are associated with the past and a present set to expire.

promising to many, they are also accompanied by negative visions of the Anglo-Australian future if it diverged from its parent stock. Tanya Dalziell has argued that by the end of the nineteenth-century, Australians were being fitted into evolutionary discourse in ways not to their advantage, figured as monkeys that were neither European nor white (5). Based on alleged evidence from the West Indies and India, the proximity of settlers to non-whites and their distance from metropolitan centers of civilization was believed to cause racial degeneracy.⁶⁹ When writers see more than one “type” in the colonies, they are likely to note a distinction between English-born settlers and colonial-born settlers and these often established metropolitan superiority. As Dalziell suggests, these comparisons indicate that “‘the (white) race,’ and the privileges and powers accorded settlers under colonial conditions, are neither secure nor essential” (6).

Dilke’s *Greater Britain* and Trollope’s *Australia and New Zealand* provide two interesting examples of theories about the ways in which settlement was seen to impact the vigor of the Anglo-Saxon race. Dilke observes that Victoria was the wealthiest “of the Australian nations” (303) because of the gold rush, but Victoria’s supremacy also seems to be a function of the fact that Victorians are “more English, than the New South Welsh” (304). He notes the physical changes that seem to be taking place in Australia by contrasting the Sydney New South Welsh with Victorian settlers:

The leading Sydney people are mainly the sons or grandsons of original settlers—
‘corn-stalks’ reared in the semi-tropical climate of the coast; the Victorians are
full-blooded English immigrants, bred in the more rugged climes of Tasmania,

⁶⁹ As case in point, Gerty Hillyar, the quintessential native Australian woman in Henry Kingsley’s *The Hillyars and the Burtons* is described by a British party-goer as a “mulatto” despite her strictly Anglo-Saxon ancestry (2: 219-20).

Canada, or Great Britain, and brought only in their maturity to live in the exhilarating air of Melbourne the finest climate in the world for healthy men.

(304)

All immigrants, Dilke suggests, retain their physical vigor, but native-born Australians—no matter the colony—seem to be more delicate in nature, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the oft-used label “Corn-stalk,” referring to New South Welsh natives’ height and “frequent lank and bony appearance” (W. Hughes 114). Dilke notes the accuracy of this label in his observations at the Sydney races: “[T]he crowd presented several curious types. The fitness of the term ‘corn-stalks’ applied to the Australian-born boys was made evident by a glance at their height and slender build; they have plenty of activity and health, but are wanting in power and weight. The girls, too, are slight and thin; delicate, without being sickly” (295). Since height is generally the result of both hereditary and environmental factors, the tallness of native-born Anglo-Australians undoubtedly indicates better access to nutrition in the colonies, but to Victorians who had been reading Charles Darwin and other theorists of evolution, it seemed to indicate the possibility of a new offshoot to the Anglo-Saxon race.

Indeed, Dilke’s observations are, on the whole, characteristic of observations made by metropolitan visitors to Australia, and indicate a broader cultural awareness of the shifting physicality of Britons overseas. Regarding Victorians and the New South Welsh, Trollope has the opposite to say, arguing that the colonists of New South Wales retain “more of the John-Bull attributes of the mother country than his younger and more energetic brother in the South” (1: 474). The evolution of the race in Australia produces specifically gendered effects as well. Echoing a common notion, Trollope writes that women born in the colonies are more beautiful than their English counterparts and that girls become women two years more quickly than

English girls (1: 476). Boys age into young men too rapidly as well, such that Trollope finds them less energetic than their peers from the mother country (1: 481). While from a twenty-first century perspective, the early onset of puberty can likely be attributed to environmental factors, Trollope discounts claims that climate can account for such biological changes and instead attributes these differences to educational and cultural aspects. These in turn link to the question of whether or not Britons and colonial-born Australians will continue to diverge racially.

Trollope writes:

There are of course many, still young, who have come out from England,—so many that they suffice to give a tone to the whole social life of the colony. But every year this becomes less so than it was the year before, and the time will soon come in which the colonial will be stronger than the home flavour. It is of interest to inquire whether the race will deteriorate or become stronger by the change. (1: 479)

In his amateur ethnological view, the changing tenor of “social life” has a direct affect on racial futurity, with cultural and racial changes reigned in by fresh infusions of Anglo-Saxon blood and culture.

Australian immigrant Marcus Clarke responds vociferously to Dilke and Trollope’s cultural critiques of the Australian colonies in the Melbourne *Argus*. In a mock letter under the pseudonym “John Buncler” on “The Traveller of the Period” (13 April 1872), Clarke singles out Trollope (as “Mr. Cackleby Twaddle”) for his supercilious attitude toward colonists and for claiming to know them better than they know themselves. He further derides the recent spate of travel narratives like Trollope’s:

It appears that London publishers think the space of six weeks time quite long enough to understand the politics, wishes, hopes, prospects, manners, customs, and social economy of a people. That rising young demagogue Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke disposed of the universe in six months. [...] But it is by such casual observers that we are judged. The Wentworth Dilkes, Hepworth Dixons,⁷⁰ and tribe of Twaddledom in general, are accepted by European readers as retailers of truths, and the hasty generalizations of these self-sufficient travelers are taken as carefully-considered expositions of our social life. (Hergenhahn 295)

Clarke rejects Dilke's and Trollope's assumptions that Australians had extensively modified their ways of thinking to their new climate. In another article, he also critiques interest in the "Coming Man" as impracticable and unscientific, writing "I myself take no interest in the Coming Man—(having 'come,' for my own part, as far as I can)..." (Hergenhahn 29).

Yet like Trollope, Clarke also indulges himself in some meditation on the future of the Australian race, albeit to comic effect. In his pamphlet *The Future Australian Race*, he ridicules anthropological discourse on racial evolution by making ludicrous, overblown claims about future Anglo-Australians. The pamphlet was taken with some degree of seriousness, however, for *The British Medical Journal* failed to note the ironic tone of Clarke's essay in an 1878 review, and Clarke himself submitted the pamphlet for inclusion in the Library of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. Alternating between a satiric and serious tone, the pamphlet raises the question of the "Coming Man" and what he will look like, arguing that "There is certainly no doubt but that in a few years the inhabitants of the colony of

⁷⁰ William Hepworth Dixon joined Dilke during part of his Greater British tour, publishing *New America* (1867) in part in response to their visit to the United States. Dixon was notable for this travel narrative, which examines the American moral and religious condition, and *Free Russia* (1870), an account of his travels in Russia.

Australasia will differ materially in their mental and physical characteristics from ourselves” (236). Clarke attributes the future of the Australian race chiefly to the waves of immigrants arriving in Australia after the discovery of gold, drawing “some of the best nerve-power” of England (245). Australians, he argues, spring from Englishmen of the “*last* half of this century” who have been regenerated in the Crimea and “fierily re-baptised in Indian plains” (245); thus imperial Britain forges the future Australian Race.

The influence of “Physical Laws,” however—namely the Australian climate and food, though also education and exogamous marriage—will direct changes in bodily and mental vigor, religion, and the “political constitution of a nation” (247). Clarke anticipates a fractured “Australian Empire” where the northern hot parts of the continent will resemble Egyptian and Mexican civilizations (presumably Mayan and Aztec), while the southern portion of the continent will greatly resemble Greek development. Yet the potential to realize the civilizational achievements of ancient Greece are compromised by the mineral composition of the Australian continent:

The inhabitants of this Republic are easily described. The soil is for the most part deficient in lime, hence the bones of the autochthones will be long and soft. The boys will be tall and slender—like cornstalks. It will be rare to find girls with white and sound teeth. A small pelvis is the natural result of small bones, and a small pelvis means a sickly mother and stunted children. Bad teeth means bad digestion, and bad digestion means melancholy. The Australians will be a fretful, clever, perverse, irritable race. (249-250)

Here, Clarke’s tone ridicules the grandiose generalizations and claims made on the basis of inadequate evidence when writers use environmental conditions to predict racial and national

character.

Yet more telling than Clarke's predictions on Australian temperament is the manner in which he believes climate affects community. Based on the need to remain out-of-doors, Clarke suggests that, "domesticity will be put away. The 'hearth' of the Northerner, the 'fireside' of Burns' Cotter, will be unknown. [...] The Australasians will be selfish, self-reliant, ready in resource, prone to wander, caring little for home ties" (250). Such claims may seem, on the surface, excessive, and yet Clarke's prediction fell in line with some of the observations made in travel narratives about the emerging Australian character.⁷¹ Similarly, James F. Hogan (an Irish emigrant who later returned to Britain and served as secretary of the Colonial Party under Dilke) writes in "The Coming Australian" (1880) for *The Victorian Review* that the character of the future Australians will be determined by the fact that contemporary young Australians disrespect their parents and other authorities. Indeed, the Australian of twenty years from now will, Hogan argues, "[b]e distinguished for independence of character, though wanting in a feeling of reverence for the venerable institutions bequeathed by his ancestors" (108).

Thus, Clarke's visions of the Anglo-Australian future are predicated on the failure to replicate British domestic ideology and family feeling in the settler colonies. More specifically, he indexes the loss of sentimental intergenerational links between parent and child, which in Hogan's view correlates with the rejection of the "venerable institutions" of a British heritage. Clarke's vision of the loss of "hearth" and "fireside" confirms the worst effects of capitalistic individualism in an imperial age. "Home ties" carries a double valence, first signifying the loss of moral compass embodied in family. More importantly, it signifies the consequent

⁷¹ One of the most important of these is the extensive Australian public discourse on "larrikinism," a term that originated in Australia to refer to the harassing behavior, crime, and public nuisance committed by juveniles and general disrespect for authority. See, for example, Rosamond and Florence Davenport Hill's *What We Saw in Australia* (1875), p.345.

disintegration of Britain's own Australian legacy. If home and hearth are so integrally tied to a nineteenth-century notion of nationhood, then the emergent Australian rejection of such a notion spells an end to coherent nationhood and imperial social polity altogether. Because the family is such an iconic metaphor for "Greater Britain," as I've shown in chapter one, Clarke's vision of its failure simultaneously unsettles the idea of a global family of Anglo-Saxon nations. Indeed, Clarke indicates that "The Future Australian Race" will result in the antithesis of a "Greater Britain": the selfish, unintellectual, melancholic Australians will destroy themselves if not others as well. Clarke closes his pamphlet by noting that "In five hundred years—unless recruited from foreign nations—the breed will be wholly extinct; but in that five hundred years it will have changed the face of nature, and swallowed up all our contemporary civilisation" (251).

II. Theorizing the Convict in Fictions of Settlement

Clarke's predictions about the disintegration of Anglo-Australian society are predicated on the loss of domestic and family relations. But this experience of loss was already buried in Australia's early settler history as the forced outgrowth of convict transportation. If, as James Mill writes, a country is defined by both its "Past History" and its "Future History," then the temporal reaches of Australia's settler identity must reach backward as well as forward. The interrelation of Australia's anticipated future and abnegated past must come as little surprise to those familiar with its early history of aboriginal dispossession and penal settlement. Transported convicts and emancipists—freed convicts—posed an especially difficult problem in determining the evolutionary possibilities of Australia. Even though he emphasizes the newness of the emerging Australian race in *The Future Australian Race*, Clarke does not dispense fully with Australia's convict past, for the "best nerve-power" of England builds on the "sturdy Anglo-

Saxon stuff” of Australia’s early colonial days. Based on Australia’s early settlers and transported convicts—who had “eminent” though “misapplied” capacities—he writes, “It is only reasonable to expect that the children of such parents, transplanted to another atmosphere, dieted upon new foods, and restrained in their prime of life from sensual excess, should be at least *remarkable*” (245-6). Clearly, such a justification had to work against a countervailing assumption that convict blood might taint the prospects of the Australian “Coming Man.” The most concrete means of exploring ideas of the “Coming Man” is, paradoxically, its submerged and suppressed convict past.

As the following section argues, convicts in fictions of settlement negotiate two distinct problems. First, they represent the problem of genealogical inheritance between transported convicts, their children (or parents in Clarke’s case), and by extension the future Australian race. Second, they reiterate questions about genealogical continuity between Britain and the settlement colonies. The distinctive theoretical position I take in the following pages is that the convicts cannot be understood as merely cultural outsiders who signify the limits of British polity or social norms. They are almost always positioned *within* the family, and any analysis of their narrative function must acknowledge that they bear a *relational* significance. That is, the stories of convicts reflect not merely on these individuals, but also on their families and their nations. As I will suggest, all of the novels discussed here—*Great Expectations*, *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn*, *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, and *His Natural Life*—maintain a distinctly historical sensibility; they attempt to articulate a relationship between the individual convict life and the sweeping arc of settler colonial history.

The fictional convict is especially pertinent to questions of the future Australian race and racial continuity between Britain and Australia because, as Richard White shows, many

Victorians were familiar with the idea of a separate and individual “convict type” (65), which Dickens, Kingsley, and Clarke make use of throughout their novels. J.C. Byrne, for example, notes in *Twelve Years’ Wanderings in the British Colonies from 1835 to 1847* (1848) the convict’s “peculiarity of visage, different from all other men” (qtd. in White 66). Given late nineteenth-century discourse on the “criminal classes” who reproduced their criminality in subsequent generations, convicts threaten to contaminate the emergent national type through dissolute influence on their fellow settlers and by passing on negative characteristics to their progeny. British scientists writing in the 1890s, including Francis Galton and Havelock Ellis, propound theories of a “criminal type” that could be diagnosed through a scientific examination of the body and more particularly the shape of the skull. Yet such notions of criminal types were available considerably earlier, albeit without the same rigid “scientific” methods. Such theories are available, for example, in the writing of Henry Mayhew, who produces a “hereditary version of criminological determinism” (47) in *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851) showing that “crime is caused or somehow predetermined by the physical makeup of individual criminals” (Brantlinger and Ulin 47). Indeed, Patrick Brantlinger and Donald Ulin write that after the 1830s, criminals were understood less as “rational, responsible, free acting individuals” and more as “creatures of environment and heredity” (47).

If criminality was in some part hereditary, then it threatened to infect future Australian generations, and certainly Trollope seems to think this was a distinct possibility. In *Harry Heathcote of Gangoil* (1874), he shows the effects of convict reproduction through the Brownbies of Boolabong, a dangerous, despicable family consisting of ex-convict patriarch old Mr. Brownbie and his male children. Though Trollope holds the lack of female presence in the Brownbie home partially responsible for the family’s lack of common civility, he also passes

judgment on the convict's brood in part because they have inherited and augmented their father's criminal attributes. The novel as whole might be read as an almost Darwinian exploration of natural selection as it pertains to the development of a successful Australian society. The all-male Brownbies suggest the sterile antithesis of the gender normative Heathcote family, and the novel's conclusion—with the engagement of Kate, Harry Heathcote's sister-in-law to the neighboring Mr. Medlicot—validates the Victorian middle-class domestic ideal. Trollope privileges English immigrants over native-born, convict-descended Australians, who threaten class distinctions, entrepreneurial character, and Anglo-Saxon superiority.

But where Trollope dissociates the criminal element from his protagonists' family in this novel, representing two distinct evolutionary possibilities for Australia, Dickens, Kingsley, and Clarke investigate the causes and effects of having criminals *within the English family itself*. As I will show below, Dickens, Kingsley, and Clarke highlight the way in which convict transportation—a mechanism for expelling unwanted elements and purifying the social body—also interrupts “natural” affective relations between fathers and sons, or magnifies “unnatural” relationships rather than correcting them. Such banishments have repercussions not simply for these individuals, but also for their families and the entire social fabric of British life. The plots of the novels discussed here turn on the failure of fathers and sons to recognize biological and affective relationships until it is too late. This, in turn has ramifications for Dilke's and Froude's project of building an international sense of Anglo-Saxon unity. In this way the repeated tropes of contested father-son relationships contest familial “Greater Britain.”

Nowhere is this more evident than in the trope of convict “return” to the “mother country.” Clarke's position on return more generally in “Letters from Home,” an 1868 essay for the *Australasian*, is provocative:

The “return of the exile” is all humbug. Poets may write as they will about the “sacred joy” of clasping relatives in one’s arms, but those who have tried the process have experienced a totally different feeling. “The old people” have been living in the same spot, have seen the same faces, the same trees, the same houses—the “exile” knows nobody, *his* friends are all in that new country he has left. (Hergenhan 52, Clarke’s emphasis)

Clarke suggests the high-minded idealism of a Greater Britain solidified by family ties is a fabrication in part because family relationships are dynamic and mutable. He also indicates that genealogical relations are not enough to make up for the divergent histories resulting from the vast distances between Britain and the colonies. “Return” is impossible for any emigrant, he suggests, but this is even more final in the case of returned convicts in fictions of settlement, where return often proves disastrous.

Dickens in particular has a lengthy history of depicting transported convicts that have returned to England, and several of these depictions depend heavily on the irony—and also violence—of family reunions. The earliest of these appears in *Pickwick Papers* (1836-7), where a clergyman relates the brief inset tale of “The Convict’s Return.” In his story, John Edmunds returns to England after having served his sentence in an isolated Australian settlement and wanders through the village of his childhood in hopes of finding his mother, who had died fourteen years previous of sorrow over her son’s impending transportation and his failure to repent for his crime. Like Clarke’s returned exile in “Letters from Home,” John realizes quickly that none in the village recognize him, and his return to the “old house—the home of his infancy, to which his heart had yearned with an intensity of affection not to be described, through long and weary years of captivity and sorrow” cannot be (82-3):

And such was the return to which he had looked through the weary perspective of many years, and for which he had undergone so much suffering! No face of welcome, no look of forgiveness, no house to receive, no hand to help him—and this too in the old village. (83)

The clergyman storyteller does not moralize about the teenage John's crimes and instead focuses on the family dysfunction that seems in part responsible for John's tragic story. John's father, Edmunds, is described as "a morose, savage-hearted, bad man: idle and dissolute in his habits; cruel and ferocious in his disposition," as a physically abusive "brute" who treated his wife "cruelly" (77-8). Perhaps more importantly, Edmunds is described as an "unnatural father" (78). John's crimes are similarly described less as crimes against property, but as the betrayal of natural laws of affection, for "with a reckless disregard of her breaking heart, and a sullen wilful [sic] forgetfulness of all she had done and borne for him, [he] had linked himself with depraved and abandoned men, and was madly pursuing a headlong career, which must bring death to him, and shame to her" (78).

The sense of familial transgression against the natural laws of affection comes to a head in the final moments of the story as the clergyman relates how the returned John discovers his father dressed in workhouse clothes and sleeping on a riverbank. Both men experience a moment of horrified recognition, Edmunds strikes his son, and John, saying "Father—devil," attempts to kill him. Ultimately John cannot, however, for "he was his father" (83). In the end, the natural law preventing patricide reasserts itself (though Edmunds dies anyway of a ruptured blood vessel). Yet the conflict between father and son is revealing. Though Dickens does not excuse John of individual responsibility for his crimes, he focalizes the story through John's perspective and generates a sympathetic account of how the lack of a natural father contributes to

his criminal development. He also represents transportation not merely as a punishment for individual criminals, but as tearing at the fabric of domestic life itself by resulting in the death of John's mother. In this tale, Dickens is not interested in settler Australia or "The Coming Man," but he is interested in indicting a system that is oblivious to a complex understanding of environmental circumstances, that violently and permanently dispossesses John of both mother and home, and that produces a story of a return that is, after all, no return at all.

"The Convict's Return" was written while transportation to Australia remained one of the chief means of settling Australia. It is an interesting contradiction, then, that *Great Expectations*, *Recollections*, *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, and *His Natural Life* focus on the figure of the convict despite the fact that they were all published after transportation had permanently ended in most of the Australian colonies and after the Australian imaginary had begun shifting from the image of a place of punishment and incarceration to a place of prosperity and potential wealth. By the early 1870s, transportation had ceased in most of the well-settled areas nearly twenty years previous (with the exception of Western Australia). New South Wales (which then included what became Victoria and Queensland) abolished transportation in 1850, Tasmania in 1853, and South Australia—like Kingsley's fictional Cooksland in *The Hillyars and the Burtons*—never allowed convict hulks to deposit their human cargo on its shores.⁷² Convicts and ex-convicts continued to live alongside free settlers after the end of penal settlement, yet after the discovery of gold in Victoria in 1851, the ratio between these two groups rapidly declined with the influx of free settlers.

The novels of Kingsley, Dickens, and Clarke indicate that the figure of the convict is a

⁷² Britain began shipping convicts to Western Australia in 1850 after the colony petitioned for the infusion of capital and cheap labor it would provide, and continued to do so until 1868. It is important to keep in mind, however, the fact that the cosmopolitan and developed cities of Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide were located in colonies that had abolished transportation.

powerful force in both the metropolitan and colonial Australian imaginary, and I would argue that the convict colored and complicated the relation of Australians, present and future, to a Greater British totality. The title of Clarke's *Old Tales of a Young Country* (1871), a collection of non-fictional stories originally written for the Melbourne *Argus*, points toward the paradoxical temporal dislocation between convict history and contemporary Australia. On the one hand, these stories about Australia's convict origins are "Old" and distant, and on the other, they seem to inhabit Australia's continuing infancy.

But as I argue here, anticipating an Australian Coming Man required a position on Australia's convict history. As Robert Hughes argues in his influential *Fatal Shore* (1987), the end of the transportation system occurred in such a manner as to largely require the erasure of the convict past in public discourse. Indeed, anti-transportation efforts were made on "behalf of free emigrants and their stock" instead of the children of former convicts, and "it was this side of Australia which most fervently brandished the myth of corrupted blood and 'convict evil'" (xiv). Robert Hughes writes,

You could not take pride in [your forebears for being convicts], or reproach England for treating them as it did. The cure for this excruciating colonial double bind was amnesia—a national pact of silence. Yet the Stain would not go away: the late nineteenth century was a flourishing time for biological determinism, for notions of purity of race and stock, and few respectable native-born Australians had the confidence not to quail when real Englishmen spoke of their convict heritage. (Hughes xiv)

Popular history books like Hughes's have detailed the erasure of convicts from Australian family trees. When Australians of the later-nineteenth century attempted to divest themselves of the

association with convicts and crime, they simultaneously disavowed a complex and conflicted national-imperial family story. Thus, any novelistic resuscitation of Australia's convict past had implications for the future Australian race and "Greater Britain."

Stories of convicts would have been revealing to Clarke personally, who immigrated to Melbourne in 1863 and who had never visited an active penal settlement. But according to his prefatory note to *Old Tales of a Young Country*, Clarke's research was understood both by himself and those he worked with at the *Argus* as *recovery* work. Indeed, Lloyd Robson argues that "even in the 1860s, people were speaking of the fifty years of the penal era as if it had occurred and passed away many centuries before" (93). Certainly *His Natural Life*, the novel Clarke wrote largely from the source material of *Old Tales* and set between 1827 and 1846, was understood by many of Clarke's contemporaries as irrelevant to modern Australian life. Both metropolitan and colonial reviewers charged the novel with belatedness, the *Brisbane Courier* reporting that if the novel were written earlier, it might have ended the transportation system much more quickly than it had been, and the *Examiner* arguing that the novel had no purpose since transportation had ended (Stuart liv-lv). Before London publication, Charlotte Jackson, reader for Richard Bentley and Sons, suggested that the novel's sensational scenes were "scarcely worth while" given that transportation had ended, though Bentley's other reader, Geraldine Jewsbury, thought the novel had sufficient merit for publication (Stuart xli).⁷³ Even Clarke himself offers an apology of sorts in his dedication.

The convicts of Dickens's and Kingsley's novels were also conceived of as relics of a historical system. As Jerome Meckier has shown through careful dating of Dickens's detailed

⁷³ Jewsbury did, however, ask for a rewriting of the end of the novel in which Dawes is restored to his fortune and rightful place. In the end, the English version was published with the same ending as the Melbourne 1874 edition, though it also contained major stylistic revisions that Clarke did not contribute to. This chapter uses the Melbourne version that Clarke approved.

description, *Great Expectations* begins roughly fifty years before the novel's serialization in 1812, and the principal action of the novel occurs in the mid to late 1820s (and certainly prior to 1834 when illegal return from transportation was no longer considered a capital offense [Meckier 180]). Kingsley's *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* too points through its title to its historical quality rather than its continuing currency. Hamlyn narrates in 1857, only a few years prior to the novel's publication, but the novel concerns events beginning as early as the 1780s—significantly the same decade that marks the landing of the First Fleet in Botany Bay in 1788—and its central Australian scenes take place before the discovery of gold.

These historical settings have, I argue, formal implications for the novels' treatment of their subject matter. While Georg Lukács's reading of post-1848 historical fiction says that depictions of history are objectifying and distance readers from a sense of their relations with the past, at least in Clarke's novel, and arguably in Kingsley's work as well, the strategic linkages between individuals, their genealogies, and what Lukács terms a "world-historical" process—I include penal settlement as a world-historical event—generate opposite effects.⁷⁴ Kingsley and Clarke in particular take a broad historical view. The dates of *Recollections*, in point of fact, are roughly coextensive with the entire history of Australian settler colonialism. Their historical settings do not reawaken a moment of "national dishonor" as a way to examine Australian national character since no such nation exists, but they do implicate emergent ideas of "Greater Britain" by resuscitating the memory of Britain's dishonour.⁷⁵ Depictions of convicts situated in a rhetorically-distant past act, then, as a recovery of this sort of "national dishonor," and work

⁷⁴ Dickens's treatment of Pip and Magwitch's relationship does, however, tend to prove Lukács's point.

⁷⁵ Lukács similarly argues within the national frame that "The appeal to national independence and national character is necessarily connected with a re-awakening of national history, with memories of the past, of past greatness, of moments of national dishonour, whether this results in a progressive or reactionary ideology" (25).

against an opposing narrative of Australia's genealogy as bourgeois individualist, as free and entrepreneurial. As I will discuss below, convicts are a depiction of a suppressed family history with implications for questions of Greater British belonging.

For writers like Dilke and Froude, generating a notion of a Greater Britain was an uphill battle given a long history of dissociating carceral Australia from free Britain, though Australia's deliberate amnesia of its convict past made it easier to define an international community of Anglo-Saxons united by race and culture. In *Rule of Darkness*, Patrick Brantlinger argues that Dickens's convicts—John Edmonds, Alice Marwood of *Dombey and Son*, and Abel Magwitch of *Great Expectations*—serve as a “sociological return of the repressed” (120-21), the dispossessed convicts and poor dumped in the settler colonies. In such a reading, returned convicts in particular act as an imperial conscience, documenting the way in which Britain has attempted and failed to rid itself of problems through physical displacement. For the novelists I discuss below, belated convicts came to operate less as irrelevant commentaries on past penal transportation, but as instead linked to a crisis over Australia's role in a Greater British polity. Convicts could embody the sense of rejection and othering produced by the metropolitan liberal discourses of separation and colonial sovereignty I discuss in chapter one, whilst also pointing toward the destructiveness of masked and abnegated family relationships.

Dickens's returned Magwitch serves as a critique of class narratives and the tendency of capitalism to lead to labor exploitation, but it also shows that exploitation targets those who are linked by affective bonds or bonds of blood to people who remain behind. The figure of the convict serves as an ideal referent for other types of emigrants who seemingly have no choice (like Caroline Chisholm's poor, the failed middle-class Micawbers, and the fallen women of *David Copperfield* I discuss in chapter two). The convict embodies those who for classed and

gendered reasons, have been abandoned by their society. In the latter type of return narrative, again, colonization is not the subject of critique, but rather the bourgeois individualist narrative that underwrites it—one that dispenses with family, friendship, and community. As my discussion of Clarke and Kingsley will show, narratives in which there is no convict return amplify this tendency, although Clarke and Kingsley simultaneously stress the finality of transportation and undermine it with occasional transgressive returns to the metropole. More than anything, these novels point toward the impossibility of truly othering the criminals who are embedded in a Greater British genealogy. Thus, even in narratives like *His Natural Life* where protagonist Rufus Dawes doesn't literally "return" to England, we might nonetheless read his presence in the narrative as a convict's "return" to the fore of the Australian imaginary.

These writers do not, however, ultimately dismiss a notion of "Greater Britain." Instead, they excavate Australian penal history in order to indicate that this family story is fraught with internal contradictions. The dual insider-outsider status of the convict can be read as a figure for the settler colony itself, which while nominally British does not retain all of the privileges of citizenship by virtue of colonial status, nor as Dilke and Trollope suggest, necessarily the sameness of racial identity. As represented in fictions of settlement, the central conflict of settler space is thus an internal conflict between Anglo-Saxons.

I would stress that the figure of the convict does not serve as a criticism of the ideology of imperialism; quite literally, it whitewashes settler colonialism. The figure of the convict in Dickens, Clarke and Kingsley complicates the narrative of an integrated, affectively linked Greater Britain, but it does so by focusing on dispossessed and disenfranchised *white* immigrants. In exposing the convict history of Australia as a family story, these writers also rewrite Australian history as a white story. They propose a dialectical approach to Australian

history that synthesizes a suppressed convict past with the free-settler present, but which ignores an aboriginal role in Australian history altogether, including past, present, and future. If the convicts of Dickens, Clarke, and Kingsley confront Britons and Australians with the violence and barbarity of Anglo-Saxon recent family history, they also obscure histories (both past and future) of aboriginal Australians. In mapping out the Australian convict past, these writers do not merely colonize Australian space geographically, but claim it temporally as well by appropriating its history for themselves. Thus, the literary convict in the historical novel is at the vanguard of settlement, a figure for settler colonialism itself.

III. Dickens and Kingsley's Convicts

Given the loss of family that their convicts experience, it is worthy of note that Kingsley and Clarke both make a concerted effort to establish their characters in lengthy histories and, in Kingsley's case, a large extended family. In *The Hillyars and the Burtons* Kingsley is keenly interested in genealogical questions, tracing the ancestry of the Hillyars back to the seventeenth century (though the antecedents of the working-class Burtons are less clear). In *Recollections*, Kingsley depicts roughly four generations of the Thornton family. Clarke is similarly interested in an extensive history of Dawes's pedigree and his family's role in British national history. Through his biological father Lord Bellasis, Dawes's origins are traced back to Armigell Wade (or Waad), the "English Columbus" who "was reputed to have landed in America before Gilbert or Raleigh" (21) and who exemplified "good family" (21). Dawes's ancestors are also enmeshed in the affairs of Queen Elizabeth and James I, though by the time the family line produces Bellasis, the "family prudence seemed to have run itself out" (21). Given the relation between lineage and questions of national belonging I discuss in the chapter on Trollope's *John*

Caldigate, it seems clear that part of the function of these extensive family treatments is that they are meant to establish a lengthy history of national belonging that penal settlement and other forms of emigration threaten with destruction.

Great Expectations, by contrast, begins with the unsettling of genealogical certainty in juxtaposing the churchyard where its narrator's parents and brothers are buried with the appearance of a replacement father figure, Magwitch. Pip imaginatively brings his family to life by reading their tombstones, but upon Magwitch's appearance, Pip is impressed with "the identity of things"—the finality of their deaths and his own orphaned status (3):

At such a time I found out for certain, that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; and that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried; and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried. (3)

These silent graves are compared to the very much alive Magwitch, who in his later role as Pip's anonymous patron comes to have a more significant impact on Pip's development than the latter's family.

As Robert Douglas-Fairhurst has argued, the reference to the deaths of Pip's brothers and their relinquishment of the "universal struggle" paraphrases Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), which had been reviewed in Dickens's *All the Year Round* prior to the serialization of *Great Expectations*. In *Origin*, Darwin writes that this universal struggle entails "not only the life of the individual, but success in leaving progeny" (qtd. in *Great Expectations* note #3 458). In referencing Darwin in *Great Expectations*' opening sequence, Dickens thus contests this measure of successful struggle by shifting the subject of influence from the

biological inheritance of traits to the effects of the environment on the individual. Goldie Morgentaler similarly argues that the popularity and ubiquitous presence of Darwinian discourse on heredity at the time Dickens was writing *Great Expectations* seem to have prompted Dickens to meditate on its opposite. That is, Dickens discards theories of heredity that had informed much of his early work and instead points to the shaping force of environment “in which adoption, adaptation, and the vagaries of life experience play a far more crucial role” (712). He traces, for instance, the effects of Miss Havisham on her adopted daughter Estella rather than the inheritance of qualities from her biological parents Abel Magwitch and the murderous Molly.

But if Magwitch’s biological impact on Estella seems lost, he attains another legacy through his role as Pip’s benefactor. *Great Expectations* highlights both his and Miss Havisham’s desire to adopt and form a life that will achieve psychological if not genetic continuity. Miss Havisham’s desire to turn Estella into a vengeful curse on men is successful, and of course Magwitch maintains some pride in having fashioned a gentleman by dint of his Australian labor. Yet Magwitch views his own influence over Pip as specifically familial, saying, “Look’ee here, Pip. I’m your second father. You’re my son—more to me nor any son” (292). His love of Pip and his proclamation of a father-son relation is the specific outcome of the youthful Pip’s aid in his escape from the convict hulks at the beginning of the novel. Though Pip only assists because he is terrified of being murdered, Magwitch sees his assistance as the only act of kindness and nobility he has ever received. Even after he is recaptured and transported, his response to Pip’s act is nothing short of total devotion. Magwitch describes the only consolation of his Australian “solitary hut-life” as the image of Pip’s face (309, 292), and Pip is again the sole motivation behind his hard work and enterprise.

This family relationship is structured by Magwitch's desire to strengthen the connection and Pip's abnegation of connection. These in turn parallel the conservative critiques of liberal discourse on "Greater Britain" that I sketch out in chapter one.⁷⁶ Dickens characterizes the metropolitan Pip as, like Gladstonian liberals, callously dismissive of the affective appeals of colonials, who are ejected from the national family. Dickens troubles the unreasoning liberal position that fails to see family as a transoceanic structure by contrasting Magwitch's familial language with Pip's descriptions of Magwitch as a Gothic other. The initial characterization of Magwitch through Pip's childhood eyes plays with popular stereotypes of Australia and makes him a suitably appropriate candidate for transportation. The early-nineteenth-century story of Alexander Pearce, an escaped Irish convict who resorted to cannibalism while on the loose in Tasmania, had made an impression on the convict imaginary,⁷⁷ and Magwitch is represented as a potential cannibal even before he is relocated there. This dead "pirate come to life" from a gibbet threatens to eat the young Pip, and the adult Pip also associates Magwitch with a rustic savage bush life (7). The conflict between Pip's gothic imagination and Magwitch's unifying familial language come together in Pip's comparison of their parent-child relationship with that of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and his monster. Pip and Magwitch's relation, he argues, is the reverse of Frankenstein and his monster though equally wretched, and Pip argues that "I, pursued by the creature who had made me, and recoiling from him with a stronger repulsion, the more he

⁷⁶ These critiques lament, among other things, attempts to cut Britain's spending on military protections of the colonies, as well liberal discourse on "separation" as inevitable. According to writers like Disraeli, liberal discourse on separation lacks a sense of the affective connections between the colonies and the "mother country." The empire, he suggests in "Conservative and Liberal Principles" (1872) is nevertheless held together by the common sympathies of settlers and metropolitans, and conservative, in contrast to liberals, respect this emotional connection. Though this illustrating example appears over a decade after *Great Expectations* publication, conversations about the possibility of separation—and the relation of separation to "national" sentiment—appear much earlier in the century, as indicated in my introductory chapter.

⁷⁷ Pearce served as the inspiration for Clarke's cannibal convict Gabbett in *His Natural Life*.

admired me and the fonder he was of me” (310). As in Shelley’s famous 1818 novel, the act of creating another human being or “creature” translates into a consequent responsibility toward the connection. Pip’s response to Magwitch bifurcates into inward rejection of this second father and outward obligation to protect Magwitch from discovery.

In Pip’s dual response to Magwitch, Dickens depicts the predicament of metropolitan perspectives on penal settlement, for convicts are betrayed and abandoned by their British family. The centrality of family betrayal to Magwitch’s story is signified by his first name, Abel, which alludes to the Genesis story of the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. While Compeyson, Magwitch’s upper-middle-class criminal confederate, seems to suggest an ideal Cain, from his first memory Magwitch’s backstory is a sympathetic portrayal of social placelessness and betrayal by fellow Britons. Like Jo in *Bleak House*, Magwitch is a vagrant orphan sent from place to place and he becomes a criminal only because he can attain a social position through serving other criminals. But of course his fellow Britons read criminality in his body. Magwitch, like Frankenstein’s monster, is a social pariah largely because of his frightening physical appearance, and he is subjected to phrenological readings to determine the origin of his criminal character (317). Evident in Pip’s gothic imagination, society projects a racialized colonial identity onto the convict (though he is always a degenerate Anglo-Saxon rather than an aboriginal Australian).

Even in settler space, Magwitch is clearly othered. He takes special pride in “making” a London gentleman because it compensates for the fact that “The blood-horses of them colonists might fling up the dust over me as I was walking” (293). Social exclusion is thus reproduced in New South Wales where he is subject to the snidely superior remarks of the free settlers, who say “He was a convict, a few year ago, and is a ignorant common fellow now, for all he’s lucky”

(293). Even money cannot wash away Magwitch's racialized and classed difference or open up the possibility of social acceptance.

Though *Great Expectations* does not directly engage important colonial political questions about sovereignty and autonomy, Dickens's sympathetic rendering of Magwitch's story recovers lost biological and affective family relations. The implications of their relationship on a larger scale are important: Pip's story makes the progress and development of a metropolitan subject conditional on colonial convict labor and suggests the impossibility of expelling convicts from a "Greater British" family story. But of course by the early 1860s, Australia was also known as a receptacle for other social refuse: less successful younger sons, the poor, the Irish, and unchaste women among others. The historical treatment of a convict allows Dickens to comment more generally about the classed and racialized discourses that metropolitans use to dissociate themselves from Anglo-Saxons who emigrate to Australia.

Ultimately, Magwitch is not Pip's biological relation. Dickens may have rejected the effects of heredity in favor of the environment, but nevertheless he reinscribes the importance of recognizing biological connections in Pip's final words to the dying Magwitch: "You had a child once whom you loved and lost. [...] She lived and found powerful friends. She is living now. She is a lady, and very beautiful. And I love her!" (420). Pip's disinterest in responding to Magwitch's loving proclamations is eventually undermined as he begins to recognize that there *is* a biological connection of interest if not his own, and his love of Estella translates into a desire to care for and protect her father. His newfound dedication to Magwitch is, moreover, expressed through Pip's sense of duty to Estella's "unborn generations—Estella's children, and their children" (389). Establishing Magwitch's paternity throws into relief the cruelty of his experience of a social exclusion, which denies him a role in his daughter's life as well as his

place within a family story. While Estella continues to live in ignorance of her biological father, Dickens salvages Magwitch's life by allowing him to learn that his daughter lives and is beloved by Pip, the "son" of his heart. But Dickens cannot in the end give Magwitch back his place in a family story because the violence of the state prevents his reinsertion; Magwitch's illness precludes his hanging, but the result is still death. The partial restoration of intergenerational links throws into relief their prior abnegation, as a testament to the impossibility of fully realizing a connective "Greater Britain."

Henry Kingsley's treatment of the convict figure has many similarities to Dickens's Magwitch, though his convicts and his Australian scenes are informed by actual experience in the colonies. Kingsley bases the Australian scenes of *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* and *The Hillyars and the Burtons* on his experiences in the Australian gold diggings and on large sheep-runs between 1853 and 1858. He had attempted to make his fortune there and failed utterly, but his time in Australia did provide him with a store of experiences that lent local color and specificity to the novels he wrote when back in Britain. Kingsley has largely been forgotten as a Victorian writer, overshadowed by his famous brother Charles Kingsley and the more talented Dickens among others. Henry James, for one, terms him "a reduced copy of his brother" in a review of *The Hillyars and the Burtons* with "less talent, to begin with; and less knowledge, to end with" (James 59). Yet *Recollections* was one of the first Australian novels to receive any critical attention, sold quite well in England (Scheuerle), and in Clarke's view was "the best Australian novel that has been, and probably will be written" (qtd. in Pierce 11).

Recollections and Clarke's *His Natural Life* are at near opposite ends in terms of subject matter, for where Clarke depicts the "Convict Epoch," Kingsley's novel serves as what Martin calls the "best permanent literary record in the form of fiction of what I have termed the Pastoral

Epoch of Australia” (21). Critical approaches to Kingsley’s work have largely emphasized his vision of Australia as an ideal home for England’s working and middle-class families.

Paradoxically, Kingsley’s personal experience of Australia seems to have been almost antithetical to ideas of family and domesticity, for he describes emigration as an experience of immense loss and disorientation, and in fact frames *Recollections* with a dedication to his parents in which the novel is described as the “fruit of so many weary years of separation” (v). Narrator Geoffry Hamlyn seems to occasionally echo Kingsley’s personal views with such statements as:

Only those who have done so know how much effort it takes to say, ‘I will go away to a land where none know me or care for me, and leave for ever all that I know and love.’ And few know the feeling which comes upon all men after it is done,—the feeling of isolation, almost of terror, at having gone so far out of the bounds of ordinary life; the feeling of self-distrust and cowardice at being alone and friendless in the world, like a child in the dark. (146)

Kingsley’s fictionalized accounts of Australian life are notable in part because they represent settlement as the reverse of his own experience. The intense loneliness characterizing emigration in Geoffry Hamlyn’s views—and clearly Kingsley’s as well—are emphatically dismissed in Kingsley’s narrativization of Mary Hawker’s emigration in *Recollections*. The voyage to Australia is characterized for Mary as one of holding together family in the face of domestic shame. After her husband George is convicted of counterfeiting, Mary decides “that they would not rend asunder the last ties they had this side of the grave, but would cast in their lot with the others, and cross the weary sea with them towards a more hopeful land” (145). En masse, a large group of friends and family depart for Australia such that in saying goodbye to the departing ship, the character Dr. Mulhaus says, “There goes my English microcosm” (146). An

entire, cohesive social unit quite literally relocates to Australia and the emphasis on family and friendship wards off any real sense of difference that the Australian landscape mobilizes. Rather than emphasizing the labor involved in making Australian sheep-runs function or the isolation produced by large runs—with twenty miles between neighbors—Kingsley stresses conviviality and the welcome neighborly invasion of other people’s space.

Kingsley’s family-oriented “working man’s paradise” could not entirely eclipse the effects of the transportation system (*Recollections* 55). In both *Recollections* and *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, Kingsley complicates the family story with racially-othered, transported fathers who endanger their own children, and by extension, Australia’s future. *The Hillyars and the Burtons* establishes the tension between convictism and the futurity of the colonies through the threat Samuel Burton, embodiment of the convict type, poses to the fictional “model colony” of Cooksland (1: 70).⁷⁸ James Oxton, Cooksland’s Colonial Secretary, prides himself on the fact that the “infant colony” (1: 2) has formed independently of the convict type and looks forward to a future populace free of convict taint. Yet as Samuel demonstrates through repeated border and ocean crossings, the boundaries separating the pure colony and “Greater Britain” as a whole from such “vermin” are quite porous (1:28). With his “wonderfully clear dark-brown complexion which one sees so continually among old convicts who have been much in the bush” and “one of our commonest types of convict face,” Samuel is racialized like Dickens’s Magwitch (1.33).

Though an opportunist and a minor villain, Kingsley treats Samuel with some degree of sympathy in part because he has a natural albeit misguided love for his family. As a young man,

⁷⁸ This fictional “model colony” seems to resemble South Australia in many respects, but may also refer to John Dunmore Lang’s 1847 proposal to form a new Australian colony named Cooksland.

Samuel turns to crime because his master George Hillyar involves him in his own misdeeds. Transported for thievery, he seeks the help of Hillyar in Cooksland fifteen years later only to be treated with fear and loathing by the man he claims ruined him. To add insult to injury, he later discovers that his son Reuben, who shelters him after his first illegal return to England, is actually Hillyar's son from an unacknowledged Scottish irregular marriage. Though Samuel is tempted to ruin his former employer by producing a missing will that strips Hillyar of his inheritance, his breaking point only comes upon his realization that Hillyar is responsible for the alienation of Reuben's affection and loyalty. Samuel's devastation at being deprived of fatherhood is reiterated when Reuben speaks with a degree of finality about their "change of relationship," saying that separation from his former father is necessary and that he will "always remain fond" of Samuel (3: 213). Samuel finishes his days in Australia, a broken and lonely man.

The sympathetic treatment of the plight of convicts more generally is reiterated through Samuel's distant cousin, Jim Burton, who narrates roughly half the novel.⁷⁹ After having his first taste of the Australian landscape, he writes:

I began thinking of that desolate, wild-looking landscape I had just seen— thinking, by what wonderful accident it came about that all the crime of the old country should have been sent for so many years to run riot in such a country as *that*. I could understand now, how any mind, brooding too long in solitude miles away from company, among dark forests or still more dreary plains, like those, might madden itself; and also began to understand how the convict mind under those circumstances sometimes burst forth with volcanic fury, and devoured

⁷⁹ Like Dickens's *Bleak House*, Kingsley's novel oscillates between first-person and third-person omniscient narration.

everything. “Fancy a man,” I said to myself, “taking the knowledge of some intolerable wrong into those woods with him, to nurse it until—.” (II.263)

The unspoken conclusion explains in part Samuel’s own contradictory morality. He desires both revenge and acceptance back into the social fold, though his first encounter with Hillyar after fifteen years indicates that acceptance would have put to rest all desire for revenge. But acceptance proves nearly impossible for him, even among his biological family. If Kingsley does not depict, as Martin argues, a “Convict Epoch,” he nevertheless represents the effects of transportation as still being felt in the “Pastoral Epoch.”

Samuel is a strong presence throughout *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, intermittently and unpredictably appearing in the narrative as a reminder that criminal histories cannot be entirely forgotten. But his is not the only story of family loss. Samuel’s nemesis Hillyar is hated by his own father because of his mother’s infidelity, and though he is the legitimate heir to the Hillyar title, Sir Hillyar’s will confers the Hillyar wealth upon Erne, Hillyar’s younger half-brother. Samuel’s theft of the will allows Hillyar to take his father’s property and title, but when Samuel threatens to reveal the contents of the missing will, Hillyar seeks Samuel across Europe intending to murder him. Hillyar is ultimately unable to locate Samuel though, and gradually sinks into moral and physical decline mirrored in his abandoned Australian wife Gerty’s mental decay. Thus the alienated convict and the deprivation of his paternal relationship with Reuben echoes Hillyar’s own degeneration as a result of the fact that he is unable to secure his legacy. The destruction of Samuel’s family is matched with a corresponding destruction of Hillyar’s Anglo-Australian family, suggestively pointing to the fact that neither Anglo-Australian is able to cement family affections and bonds. Notably, the parallel narrative of Erne Hillyar’s love for Emma Burton ends in the dashing of Erne’s hopes for domestic bliss. In the novel’s

denouement, Emma dies in a cyclone and Erne leaves Australia. Unlike the Australia of *Harry Heathcote*, Kingsley suggestively strips his characters of the ability to reproduce metropolitan domestic norms.

This destruction of an Anglo-Australian family is more pronounced in *Recollections*. Where Samuel is a constant presence throughout *The Hillyars and the Burtons*, convict George Hawker serves as a hauntingly absent presence in *Recollections*. The reproduced “microcosm” of English society in Australia is destroyed in the end by the violent reunion of George and his son Charles. Charles grows up ignorant of his father’s criminality or whereabouts, but when his father—now a bushranger, an escaped convict who lives in the bush and resorts to violence for subsistence—goes on a rampage across the countryside, Charles joins the pursuing party. His mother Mary has a preternatural sense that if father and son meet, disaster will ensue, and attempts to prevent the meeting. Major Buckley inscrutably tells Charles he must return home, lest “you may do a deed which would separate you from the rest of mankind, and leave you to drag on a miserable, guilty life” (400). The enormity of the possible reunion seems to carry as much weight as any moment of crisis in a Greek tragedy, and as in any such tragedy, the crisis is unavoidable despite the best of prognostications. Shamed by an acquaintance who implies that he is a coward, Charles abandons his intention to return home and George unknowingly shoots his own son. An unrepentant villain throughout the majority of his life, George experiences a change of heart when he discovers that he has killed Charles. As he awaits public hanging, he tells the narrator and Major Buckley that he would have shot himself in the head to save his son from committing the ultimate act of patricide.

George goes to the gallows desiring his own death as just punishment, and yet Kingsley uses his last moments to meditate on the cruelty of the convict transportation system. Clearly

George's experience of Australia has not involved the same loving transplantation of home and society that Mary's has. Rather, George's isolation from the collateral influence of family has solidified his criminality; already at the margins of society, he becomes a dangerous (and murderous) bushranger, ranging the countryside robbing and pillaging. Convictism itself is represented as at least in part a result of the failure of family affections. George's nameless illegitimate son by his cousin Ellen grows up into a criminal like his father, which the Doctor attributes to the fact that "He never knew what it was to love a human being in his life. Why, what does such a man regard this world as? As the antechamber of hell, if he ever heard of such a place" (412). Much like Magwitch, George's nameless bastard is "Base-born, workhouse-bred! Tossed from workhouse to prison, from prison to hulk—every man's hand against him—an Arab of society" (413). Kingsley's narrator calls to account an abstract "lord judge" who stands in for the criminal justice system, arguing that some measure of sympathy would keep such individuals from being wholly "lost" and prove "that hardened criminals may be reformed" (413). Hamlyn convinces even Major Buckley, who says after their final encounter with George that "There is a spark of the Divine in the worst of men, if you can only find it" (428).

Charles's death—as well as his friend Cecil Mayford's, also at the hands of George's party of bushrangers—is metaphorical, indicating a disintegration of a vibrant Australian future at the hands of a violent, suppressed past. As it turns out, George's other son has no future either, and the end to George's lineage through the deaths of both of his sons is drawn into focus by *Recollections*' meditation on Australia's future. On the one hand, Kingsley associates the Australian future with the transoceanic racial unity Dilke appealed to in his preface to *Greater Britain*. The Major predicts that "the Anglo-Saxon race" will assert as usual "their right to all the unoccupied territories of the earth" (350) and fill the harbors with English ships. Doctor

Mulhaus points out that his vision ignores the presence of “the Irish, Jews, Germans, Chinese, and other barbarians” (350), as well as the fact that the supposedly unoccupied territories did have residents, the “Blackfellow’s claims being ignored” by the Major (350). Dr. Mulhaus’s position suggests that the Australian colonies are rooted less firmly in Englishness than believed. Even so, Dr. Mulhaus’s more racially inclusive claims about the Australian future do not foreclose the possibility of the Anglo-Saxon “Greater Britain” Dilke discusses, which bends even the emigrants of other nations to England’s purposes.

On the other hand, the conclusion of *Recollections* rejects the colonies in favor of Britain, for ultimately, the shadow of the Hawker family disaster prevents many of Kingsley’s characters from participating in an Australian future, whether Anglo-Saxon or not. In the end of the narrative, the Buckleys and “everyone we really care about” have returned to England to collect their Australian profits from afar on ancestral land (Birns 139). Kingsley’s celebratory English nationalism—which Henry James criticizes⁸⁰—finds expression in the words of the young Samuel Buckley:

Think of you and I taking the place we are entitled to by birth and education, in the splendid society of that noble island. Don’t let me hear all that balderdash about the founding of new empires. Empires take too long in growing for me. What honours, what society, has this little colony to give, compared to those open to a fourth-rate gentleman in England? I want to be a real Englishman, not half a one. I want to throw in my lot heart and hand with the greatest nation in the world. (432)

⁸⁰ James writes “Let him forget, in the first place, that he is an English gentleman, and remember that he is a novelist” (67).

Though Australia offers resources and redemption for Britons down on their luck, Kingsley casts it off in the end as too small and provincial for the upper and middle classes. In Nicholas Birns's view, this indicates that Kingsley "cannot see outside conventional metanarratives" of triumphal return to Britain (Birns 139). I would argue as well that this has just as much to do with the failure of "Greater Britain" embodied in the Hawker family's destruction. Though a distant future seems to hold the possibility of "new empires," Britain's convict past threatens their ability to replicate Anglo-Saxon domestic norms in settler space and reproduce family itself.

IV. Clarke's Convicts

Clarke's *His Natural Life* has a similarly fatalistic view of the family, though this might be attributed in part to a bleak Tasmanian landscape and its dark history. Tasmania, known as Van Diemen's Land prior to 1856, was a significant site of early Australian settler history because it seems to signify both the worst depredations of penal settlement and one of the clearest examples of genocide against aborigines. Benjamin Madley writes that when Tasmania was first settled by the British in 1803, between 4,000-15,000 Aborigines resided there and by 1835, those numbers were less than 400. The remaining aborigines were placed in camps and by 1876, no full-blooded aboriginal Tasmanians existed (Madley 78). Though historians have debated the extent to which British settlers contributed to this decline—and whether it should be termed genocide—at least by the end of the century, it was possible for H.G. Wells to compare Martian invasion to British settlement of Tasmania:

And before we judge of [the Martians] too harshly, we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought [...] upon its own inferior races. The Tasmanians, in spite of their human likeness, were entirely

swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in the space of fifty years.

Madley suggests that Mark Twain and Wells were responsible for spreading the idea of the complete “extermination” of aboriginal Tasmanians, but of course earlier writers had noted the genocidal tendencies of settlement there, including Herman Merivale in his *Lectures on Colonization* (Madley 79).⁸¹

By contrast, Clarke’s treatment of Tasmania never acknowledges the presence of Tasmanian aborigines in the years the novel is set in the colony.⁸² Rather, Clarke’s interest in Tasmania is confined to the depiction of the barbarity of secondary penal settlements where reoffending Australian convicts (often the most hardened, violent prisoners from mainland Australia) were sent. His story of the innocent Rufus Dawes (a.k.a. Richard Devine), wrongly convicted of theft and under suspicion of murder, exposes the extreme physical abuse of colonial administrators, the general lack of humanity with which prisoners were treated, and the descent of the prisoners themselves into barbarity under prison conditions (which includes homosexual rape and cannibalism among others). The degeneracy of the prisoners casts an ironic shade on the novel’s title, an abbreviated version of Dawes’s sentence “For the Term of His Natural Life.” Clarke suggests that transportation produces anything but “natural” results. As I suggest here, this is most evident in Clarke’s treatment of family.

Where Tasmanian texts like Louisa Meredith’s *My Home in Tasmania during a*

⁸¹ Such notions of complete extermination fail to account for mixed-race individuals who claim Tasmanian aboriginal origin. As of 2001, 15,773 Tasmanians claimed aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ancestry (Madley 104).

⁸² Clarke does acknowledge the existence of aborigines once in the novel when Reverend James North notes the racial breakdown of the prison at Norfolk Island, but even then, they are the criminal “aborigines of New Holland” transplanted to the island prison along with “Chinamen from Hong-Kong, [...] West Indian blacks, Greeks, Caffres, and Malays” (468). No aborigines seem to exist in Van Diemen’s Land itself.

Residence of Nine Years (1852) perform the work of “normalizing white settler presence” through domesticity and the “womanly role of homemaker” (Grimshaw and Standish 136), Clarke’s novel queers the family and domesticity. The domestic scenes of colonial administrator Maurice Frere and his wife Sylvia (née Vickers) are far from happy, and the nature of their relationship is encapsulated in the death of their infant child and subsequent inability to have more children. As in “marriages” like John Caldigate and Euphemia Smith’s (discussed in chapter three), the childlessness of a couple in the Victorian novel could often signify more significant problems than biology since sexuality and reproduction were linked to the idea of social reproduction.⁸³ Childlessness within marriage might signify women’s sexual transgression (as is the case with Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House*) or the sterility of the social system from which a marriage emerges. Certainly, the sterility of the Freres complements Clarke’s allusion to the homosexual rape perpetrated by dominant convicts on the weaker, feminized male prisoners. Both are instances of what Victorian considered unnatural sexuality, and correlatively they are the results of an inviable social system premised on violence.

And like Meredith’s normalizing domesticity, Clarke’s queering of sex and marriage in *His Natural Life* displaces aborigines, replacing them with flawed and broken Anglo-Saxon families. The emotional appeal of *His Natural Life* would be impossible without an appeal to ideal Victorian domesticity that is its outside point of reference. In the first sentence of the novel, Clarke stresses that the melodramatic events taking place are “one of those domestic tragedies upon which dramatists found plays, and novelists construct stories” (15). The centrality of domestic life to the convict experience is also emphasized in the modifications

⁸³ For example, Thomas Laqueur’s *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* contrasts nineteenth-century prostitutes and “fallen” women who are assumed to be sterile with a “household economy of sex, which is quintessentially social and productive” (230-32).

Clarke made between the 1870-2 serial version of the novel and the 1874 volume edition. In the earlier version, Dawes is wrongly tried for the murder of his father-in-law and submits to the accusation in order to spare the wife he no longer loves from her father's exposure as a criminal who sold synthetic jewels (Stuart xxxiv). Fellow Australian journalist John Joseph Shillinglaw claimed that during revision, he suggested to Clarke that "no *man* would make such a sacrifice as did Dawes except to save say *the reputation of a mother*" (qtd. in Stuart xxxv, Shillinglaw's emphasis). Hence the initial impetus for the plot was changed to one that stresses filial and biological bonds.

In the prologue to the 1874 version, Richard Devine discovers that his "father" is not his biological father. Having discovered that his "son" is not his own, Sir Richard Devine threatens Lady Ellinor with the exposure of her infidelity but agrees to keep her secret if her son leaves and takes a new name immediately. The younger Devine flees to avoid putting his mother at risk, and is mistakenly taken up for the murder of his biological father Lord Bellasis. Devine gives the name "Rufus Dawes" to the authorities, not knowing that Sir Richard Devine has died of apoplexy from the shock of seeing Lord Bellasis's body. Ultimately, the authorities cannot prove Dawes's guilt and instead convict him of theft, and without the protection of his upper-middle class identity, he is sentenced to transportation. Crucially, in the space of fifteen pages, Dawes is deprived of not one, but two fathers. The tension between these two fathers begins to suggest a nation in flux—from the old system of aristocratic inheritance Lord Bellasis represents to Sir Richard Devine's newer, nineteenth-century capitalistic ideal of the self-made man. Dawes's legal father Sir Richard Devine is described as a "*parvenu*"—a shipbuilder and son of a boat carpenter who is given his title for his commercial achievements—whose chief defining characteristic is his *lack* of family history (20). The novel stresses the irony of this dislocation,

for in a sense Dawes had already lost a familial, historical narrative of his identity even before he ceded his identity as Richard Devine. Yet in the end, Dawes has neither an aristocratic, nor a parvenu father.

Thus, *His Natural Life* opens with the protagonist's loss of identity and the loss of family connections similar to the structure of nineteenth-century bildungsroman. As Marianne Hirsch argues in "The Novel of Formation as Genre" (1979), the *bildungsroman*—a "novel of formation" or "novel of education"—tracks the development of the protagonist's mind and character from childhood to maturity through spiritual crisis and toward a recognition of the individual's role within an established social order. Familial dislocation, Hirsch argues, is one of the central features of the *bildungsroman*, for in the search for identity and meaning, the individualist protagonist must be spurred on their journey by the experience of loss or discontent that removes them from home and family setting. But unlike the orphans of *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield* who are reintegrated into a defined social order, the twenty-two year old Dawes's loss of identity and family proves permanent. Indeed, as Nicholas Birns suggests, Clarke's convict narrative questions the Victorian "propulsive historical current" (135) and resists the type of providential tropes that results in *Jane Eyre*'s family reunion with her cousins, fortune, and marriage. Where Kingsley cannot see outside of conventional metanarratives, Clarke "liberates through reversal" of these conventional metropolitan endings (Birns 140-1).

Readers follow Dawes's experiences over a period of years from 1827 until his death in 1846, but by the end of the narrative he has himself ceased to be the center of his own story and is replaced by the Reverend James North and Sylvia love-story. In some sense, Dawes could not remain at the center of the narrative because, as an individual continually stunted by the transportation system, he is figure of anti-development and anti-progress. All of his attempts to

aid his captors in hopes of attaining freedom are foiled by vengeful fellow convicts and Frere. Though Dawes never ceases altogether to be a moral man who makes ethical decisions to protect others, neither does he achieve any real spiritual growth until the novel's final scene. Having saved Sylvia from ruin by stopping her from running away from her husband with North, Dawes and Sylvia die in each other's arms during a cyclone.

To describe a tempest of the elements is not easy, but to describe a tempest of the soul is impossible. Amid the fury of such a tempest a thousand memories, each bearing in its breast the corpse of some dead deed whose influence haunts us yet, are driven like feathers before the blast as unsubstantial and as unregarded. [...] These two human beings felt that they had done with life. [...] They felt as beings whose bodies had already perished, and as they clasped hands, their freed and naked souls recognizing each the loveliness of the other, rushed tremblingly together. (564)

Thus, only in the moment of his death does Dawes escape from the burden of his own history and society's restrictions on his growth. This conclusion proves a relief for Sylvia as well, for in addition to her childlessness, her own father describes her as an odd child because she was raised in a penal settlement (130). Thus, the stunting effects of the convict settlement ripples outward.

Dawes's anti-developmental story of penal settlement centers on his loss of family relations and his loss of agency as he is tossed about by a cruel system. Yet paradoxically, Tasmania is populated with his relations. From the opening of the novel, readers encounter Dawes's cousin, Frere, and half-brother John Rex, another of Lord Bellasis's bastard sons on board the ship to Australia. These relations serve to shrink "Greater Britain" for Clarke's readers, making it knowable, but for the characters themselves, these relationships remain

unknown or unacknowledged by them throughout the majority of the novel. Again, Clarke resists metropolitan tropes by rejecting the conventions of sensation fictional narratives, which generally turn on pivotal moments of family recognition and reunion. *His Natural Life* rejects such tropes by constantly placing these family members in close proximity while preventing them from learning of their connections or from forging productive relationships. Like Kingsley's novels, the colonies in *His Natural Life* prove incestuously and catastrophically small, but where Kingsley follows the lack of recognition with a resurgence of George Hawker's sense of fatherly obligation, Clarke represents his family members as enemies and competitors until the end. Early in the novel, Frere in particular becomes Dawes chief antagonist since Frere sees Dawes as competition for the affections of the eleven-year old Sylvia Vickers. Back in England, he and Dawes were also in competition for the Devine fortune; significantly, neither man receives this fortune.

As Robert Hughes notes, Frere was based in part on the real colonial administrator John Price and Clarke's selection of the character's name—*frère*, French for “brother”—is pure irony given both Price and Frere's harsh treatment of prisoners and especially Frere's hatred of the innocent Dawes. Clarke reiterates the impossibility of forging horizontal affiliations by ensuring that Dawes's articulations of friendship and common interests with convicts and non-convicts alike are rejected or misunderstood throughout the narrative. Dawes attempts to stymie a mutiny only to be convicted as its ringleader; he forgoes a selfish desire to abandon fellow castaways at Macquarie Harbor and free himself, only to have Maurice suppress his central role in the party's survival. Dawes's transportation removes all possibility of affection and family connection, except through the Anglican Reverend North's metaphoric use of “brother.” By the time North—an internally-tortured drunkard who committed the robbery Dawes was convicted of

years before—is introduced, Dawes is hardened by his years of imprisonment, and yet when North asks for his forgiveness for failing to save him from a flogging and calls him “brother,” readers see something of his humanity (352). The simple term of horizontal kinship—reiterated several times in the last book—affects Dawes potently and counters the isolating conditions that set convicts against each other throughout the novel. Yet North is also clearly ineffectual and ultimately fails even to save himself; this sole acknowledged “brother” commits suicide at the close of the narrative.

His Natural Life goes beyond the undermining of “natural” family relationships to suggest a warping of inheritance narratives as well. This, I’ll suggest, connects to the larger question of Britain’s “Greater British” legacy I raised in my discussion of Rossetti. Rex’s story in particular emphasizes the question of misrecognition and the confounding of clear inheritance trajectory. Through conversation with Dawes at Port Arthur, the intelligent dandy murderer realizes that Dawes is the lost heir to the Devine fortune. Though he does not know that he and Dawes are half-brothers, he does recognize that there is considerable physical similarity between himself and Dawes. Rex escapes imprisonment again, makes his way to England and proclaims that he is Lady Ellinor’s lost son. Clarke models the episode of Rex’s imposture on the real Tichborne case of the late 1860s and early 1870s in which Arthur Orton, a butcher living in New South Wales, claimed to be Sir Roger Tichborne, who had gone missing and was presumed dead in 1854. Like Lady Tichborne, Lady Ellinor does not want to believe that her son may be dead and accepts Rex, who in turn spends the Devine fortune recklessly for several years before she discovers his imposture. Here, misrecognition speaks to her powerful desire to reestablish her family connection, but it is similarly predicated on the fact that it was believable that time in the colonies would have changed her son into a coarser man. Clearly settler space has the ability to

modify the character and appearance of Anglo-Saxons abroad and facilitate fraudulent colonial claims of Greater British kinship.

Rex's murder of his and Dawes's father emphasizes the same fraught father-son relation Kingsley and Dickens explore, though Clarke presents readers with a reversal. Instead of criminal fathers, readers find dispossessed, orphaned, bastardized, and criminalized sons who lack identities. Rex completes the deed that Dickens's John Edmunds could not by murdering his and Dawes's father, Lord Bellasis. Crucially, he murders Bellasis when he confronts him with the fact of his parentage only to be laughed at. Rex's criminal ability to pass himself off as another man seems to suggest a liberatory flexibility of identity, but then again the worst crime of his life is the murder of his own father in resentment for rejection and for failing to recognize their connection. Throughout *His Natural Life*, the brutality of the convict system distorts or checks all growth and development, and seems to facilitate only misrecognition and disguised identity.

V. Conclusion

Geoffrey Hamlyn's claim that the experience of settlement is one of isolation and terror is crystallized in a simile: "like a child in the dark" (146). As Peter Pierce argues, a similar figure, the child lost in the bush, is a recurrent Australian trope in the nineteenth century signifying the disorientation of adult emigrants in an alien environment and the "generational disjunction" that emigration entails (6). The frequent depiction of this child's death in nineteenth-century Australia—as, for example in the inset story of a child lost in the bush in *Recollections*—indexes a concern about the viability of colonial settlement: Does Australia's future history die with these lost children in the harsh environment? These figures, which John Scheckter identifies as

an “indigenous Australian myth” that does not correlate with any such European mythology, often reveal a “naive assumption that Australia will be just like home” (61). The lost child, he continues is a “political story,” in which Australians view themselves as “orphans or outcast children of Europe” and become “archetypes of national determination” (62). National failure seems implicit in their deaths. Indeed, these children resonate with Trollope’s assertion in *Australia and New Zealand* that “I have heard on all sides accusations of the littleness, of the weakness and infanticide of which England is guilty, in her desire to repudiate and put away from her her own children” (1: 358).

But if the lost child can stand as an orphaned and abandoned figure for settlement, convicts like Dawes, Rex, Magwitch, and Samuel Burton do as well. One of the most poignant scenes of *His Natural Life*—and one that evoked a strong reaction from Clarke’s readers— involves the tragic overlap of these two seeming opposites. Sylvia visits Point Puer, a convict settlement for juveniles near Port Arthur where she encounters two young boys. “Billy,” she learns “never had no mother” and Tommy’s mother is “at home” in England (381). After she kisses the boys and departs, the two “babies” pray, “Lord, have pity on we two fatherless children!” (382) and jump off a cliff to escape prison brutality. Their appeals to Sylvia about their motherlessness and their appeals to God about their fatherlessness present an interesting counterpoint to the lost child trope, for they indicate that the most pressing torment of their lives is not the lash, but the absence of parental affection. As I’ve suggested above, this problem is absolutely central to the four novels I’ve discussed: in these few fictions of settlement, the parentage of Magwitch, Estella, Reuben Hillyar, Charles Hawker and his unnamed illegitimate half-brother, Dawes, and Rex are either unknown, suppressed, or in question. If these characters index “generational disjunction” like the lost child figure, then they anticipate the difficulty of

establishing a lineage of “Greater Britain” and of anticipating a brilliant Anglo-Australian future race.

The figure of the guilty convict is the innocent child’s reverse, both “lost” though the former is “socially dead” and the latter is simple innocence gone astray (*His Natural Life* 122). Dickens and Kingsley’s novels build a duality between guilty adult and innocent child into the family story by presenting them in opposition, but in the end, all three writers unsettle this binary by tracing criminality to the failure of the family and the failure of “Greater Britain.” *Great Expectations* and *His Natural Life* in particular problematize youth, for if the orphaned Pip’s bildungsroman integrates him into society, Magwitch’s story begins with a wandering, parentless existence and ends with the ultimate ejection from society: a sentence of death. *His Natural Life* breaks down the binary even further in Dawes who, like Tommy and Billy, represents both the innocent lost child and the socially dead convict. As such, Australia’s convict past threatens to overtake its Greater British future, though as least in doing so, it holds Britain responsible for her “infanticide.”

Chapter 5:

A “Curious Political and Social Experiment”: Catherine Helen Spence’s Feminist Greater Britain and the Politics of Race

As I suggested in chapter four, the colonial writers I examine in this dissertation respond in two ways to the question of “Greater Britain” and its relation to Victorian family. On the one hand, writers like Henry Kingsley and Marcus Clarke depict families disintegrating as a result of settler historical conditions like convictism and dismissive metropolitan attitudes toward the settler colonies. In their stories, Australia’s convict past threatens the future development of the Anglo-Saxon family. On the other hand, colonial writers might capitalize on the theoretical possibilities of new environmental conditions by predicting the evolutions of normative family structures. Where modifications of the Victorian normative family pose a continuing danger to the theoretical basis of “Greater Britain” in Clarke’s work, Catherine Helen Spence’s *Handfasted* (submitted for publication in 1879 but first published in 1984) shows that new family structures can benefit a burgeoning Australian nationalism as well as the larger structure of “Greater Britain.” If “Australia is a special place where ‘prophecy’ better than history can best describe the particular character of a unique polity” (Veracini, “Historylessness” 279) as I discussed in my last chapter, then Spence’s prophecy foretells radical social changes almost unimaginable in Britain. Spence challenges the transhistorical value of the normative Victorian family in the interests of social progress for the entirety of the Anglo-Saxon world by experimenting with a settler feminist utopia. She intimates that colonial modifications to metropolitan culture and norms—chiefly with regard to marriage and sexuality—serve the best interests of the “Greater Britain” by proposing alternatives to constrictive marriage practices and the exploitation of

women. In her vision, a form of trial marriage practiced in a fictional lost Scottish colony revolutionizes relations between men and women, as well as the entire structure of “Columban” society.

I would also argue that *Handfasted*'s radicalism on gender and sexual matters is compromised by a more mainstream commitment to a racist politics of settler colonialism. Indeed, *Handfasted* illustrates how settler ideology pervades even the most fringe-radical evocations of Western feminist, liberatory, and utopian politics. In representing her feminist utopia in settler space, Spence advances women's rights at the expense of indigenous peoples and advocates assimilative reproductive technology as violent erasure of native customs and beliefs. Columban colonial modernity becomes a guiding light to imperial progress itself, and Spence's vision of a limited imperial heterogeneity a boon to a greater unity of “Greater Britain.”

I. Settler Innovation, Fiction and Utopia

While Clarke is perhaps the most widely known nineteenth-century Australian novelist, Spence has remained relatively obscure outside of Australia's borders. Her lengthy career as a novelist, journalist, Unitarian preacher, and political candidate—among other things—mark her as one of the most accomplished and important women writers of nineteenth-century Australia. Indeed, one scholar has suggested that given her philosophical breadth of knowledge and her interest in politics, law, economics and social reform (Thomson, Introduction to *Handfasted* ix), Spence had the potential to become the George Eliot of Australia, though ultimately the literary society of Australia was not substantial enough to encourage her artistic development (Bennett). Her marginalization in twentieth- and twenty-first century scholarship until very recently may have come as a result of the fact that she was not wealthy, never married, and was, of course, a

colonial writer whose reputation pales in comparison to metropolitan literary giants like Dickens (Thomson, Introduction to *Handfasted* ix). The fourteen-year-old Spence emigrated from Scotland to South Australia in 1839 just three years after the founding of the colony and died roughly seventy years later in 1910. She was thus present throughout the colony's "infancy" and lived through the shift toward self-governance in the 1850s and the federation of the Australian colonies as the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. The breadth of her experience in the colonies was formative to her writing career. The roughly forty years she spent there prior to writing *Handfasted* gave her a concrete understanding of the possibilities (and limitations) of settler innovation, as well as a sense of Australia's changing relation to Britain. Spence's settler understanding thus infuses her utopian romance.

In addition to her journalistic contributions to the Adelaide newspapers *The Register* and *The Observer*, Spence wrote a number of novels at least partially set in the colonies. The most successful of these novels, *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia During the Gold Fever* (1854) was, like *Tender and True: A Colonial Tale* (1856), *Mr. Hogarth's Will* (1865), and *Gathered In* (1881-82), written in a realist mode influenced by writers like Jane Austen. *Clara Morison* features emigration, and in Helen Thomson's view, ultimately "champions colonial life" (Introduction to *Catherine Helen Spence* xvi). Its fictional author Margaret Elliot also sketches out a means of keeping "Greater Britain" together, arguing near the conclusion of the novel that "The English government will find that the surest way to keep her colonies is to leave them very much to act for themselves" (Spence, *Clara Morison* 396). Margaret—a spinster who transparently espouses Spence's own ideas—thus promotes a balance between Australian nationalism and a more transnational maintenance of Anglo-Saxon familial ties. Spence's corpus reiterates this model in slightly different permutations throughout her career.

Realism was, however, not her only style of representation nor even the one that best captures her ideas about settler potential. Thomson argues that Spence “epitomizes that central nineteenth-century concept of progress; she was consciously and deliberately utopian” (Introduction to *Handfasted* x). I would suggest, then, that her two utopian works, *Handfasted* and the novella *A Week in the Future*, which was serialized in the *Sydney Centennial Magazine* between 1888 and 1889, most clearly realized her political position on the colonies and their relation to a “Greater Britain.” All of her fiction was political, but *Handfasted* in particular moved into a sustained critique of existing social structures, their effects on women, and the manner in which the settler components of “Greater Britain” might offer a corrective to the limits on women’s civic participation and labor.

Over the course of her career, Spence had the opportunity to mix with a variety of influential writers and politicians. During an 1865 trip to Britain where she met a number of famous Victorian Britons including Eliot and John Stuart Mill, Spence gained admission to the Ladies’ Gallery of the House of Commons expressly through the help of a “Sir Charles Dilke, Professor Pearson’s friend” (Spence, *Autobiography* 437).⁸⁴ This Charles Dilke was, of course, the self-same British writer I discuss throughout this dissertation. As her novel reveals, by the 1870s Spence was familiar not only with the man himself, but also with his popular and oft-reprinted *Greater Britain*. She loosely models portions of her protagonist’s travels on Dilke’s own and, of all the writers I have discussed in this dissertation, she is the only one to actually use the phrase “Greater Britain” in the language of her novel. Indeed, the concept of “Greater

⁸⁴ “Professor Pearson” is Charles Henry Pearson (1830-1894), who served as professor of modern history at King’s College, London and later Trinity College, Cambridge. He tried farming in South Australia between 1864 and 1866 when Spence may have first met him, and moved permanently to Australia in the early 1870s, becoming a prominent Australian politician and writer.

Britain” offers an important theoretical lens for *Handfasted* and *A Week in the Future*, as well as for Spence’s brand of feminism.

In *Handfasted*, Scottish-Australian narrator Hugh Victor Keith first learns from his grandmother that a ship full of Scottish emigrants, including one of his ancestors, departed for North America in the spring of 1745 in a settlement plan that had developed out of the late-seventeenth-century failed Darien scheme.⁸⁵ The colonists were seen putting in to port at Virginia and Jamaica but subsequently disappeared, never to be heard from again. After hearing this interesting story, Hugh sets out on a year-long world tour where—of course—he chances upon the lost colony of the Scottish settlers located somewhere in the American West.⁸⁶ Cut off from global developments for approximately 130 years, “Columba” woefully lacks material evidence of progress, but Spence presents the fictional lost colony as a utopian space for *social* progress through the radical feminist transformation of marriage and the state. Her settlers have intermarried with an indigenous group and reinvented marriage to include a probationary period of “handfasting” where couples live as if married for a year and a day before deciding whether they wish to confirm their relationships more permanently with marriage. If they do not, the couple parts unstigmatized by their sexual experience and can take on new handfasting partners.

⁸⁵ The Darien scheme was an attempt by Scotland to establish its own settler colony in the Panama isthmus in the 1690s. Its failure—the result of disease, poor planning, and starvation—has been cited by some historians as fomenting the 1707 Act of Union which ended Scotland’s governmental autonomy and consolidated England’s imperial power in the British isles. See, for example, David Armitage’s “Making the Empire British” (1997), p.58-59.

⁸⁶ There is some critical disagreement over the possible location of the colony in part because of the vagueness of detail Spence includes as well as the fact that her protagonist seems to traverse vast distances in singular sentences of the novel. Helen Thomson’s introduction to the 1984 publication of *Handfasted* identifies the location as somewhere in Central America (viii), and elsewhere I have suggested that this location is in the American southwest or Mexico (a forthcoming essay in *Victorian Settler Narratives* [2011]). As the protagonist Hugh discovers Columba on a trip on foot from San Francisco and returns to San Francisco after leaving Columba, it is perhaps reasonable to assume that the American West is more likely what Spence had in mind.

Spence further disassembles the traditional system of inheritance and legitimacy by allowing the children of such partnerships equal, if not superior, social positions. It is understandable, then, that when Spence submitted the manuscript of *Handfasted* to *The Sydney Mail* in 1879 hoping to win a £100 prize, she was informed by the judge that her novel “was calculated to loosen the marriage tie—it was too socialistic, and consequently dangerous” (Spence, *Autobiography* 456). Spence’s frank treatment of serial monogamy and her failure to criticize it no doubt was largely responsible for the manuscript’s rejection and the fact that it remained in obscurity until 1984 when the first and only edited version was finally published.

Spence’s novel engages with an important nineteenth-century discussion on the social function of the settler colonies. As Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper argue in *Tensions of Empire* (1997), nineteenth-century missionaries, educators, and doctors sometimes imagined settler colonies as “laboratories of modernity” where “experiments in social engineering” could take place (5). These experiments might range from reconfigurations of legislative structures and the extension of the franchise to various strategies for the management of indigenous populations. The common depiction of settler space in colonial discourse as empty or inhabited by nearly extinct races that would be easily supplanted by Europeans—the *terra nullius* I discussed earlier—made colonies like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand all the more inviting for social experimentation. Spence’s own South Australian Adelaide was just such an idealistically planned space supposedly free from the taint of transported convicts. Yet despite the imagined freedom to start from scratch, the colonies could never realize “controlled conditions” for social experiments (Zemka 440), given their variable geographic conditions, the multiple classes, nationalities, and races of emigrants, and the persistent presence of indigenous peoples among other things.

Fictions of settlement thus provided space for the imagining of a range of possibilities for idealistically planned colonies that might maximize Anglo-Saxon potential,—one important side effect of which was the imagining of divergent modernities between metropole and settler colony. These settler colonial imaginaries helped produce what Sue Zemka has termed “the myth of idyllic expansion,” a strain of utopianism that saw the process of settlement as relatively unimpeded by local conditions and settler spaces as ripe for social experimentation (440). Speculative utopian fiction—an increasingly popular genre in the last several decades of the nineteenth century—frequently capitalized on this affinity with settler colonial imaginaries. Settler imaginaries were similarly predicated on spatial and temporal distance from metropolitan Britain, Arcadian pastoralism, and exoticized or romantic difference. Thus, Anglophone nineteenth-century utopias often are set in fictional lost or former British colonies.

Given that “[c]omparative social analysis is the substance of all utopian novels” (Bowman Albinski 15), and given the type of comparative work that writers treating “Greater Britain” were doing in order to consider the viability of this global imagined community, the “Greater British” imaginary and the utopian mode were bound to overlap. As an example of such overlap, Anthony Trollope’s *The Fixed Period* (1882) was set in a fictional British colony in the South Seas similar to New Zealand. Notably, the novel was set in 1979-80 and, like Spence, Trollope was interested in what kind of innovations the settler colonies would generate in the future. As I show in chapter 1, he envisions a colony that plans to euthanize all citizens at the age of sixty-eight (which was also Trollope’s age when he wrote the novel) so that the elderly are not a drain on the nation’s resources, thereby demonstrating a concern about what newly independent settler colonies would do with their freedom. In response, Britain reclaims the newly independent Brittanula by military force and Brittanula becomes a crown colony again

under the rule of an appointed British governor. Though such imperialistic behavior does not sit comfortably with Trollope, he nevertheless reestablishes metropolitan norms and law as the essence of a “Greater British” totality. Similarly, Edward Bulwer Lytton’s speculative *The Coming Race* (1871), also briefly discussed in Chapter 1, describes the unnamed narrator’s discovery of an underground colonizing species derived from the same Aryan origins as Britons. The narrator explores their social, political, and linguistic difference, but their crucial similarity to Britain is that the “An” species engages in ongoing settler colonialism that may pose a threat to the Anglo-Saxon world if they expand their settlements above. Like Dilke’s version of “Greater Britain,” the structure of the An’s underground empire is loosely-affiliated and familial, approaching an unofficial federation.

As both Bulwer Lytton and Trollope’s novels indicate, speculative utopian fictions of the mid-Victorian period anticipate future political possibility through the paradigm of settler colonialism. The function of utopian fiction has gone beyond comparative social analysis to trace the effects of a globalizing world on national development and question what national sovereignty means in relation to a larger imperial totality. Spence’s unpublished novel fits squarely within this mid-Victorian tradition of writing. As in Bulwer-Lytton’s novel, the geographic location of Columba is vague, and this ambiguity speaks to the ultimate purpose of the novel. Because the setting is abstract, Columba theorizes the possibilities inherent in settler colonialism itself. The North American setting is perhaps peculiar coming from an Australian writer, and I will suggest below why such a setting might contribute to Spence’s racial politics as well as her views on marriage. Among other benefits, the choice of North America enables Spence to turn fictional Columba into an imaginative recreation of the founding of the Australian colonies on more idealized terms. Initial separation gives the colony breathing space to take

aspects of metropolitan life and modify them to fit the needs of a small, isolated community of emigrants.

Speculative utopian fictions like Spence's provided quasi-ethnographic accounts of social, political, and cultural differences through the eyes of visiting travelers often as a way of criticizing contemporary British culture. As I have indicated above, Spence's narrative offers up the colonial experimentalism of Columba as a cure for constrictive metropolitan marriage practices. At the same time, *Handfasted* lauds the interconnectivity of the Anglo-Saxon, English-speaking, and ultimately British imperial world. Though early to be considered a "New Woman" novel proper, *Handfasted* anticipates many of the discursive strategies that later nineteenth-century New Women novelists used, including the argument that women's rights and sexual freedom would help Anglo-Saxon women act as nation- and empire-builders (Jusová 181). Spence's feminist utopia reveals how vital feminism was to the consolidation of a global imperial "family" and to a burgeoning rhetoric of a "Greater Britain."

Though Spence's *Handfasted* "does not purport to be a book of travels" like Dilke's *Greater Britain*, its Australian narrator Hugh Keith nevertheless presents his story as an account of his travels through Columba, California, Utah, New York, and England—many of which were destinations in Dilke's travel narrative (323). Even as the novel ethnographically examines contingent cultural differences across these spaces, it attempts to sketch out cultural and linguistic continuities as the basis for a larger shared sense of "Greater Britain." Spence had also addressed this "Colonial Question" several years previously in an essay for *Fraser's Magazine* published in October 1877. Signed merely "By a Colonist," her "Australian Federation and Imperial Union" argues for the vital importance of the colonies to Britain's global position especially in light of competition from other European powers. Spence explains that dealing

with the question of colonial representation in the British parliament was a first step to cementing British global preeminence.

... Canadians, Cape Colonists, and Australians are in effect Englishmen transplanted to new conditions which have only partially modified their original character; and if by any means their distant offshoots could be represented together with the parent stock, so as to form of the British Empire one homogeneous whole, capable of united, prompt, and effective action, we should feel how strong is our kinship, and should derive strength from the various qualities which each section has developed in its different circumstances. (526-7)

Taking a cue from Dilke, Spence reiterates his claim that despite emergent national characters and new racial “types,” the “English element” was predominant (Dilke vii). Race and family ties remain central to her vision of “Greater Britain.”

Yet “Australian Federation and Imperial Union” also evidences a tension, later repeated in her novel, between the imagined “homogenous whole” and the “various qualities” that make each “section” distinct. Spence’s later utopian romance, *A Week in the Future*, reveals a similar tension over whether the colonies replicate British culture in the antipodes. In its opening pages, the Australian narrator wonders about what the future will bring for the empire:

Was there to be federation or disintegration? Was the homogeneous yet heterogeneous British Empire to be firmly welded together, or were the component parts to be allowed peacefully to separate and form new states? Was the *régime* of unrestricted competition and free trade and individualism to be kept up, or were these to be exchanged for protection and collectivism? (1-2)

The narrator determines to answer these and other questions by sacrificing the last year or two of her life in Australia for a week in Britain one hundred years in the future. In 1988, she learns that Britain is destined to lose its “Colonial and Indian Empire,” though “As in the case of our ordinary families, the children have become independent. They still love their parent State, and honor her; but they do not depend on her” (53). As in *The Fixed Period*, political separation seems inevitable.

Colonial independence is markedly important to Spence, though it is balanced by the fact that economic interdependence and political ties have been replaced with a more “natural” imperial economy of affect characteristic of “Greater Britain” discourse. Indeed, like the liberal thinkers I discuss in my introduction who insist that “separation” does necessarily spell an end to the Anglo-Saxon global family, the narrator of *A Week in the Future* reiterates the importance of shared language and culture:

The English-speaking communities were still mindful of the fatherland. War having ceased all over the world, the alliance for peace or war which was held to be the main colonial bond in the nineteenth century was not needed; but the feeling between England and her daughter States, including the great Republic of America, was of the friendliest. Literature and laws, manners and customs, history and traditions were identically similar. (117)

In describing this loosely-affiliated “Greater Britain” as having “[i]dentically similar” societies and cultures, Spence abandons the sense of diversity within unity with which she opens the novella. *Handfasted*, in contrast, dispels the notion of an identically similar family of Anglo-Saxon nations. There, Spence fuses a clear investment in a unified empire to a sense of the importance of diverse modern identities as they were emerging in Australia and other colonies.

Colonists, she argued, were far from being an “inferior set of people” defined by their “*parvenu* social position” (526). Rather, Spence’s notion of imperial unity relies on the fundamental premise that divergent colonial evolutions produce new ideas and modes of being that contributed to the strength and progress of a global settler empire.

Handfasted experiments with this notion not in Spence’s own familiar South Australia, but rather in the entirely fictional North American Columba. There, the lost Scottish settlers settle into a small valley alongside an indigenous group, and wall themselves in to escape the depredations of the Spanish. Unlike the maintained metropolitan-colonial connections that define Australia’s development, Columba’s civilization develops independently, though the colonists do not wholly throw off their sense of identification with Britain. Crucially, Spence stresses that Columba’s evolutions are a testament not to Scotland, but to Britain. Spence’s colonists had departed Britain for the New World in the spring of 1745 (15), at a time when the Jacobite Rising was imminent, as was the 1746 Battle of Culloden, which struck a decisive blow against Scottish nationalists and created for many Highlanders long-lasting resentments. The Columbans do in fact keep several political pamphlets against the Union of Parliaments in their minuscule library alongside Shakespeare, Bunyan, Dryden, and Milton (154), yet their almost ubiquitous illiteracy suggests that these pamphlets do little more than date their emigration. Longlasting negative sentiment against the English is not part of their collective political imaginary.

Indeed, Spence dispenses with the notion of a distinct Scottish racial or national identity in *Handfasted* in favor of a unified British culture. Hugh’s Scottish-Australian grandmother, seemingly a mouthpiece for Spence herself, argues that the Union of Parliaments was a “great blessing to Scotland” and helped end the “degradation of the old nationality” in favor of a unified

British national identity (19). Hugh's grandmother, like Spence herself, is a Scottish emigrant to Australia, and her age is a testament to the accretion of her knowledge and the authority of her experience. She models Anglo-conformity, in which the mixing of Scottish and English elements does not produce a hybridized Anglo-Scottish culture. Rather, Scottish national identity—and by extension the racial differences that came to define Highlanders resistant to Union—becomes subsumed within a larger British identity. The grandmother looks forward, in fact, to an eventual end to Irish nationalism too, and thus total peace and contentedness within the British isles (24).

Spence does not treat her Scots as internally colonized and oppressed subjects either. Spence's representation of Keith's grandmother imitates in some respect the position she takes in *Mr. Hogarth's Will* (1865), where Jane, one of the Scottish protagonists, believes that when fellow Scots see themselves as occupying a colonized subject position, they simply demonstrate an inferiority complex. Spence writes,

Jane was very cosmopolitan in her ideas, both by nature and by education. Her uncle had always had more pride in being a Briton than a North Briton, and never had fired up with indignation at Scotland being included or merged in England. She did not think Scotchmen intrinsically more capable than English [...] Scotch and Irish people are apt to be afraid that they are looked down upon, and are too often on the look-out for slights to be resented [...]. (3: 85-6)

The more productive position, Spence indicates, is one that abjures a limited Celtic subject position in favor of the more cosmopolitan and self-confident identity that the English exhibit. As an isolated colony, *Handfasted's* Columba cannot realize this cosmopolitan position, but the

Columbans do build a sense of independent national identity through social innovations that have evolved from the best aspects of Britain.

Like other pseudo-anthropological accounts of cultural difference, *Handfasted*'s representation of utopia plays with the temporal "allochronism" that largely marks the practice of ethnographic accounts of otherness. Allochronism, the denial of the contemporaneity of the subjects of study to the West, or as Johannes Fabian has famously defined it, "denial of coevalness" (31-2) is evident in contemporary accounts of "primitive" and "savage" indigenous cultures in Australia and North America, static Asiatic cultures, degenerate Oriental civilizations, and even undeveloped settler societies. In all of these, spatial or cultural difference is reconfigured as temporal difference, and colonial "others" generally located at some point in modern Europe's developmental past. In this same vein of temporal dislocation, Spence's Columban settlers respond to primitive conditions by resuscitating the primitive, ancient Scottish institution of handfasting. Finding that there are not enough settler women for men to marry, the young men of the colony began living opening with "the heathens [who] could not understand our Christian marriage" (199). Founder Marguerite Keith proposes primitive handfasting as a solution to this immorality because it will legitimize these relationships and give the settler men time to teach these women Christianity.

This social atavism may have suggested the American West to Spence as a prime location for her Columban settler "experiment" in part because Mormon polygamy was already reconfiguring marriage in the Utah territory and drawing the attention of writers like Mill and Dilke. Dilke links the American "Far West" to "a fast increasing party who would leave people to be polygnists, polyandrist, Free-lovers, Shakers, or monogamist, as they please" (123), but of all these groups, he suggests that Mormons are in fact the "most successful of all pioneers of

English civilization” (122). Polygamy, moreover, is essential to their success as settlers because they move to uninhabited areas to escape the repression of their beliefs and begin the work of domesticating raw territories for the settlers that will follow. According to Dilke, they are “the forerunners of English civilization—planters of Saxon institutions and the English tongue” (121) and furthermore, Dilke argues that given their success, “it would be an immediate advantage to the world that they should be driven out once more into the wilderness, to found an England in Mexico, in Polynesia, or on Red River” (122).

Dilke had, in fact devoted considerable space in *Greater Britain* to a discussion of Utah Mormons and Spence responds by devoting an entire chapter of *Handfasted* to Salt Lake City in which she compares the social ramifications of their respective marriage practices.⁸⁷ But where Dilke saw Mormon polygamy as democratizing,⁸⁸ in Spence’s view, the marital practices of Mormons are perhaps more extreme and certainly more socially regressive than the developments of Columba. Spence seems very interested in Mormons, though Hugh and his newly handfasted partner Liliard Abercrombie characterize the Mormons as merely “backward” (ms. 361). Both Hugh and Liliard assume that the expanding powers of the United States will rein in these divergent marriage practices, just as Britain will no doubt force an end to handfasting when Columba eventually reestablishes connections with the “mother country.”

⁸⁷ The 1984 version of *Handfasted* edited by Helen Thomson remains the only published version of the text available. Because of her decision to omit the chapter “Salt Lake City” in its entirety from the novel because of its “unnecessary prolixity” (ix), I refer to a copy of the manuscript version of this chapter furnished to me by the State Library of South Australia. I maintain, in distinction from Thomson’s view, that this chapter is essential for contextualizing Spence’s views on settler innovation. Since it suggests the antithesis of Columban progressive development, it suggests a measure of danger involved in allowing disconnections.

⁸⁸ In Dilke’s view, polygamy is democratizing since “all the wives, and consequently all the children, are equal before the law” (122).

But where Mormons are engaged in primitive marriage practices, Columba transforms ancient Scottish tradition into the building blocks of a wholly modern and utopian society. In so doing, Columbans assert settler colonial modernity and coevalness, and in fact represent a possible future for British domestic life. Nowhere is Columba's modernity so apparent as in the institution of handfasting itself, which is represented as both a primitive antecedent to modern marriage and the natural endpoint of social progress. Spence's version of trial marriage was based on an ancient Scottish tradition of handfasting, and the manuscript of the novel includes a footnoted excerpt from Sir Walter Scott's *The Monastery* (1820) depicting the practice (Thomson, "Afterword" 372). Yet at the same time, Keith's grandmother declares in the final lines of the novel that "society is not prepared for [handfasting] yet, though maybe when you are as old as I am, I'll not say what will happen" (361). Though drawing on ancient custom, Columban handfasting enacts rational, progressive, and feminist social changes that are, moreover, anticipated as part of what the British Empire itself must undergo at some point in the future to truly advance.

Columba's other defining features are similarly cast both as relics of a British past and evidence of developing modernity. In the opening pages of *Handfasted*, Hugh imagines the lost Scottish colonists evolving an entirely distinct society, though it is one defined in part through their removal from a historical narrative of intellectual and social progress. As his later experience confirms, the colonists are deprived of later eighteenth-century European developments, including "assaults of science on the one hand, and biblical criticism on the other [...] and with no French Revolution or German philosophy to undermine so much of the faith of the educated people" (26). This allochronism produces a sense of temporal dislocation for Liliard who, unlike her fellow Columbans, longs to see the outside world. When Hugh departs

Columba with her and the couple travels to San Francisco, he remarks that his prediction has come true, for San Francisco, the epitome of modernity, quite literally seems to “plung[e] her out of the eighteenth-century civilisation into the nineteenth” (296).

Despite Columba’s isolation from late eighteenth and nineteenth-century intellectualism, Hugh uses nineteenth-century ethical theory and social philosophy to characterize Columban political and social formations. Hugh identifies socially progressive Columba as “utilitarian” and as a socialistic society that realizes Owenite socialist-utopian ideals, where community interests are upheld over individual ones (234-5).⁸⁹ Where the outside world’s social changes are guided by a variety of factors and constraints including “crowding millions” (121), Columba’s social arrangements are rationally determined in the interests of the inhabitants alone in a testament to Enlightenment principles of rationality (Thomson 237). The inclination for progress, it seems, is innate within the Anglo-Saxon race and—as in Dilke’s description of the Utah Mormons—emerges regardless of location and connection to the outside world.

II. Settler Modernity and its Role in Greater Britain

As Thomson writes, *Handfasted* “was written quite consciously as an experimental speculation on an alternative historical model of social evolution” (“Afterword” 364), and it is

⁸⁹ *A Week in the Future* refers specifically to Robert Owen (1771-1858), the founder of cooperative and socialist movements who had enacted a real philanthropic social experiment in New Lanark in the 1810s and also founded the utopian community of New Harmony in southern Indiana (Claeys). Spence’s “Owen Associated Home” (16, 20) is a testament to the fact that his communitarian socialism was revived in the 1880s and 1890s as an alternative to more radically revolutionary Marxist socialism (Claeys). Spence’s Columban community is referred to as a “Happy Valley,” which Thomson read as a reference to Samuel Johnson’s *Rasselas* and its “paradoxical Happy Valley demonstrating man’s persistent discontent even in a utopia of his own making” (365). I would argue that Spence’s use of “Happy Valley” may alternatively be a reference to Owen’s New Lanark social experiment, which was also called the “happy valley” throughout Europe (Claeys).

one where shifts in gender and sexual relations structure most other evolutions. In Columba, handfasting allows women equal rights because they are not stigmatized by a sexual double standard, ends prostitution, and allows for a respectable position for the children of unmarried parents. The re-envisioning of family, moreover, transforms the state into an egalitarian structure invested in communal interests. The implications for the settler colonies themselves are that former and current colonies like the United States, Australia, and fictional Columba in many ways instantiate progressive possibilities that would simply be impossible within metropolitan Britain. Though many Columban developments smack of atavistic reversion—the degeneration of aesthetic sensibilities, the absence of humor, and nearly ubiquitous illiteracy—the Columbans clearly have the advantage over the United States, Australia, and Great Britain with respect to the state’s protective treatment of children and social norms that produce gender and sexual equality. Liliard’s acknowledgement that the Commonwealth of Columba is a “curious political and social experiment on a small scale under the most favourable circumstances” defines white settler societies as naturally forward-moving in spite of their separation from Britain (334). They are imbued with historical roots in their “mother country,” but also with enough autonomy from British history to outstrip metropolitan progress in some limited respects.

Utopian experimentalism and settler colonial equality thus become the basis for Spence’s comparison of Columban, U.S. American, British and Australian modernities. Hugh’s journey through Columba, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, New York, England, and Scotland furnishes him with the opportunity to assess these English-speaking geographies and examine the wide range of social and cultural possibilities they suggest for the future of the British Empire.⁹⁰ The United States, according to Hugh, is bustling and flashy, materialist and racially diverse.

⁹⁰ Hugh visits other locations, including Japan, China, Italy and France, though these are not subject to extensive disquisitions in the same manner as other English-speaking countries.

Spence's England is cramped and constricted by a system of "hereditary pauperism" and crime (333). Australia, in contrast, is a quieter more open version of England, more freeing of the individual and more racially homogeneous than the United States. Helen Thomson and Nancy Bowman Albinski identify Australia—the place Hugh departs from in his journeys and ultimately returns to with his new Columban wife—as *Handfasted's* real utopia, in contrast to Columba (Thomson "Afterword" 365, Bowman Albinski 28). If Spence elevates Australia above other settler colonies, it is because, as Hugh says of Melbourne, "the people here [San Francisco] seem faster or perhaps more American than our Victorians, and we have not so many nationalities" (278). Australia is quite literally considered whiter than the United States, and that imparts its utopian status in Spence's view.

Yet in spite of these comparisons, *Handfasted* highlights competing English-speaking modernities in order to suggest that heterogeneity within the settler empire can catalyze productive changes across "Greater Britain" and divergent settler practices suggest alternate modes of social organization to sister colonies and the mother country herself. In *Mr. Hogarth's Will*, Spence also suggests the importance of the settler colonies in social innovation. Australia, she shows, is not too wedded to a social system, and thus capable of making electoral reforms that were simply impossible in Britain. Because of the newness of the Australian colonies' right to self-governance, the rules dictating political participation were still being mapped out and could push much further than Britain's "hereditary" system could allow. Similarly, the emigration of her two female Scottish protagonists to Australia suggest that the colonies could give these two women occupational opportunities unavailable in the "mother country."

Australia's social and political flexibility serves as a model for the even more progressive Columba. The defining practice named in the title *Handfasted*, offers an alternative to Western

marriage practices that deny women moral and legal rights and place upon them the onus of sexual virtue. Indeed, the colony accepts handfasting in part because of founder Marguerite Keith's unhappy marriage. When Marguerite's husband, a Calvinist minister, dies en route to the settlement, the opportunity arises to abandon patriarchal oppression by enabling his widow to determine many of the rules of the new society. One of the few written texts available in the colony is Marguerite's journal, written in French for privacy and unreadable even to the few literate nineteenth-century Columbans. Hugh translates significant portions of her journal, inserting them in his own account of Columba in order to detail women's difficulties in eighteenth-century Scotland. One of the more difficult of these problems, Marguerite observes, is in the social alienation unwed mothers experience in Scotland. Handfasting, by contrast, allows the victims of "cruel seduction and desertion" (202) a respectable social position.

Their children, too, are allowed a respectable position, and if neither parent claims a child of a handfasted partnership, it is labeled one of "God's bairns" and, as Liliard says, is "brought up different from the rest of us" (56). The revolutionary treatment of parentless children bears a striking contrast to Clarke's fatherless convicts in *His Natural Life*. Where fatherlessness contributes to an anti-developmental view of progress in Clarke's work, the "God's bairns" receive an education and social position far superior to their fellow Columbans. Though Columba is egalitarian in most respects, these children alone are taught how to read and write, and they alone become doctors, nurses, ministers, teachers, civil servants, and judges (56-7). If the socially dead convict stands in for the stunted development of colonials abandoned by their metropolitan family as I suggest in chapter four, the development of Spence's children is a testament to colonial independence. Moreover, Columban children contrast sharply with England's "children of the State" (331), who Liliard sees at a Foundling Hospital and a

workhouse. The latter leave her “depressed beyond measure” (332), and she is struck by the fact that the Columban state assures a social position for “deserted or neglected children” (332) instead of England’s “hereditary pauperism” (333).

Columban settlement allows the reframing of metropolitan limitations, resulting in an experimental reinvention of social and gender relations that would be impossible “at home.” But the novel also concludes by suggesting that Columba’s feminist social arrangements would be more or less impossible to reproduce on a larger scale for as Hugh argues in response to Liliard’s desire to enact social change elsewhere, “Vested interests in any large complex society fight to the death against every social reform” (334). Social forces like “the principles of free trade and the liberty of the subject” would prevent many of the socialistic aspects of Columban society from being applied in Australia or England (334). In fact, Hugh suggests that the size of “Greater Britain” is part of the problem, for “the social organism is not compact and proportioned, but with great excrescences and devouring hollows, and when you would smooth down here and fill up there, it is as if you tried to stem the ocean with a mop” (335). Under such conditions, the egalitarianism engendered by Columban family reorganization seems impossible within “Greater Britain.”

Nevertheless, Hugh does reflect on the systemic inequities to which he had been previously blind, and Spence’s solution to the problem of systemic change is to model change in individual affective relationships. In lieu of changes to the entire “social organism” of the British Empire, Hugh’s handfasting to Liliard—and their later marriage—serves as the chief means of applying the lessons learned from Columba’s experiment. Indeed, Liliard argues in response to this problem, “We must act together, we two, Victor. We know what other people do not know, we know that these things are not necessary—surely that ought to help us” (335).

Furthermore, Liliard's dissemination of ideas to a select group of trusted individuals assures her that Columba's lessons will not fall into complete obscurity even if Columba itself remains separate from the rest of the modernizing world.

At the close of *Handfasted*, Columba itself remains a closely-kept secret. Because its social changes are so stark and distinct from other evolutions across the British Empire, the Columbans rightly fear that if either Britain or the United States annexes Columba, they would forcibly end the practice of handfasting or, as in the case of Utah Mormons, put economic and legal pressures on Columba until the Columbans themselves are forced to dissolve their own progressive social arrangements. Both U.S. and British imperialisms are represented as oppressive of divergent family institutions, and Spence's central complaint as depicted in the fears of Columba returning to the British fold seems to be that local distinctiveness and Anglo-Saxon social progress might be hampered by an imperial stranglehold.

Yet if Columba is to be faulted for anything, it is that in its isolation from the rest of the world, it embodies the classic failing of many utopias that advance to semi-perfection and begin to statically occupy that position. While Columba's social developments would have been impossible if there had been no separation from Britain, Hugh suggests that the cross-pollinations between Australia, the United States and England produce an Anglo-Saxon global modernity. With reference to the United States' and Australian technological progress, which are a far cry from Columban stasis according to the narrator, "All the difference was made by the constant and close contact of the newer colonies with all the civilisation and progress of the world" (121). For Spence, Columba shows both the limits and potentials of settler colonial separation.

In spite of Spence's affirmation of divergent evolutionary tracks for the colonies and the intra-imperial communication that engenders these developments, she uses the figure of family reunion to reconnect Columba with the settler empire. The trope of family reunion unites these variant and creative modernities in a transnational imagined community of English-speaking peoples. Where Clarke's *His Natural Life* undermines the trope of family reunion by refusing to allow its protagonist Dawes to either recognize or benefit from family connections (see ch. 4), Spence represents the vast spaces of empire as knowable through the intimacy of family reunions.

The story of the lost Scottish colonists is first introduced by Hugh's grandmother, who recalls her own grandmother's account of their departure from Scotland in 1745 and notes that the leader of the expedition was one of Hugh's ancestors. Thus, even before Hugh discovers the colony, he engages in the imagining of a "Greater British" community. This kind of family imaginary, I would suggest, resonates with what Spence would later write in *A Week in the Future*, where her first-person narrator—again a spokesperson for Spence's political views—learns that the Britain of the future is more bounded so that "enterprising young men" no longer expand their energies toward entrepreneurial projects in the colonies. She responds,

It is difficult for me to conceive of a state of society where different members of families were not scattered abroad. With my own limited family connections I had relatives in Scotland, London, Victoria, New Zealand, South Australia, Canada, Canary, the West Indies, the United States, Ceylon, and India, China and Fiji—not to speak of others in houses of business trading with these and other distant parts. It appears a sad come down for Imperial Britain. (53)

Clearly the mass migrations that writers like Newman saw as a threat to the Anglo-Saxon family are, for Spence, the connective tissue that held “Greater Britain” together and a testament to its greatness.

Hugh’s imagined global community is made manifest through the trope of a coincidental family reunion in a manner similar to Rufus Dawes’s encounters with his cousin and half-brother in Tasmania. In happening upon Columba’s “Happy Valley” during his world travels, Keith discovers a distant cousin with the same name as himself in a meeting of some considerable symbolic significance. Spence was clearly more invested in the romantic possibilities of a utopian settlement than a realistic depiction of global travel, yet as Thomas Vargish argues, coincidence in Victorian narratives can also be read not as the failure of realism but as a sign of providence (9). Such chance reunion had precedents; coincidental family reunions, as Hilary Dannenberg argues, proliferate in nineteenth-century fiction in its euphoric (as opposed to tragic) form with notable exempla including Jane Eyre’s reunion with her cousins the Riverses, and Oscar Wilde’s parodic treatment of familial rediscovery in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (406).

From a transnational perspective, this narrative strategy is an attempt to establish a transnational, transoceanic system of racial identification, though of course it is under considerable pressure from racial, cultural, and political diversification.⁹¹ Eighteenth and

⁹¹ Political diversification includes the extension of the franchise to much larger portions of the populace in the colonies than in the “mother country.” For many Britons, democracy posed a threat to traditional social structures, Victorian investments in individuality, as well as the soundness of government. Spence’s Columba in some ways makes a mockery of democracy by disallowing voting rights to its most educated citizens and instead allowing the illiterate political power. In *Handfasted*, Hugh says, “This sensible, intelligent, well-bred people appeared in every way to be superior to their rulers. Was this really the outcome of democratic institutions? Nowhere in the world was there such equality of conditions as I saw here in Columba, but as we have seen in America and in the Australian colonies, democracy does not choose the wisest and

nineteenth-century family reunion stories organize British experience of settler colonies, from Moll Flanders's accidentally incestuous marriage to her American-born half-brother to Spence's *Clara Morison*, whose middle-class emigrant protagonist is forced to work as a domestic servant in Australia only to discover that she has been living next door to cousins who can elevate her condition. When such coincidental reunions transpire in transnational contexts, they serve to emphasize intimate interconnection in spite of the vast distances that constitute imperial space. Whereas Clarke uses the coincidence of family reunion—its failed recognition or misrecognition—as a testament to social breakdown in “Greater Britain,” Spence uses coincidence to point toward familial links woven throughout the global Anglo-Saxon imagined community.

The contrived meeting of two Hugh Keiths in *Handfasted* juxtaposes their two ways of living, each reflecting back to the other the effects of their respective environments. But at the same time, their common heritage allows Australian Hugh's nearly immediate acceptance into Columban society with their mutual assumption that each has some responsibility and loyalty to the other. Because of this family relationship, Australian Hugh is accepted into Columban society for a period of three months. While this family obligation is perhaps compromised by the fact that Australian Hugh falls in love with and eventually marries Columban Hugh's handfasted “bride” (37), the plot is developed as a family drama made possible by the fact that family ties shrink the globe to a manageable size and remake the settler world in the image of an intelligible if at times conflicted unit. The resulting fantasy of familial connections in the most

the best of citizens. Democracy thoroughly carried out, as we have hitherto seen it practiced, tends to abridge the sphere of Government action, and to make people fussy in a narrow sphere” (84). See Dilke's chapter on “Victorian Democracy” in *Greater Britain* for a comparative discussion of the philosophical basis for democracy in the United States and Australia, and how it was seen to refashion national character.

unlikely places makes the world immediate and knowable, the symbolic opposite of the othering fictionalizations of colonized peoples.

This familial “Greater Britain” is perhaps best demonstrated by Spence’s description of the Australian Hugh’s engagement to Liliard. Sent via transoceanic cables, Victor’s message to his family “traveled all through America across the Atlantic to England through Europe, Asia and through Australia, and now the answer has come back by the same route and here we know how they feel” (291). Feeling alleviates the frightening dispersion of imperial space as it is transmitted through a modern technological invention. As I note in my introductory chapter, transoceanic cables revolutionized the Victorian conception of space, such that an “‘imagined’ political community on a global scale” (Bell, “Dissolving” 553) was possible. As Spence makes clear, a global community of emigrant Britons was solidified by the interrelation of technological progress and the emotional connections it facilitated.

Hugh’s discovery of Columba and his subsequent journey through the United States show how nineteenth-century technological developments—including both railroads and telegraph cables—are fast reuniting the disparate elements of the Anglo-Saxon family of nations. In some sense, the eighteenth-century loss of the Columban settler colony might itself be seen to figure Britain’s most important colonial loss: that of the United States. Indeed, in Hugh’s explanation of the global historical changes that have transpired since the Columbans isolated themselves in the Happy Valley, the crux of the development is the replacement of the so-called “First” British Empire—the American colonies—with South Asian, African, and Australasian colonies:

Britain made up for the colonies she had lost by planting others as flourishing and as full of promise in all quarters of the world. The Great Indian Empire had been built up from a few trading stations of the East India Company, South Africa,

Australia, New Zealand had been added to the old colonies in the West Indies and to the British possessions in Canada. The population of Great Britain and Ireland had been trebled at home since the Scottish adventurers had gone forth, besides having colonized a Greater Britain abroad, and the industrial progress of the country had multiplied perhaps tenfold the productive powers of the population.

(52)

As Spence demonstrates, the Americans pose a threat to British dominance given their similarly colonial relationship to territories of pioneering settlers like the Utah Mormons, and Hugh suggests that the U.S. could potentially annex Mexico, Canada, and possibly Columbia as well.

Yet as Hugh and Liliard journey through California, Utah, and New York on their bridal tour of Greater Britain, burgeoning U.S. imperialism appears as less of a threat to British power and more of an extension of it through the dominance of English language and culture. Even though the United States is heterogeneous and includes a multitude of nationalities and racial groups, it, like Columbia, is governed by what Dilke terms “the English element,” which “has given language and history to that land.” Dilke further argues in *Greater Britain* that “America offers the English race the moral directorship of the globe, by ruling mankind through Saxon institutions and the English tongue. Through America, England is speaking to the world” (vii). Similarly, Spence’s Hugh notes a close Anglo-Saxon kinship that includes the United States. He writes of Liliard, “I was content [...] to watch the development of her nature, and her gradual adaptation to the manners and customs of a civilisation which had worked all through the English-speaking world with the exception of the lovely valley of Columbia” (309).

III. Race and Anglo-conformity

Even as Spence offers a transnational form of cultural and linguistic identification that embraces some internal diversity, *Handfasted* points toward a supplementary racial basis for this identification, masked though it is by the race-mixing of the Columbans. Racial mixture in Columba and the heterogeneity of emigrant nationalities Lilliard and Hugh encounter in the United States seemingly proclaim modernity itself to be diverse and inclusive, and neither Dilke nor Spence stress the importance of racial purity in their visions of the British imperial future.

In fact, Spence deliberately critiques Americans who see mixed-race Columbans as somehow *not* Anglo-Saxons. As I suggest in chapter four, some Britons viewed Anglo-Australians as racially degenerate by virtue of their distance from Britain and their proximity to aboriginal Australians and other racial groups. This view was premised on the Lamarckian presumption that environmental influences are passed on to future generations, and certainly Spence believed that environment was far more important in determining future prospect than heredity,⁹² though she does not subscribe to the degenerative view of settlers' race in *Handfasted*. Spence is in effect defending her own Australian identity when she defends the mixed-race Lilliard. She is at pains to indicate that discriminatory language premised on non-coeval accounts of human development—Lilliard is characterized as “savage,” “semi-civilized” and “an untaught half-savage” by New Yorkers (311, 313)—fails to account for Lilliard's unique perspectives on art and culture.

Like some of her contemporaries, Spence believed that racial “admixture” had historically bolstered England's national and imperial might. In *A Week in the Future*, Spence

⁹² For example, see her essay on “Heredity and the Environment” (1897) in Helen Thomson's edited *Catherine Helen Spence*. This view is also an important reason behind her work in support of foster care and boarding out, which I discuss below.

writes that British dominance was specifically a consequence of racial mixing within the British Isles: “England had reached her old pre-eminence by being open to all-comers. A larger mixture of races than any continental nation possessed, had evolved a composite character with many of the best qualities of each ...” (112). This view was in keeping with contemporary Victorian notions of race espoused by such writers as Anthony Trollope and Matthew Arnold. Rather than conceiving of the world strictly in terms of color, race could be broken down into hundreds of minute classifications in the nineteenth-century, and Anglo-Saxonism itself was viewed by many as a hybrid product of multiple races mixing together: Celts, Saxons, Normans, Danes, and Teutons amongst others (R. Young 17). Working out of a lengthy tradition that can be traced back at least as far as Daniel Defoe’s *The True-Born Englishman* (1700), Spence suggests that English racial heterogeneity is a point of pride that speaks to the strength of England over other European, and especially German, powers. Michelle McFarland argues that a similar celebration of race mixing is implicit within *Handfasted*’s depiction, which in her view is “somewhat enlightened for the time, if patronising and imperialistic” (42). McFarland further views Spence’s depiction as giving

a positive eugenic spin to the way in which these Columbans are perceived. Their racial heritage and their environment have produced a happy, healthy population consistent with Spence’s later belief in the idea of ‘Scientific Meliorism,’ an alternative to the view of many feminists [...] of ‘social purity’ as the means of achieving an improved society. (42)

But what McFarland calls a “positive eugenic spin” in fact enables an insidious brand of settler racism. As Patrick Wolfe has argued, the primary logic of settler colonialism was elimination for the purposes of territorial expropriation, and the fictional discourse on

miscegenation was consistent with the logic of elimination whereby the indigeneity of native populations could literally be bred out of them, thus dispensing with rival claims to land (“Land” 867-8). This logic structures Spence’s *Columba*. Liliard acknowledges that the “savages” “had a fair grievance against the white settlers, who at first were aggressive and cruel” (66), yet this concession is countered by relatively weak native resistance. Instead, the indigenous people “first and last gave us much trouble till we made them one with us, and those who would not abide, we thrust forth” (59). The reduction of indigenous choice to either territorial removal or assimilative marriage is a clear show of settler force, and in keeping with settler colonialism’s primary strategy of elimination.

Settler racism plays itself out in the twentieth-century Australian technologies of what Wolfe has termed “structural genocide,” which is defined by the “concrete empirical relationships between spatial removal, mass killings and biocultural assimilation” (“Settler Colonialism” 403). The nineteenth-century politics of race mixing in settler colonies as opposed to that within the British isles were more complicated. As I indicate in all of my previous chapters, aboriginal Australians play a marginal role in fictions of settlement if they play any role at all. Popular and fictional narratives of settlement often dealt with the problem of interracial attraction, sex, and marriage by eliding the presence of indigenous peoples altogether. Even when they were included, aboriginal peoples were largely explained away as near extinction or as being subsumed within the larger population through interracial marriage and sex.

This discourse was also consistent with Dilke’s views on “Greater Britain,” for as he writes, though “mixture with other people had modified the blood, I saw, too, that in essentials the race was always one” (vii). In the last decades of the nineteenth century, many writers including Spence sought to redefine Anglo-Saxonism in terms of culture, ideals, and institutions

instead of race in an attempt to ensure the viability of Anglo-Saxonism in “an Anglo-American world being transformed by immigration” (Kramer 1323). Thus the mixing of racial groups came to be seen by Dilke and many of his contemporaries as a fundamentally assimilative process when it pertained to settler spaces, especially the United States, Australia, and Canada. The Columban inhabitants of Spence’s “Happy Valley” are themselves no longer wholly white, since handfasting had facilitated mixed marriage between the early Scottish male settlers, who outnumbered their female counterparts, and indigenous women, who as “heathens” were not appropriate candidates for Christian marriage.

Under the egalitarian auspices of giving native women “some rights,” trial marriage seemingly protects them from sexual predation and allows time for their religious conversion before the consecration of marriage, but more importantly is it justifies exploitation through difference using gender as a tool (42). The connection between whiteness and masculinity and between indigeneity and femininity demonstrates a power hierarchy overdetermined by gender and race. Spence reifies this hierarchy in the story of Columba’s founding, a myth of cultural harmony through a personal story of love and romance. This tale makes palatable the mixing of indigenous peoples and settlers through the story of Liliard’s ancestors Ralph Abercrombie and Palahna, a romanticized indigenous woman who helps Ralph escape from captivity among the “Indians.” Like the U.S. American mythos surrounding the historical Pocahontas, Palahna is the tropically archetypal sexualized and nurturing native woman whose pairing with a white male signifies the relative hierarchy of their races. The politics of this foundational mixed union are further revealed by the fact that the “intelligent and affectionate savage” heroically rejects her tribe and converts to Christianity (64). As such, the narrative describing the origins of handfasting acts as what Mary Louise Pratt terms a narrative of “anti-conquest,” or a “strateg[y]

of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony” (7).

This formation suggests, though perhaps unwittingly, that the function of mixed marriages in Spence’s novel is not primarily to advocate for racial diversity and heterogeneity within “Greater Britain.” Indeed, Liliard, who tells the story to Hugh, specifically indicates that any “brag about her story being in favour of the mixed blood is nonsense” (68), and that the story is instead about “constancy and fidelity to bride and bairn” (68). Handfasting therefore operates as a repressive technology for the management of indigenous populations—a means to facilitate their assimilation and ultimately to destroy a competing civilization under the auspices of cultural harmony. This becomes evident in Hugh’s description of the descendants of Columban mixed marriages, who are a “fine looking race” with “not a low type of face amongst them all” though they are “a shade or two darker naturally than their kin in the old country” (81, 86). Though Hugh notes the influence of indigenous blood in the Columban “race,” nowhere is there a person of “pure Indian blood though there were many who had a very large admixture of it with the Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian” (81). In a clear echo of settler extinction discourse, the absence of fully indigenous peoples is attributed to the fact that the natives “turned out more delicate than the settlers though the mixed race was perhaps the wiriest of all” (93).

Liliard herself bears the traces of mixed ancestry, yet Hugh claims that “her skin was not nearly as dark as that of a Spaniard” (32); thus by embedding her racial identity within the spectrum of European race, he virtually erases her indigenous ancestry. The villains of *Handfasted*, Sam Peters and Ninian, on the other hand, are referred to throughout the narrative as treacherous half-Indians and half-breeds who resist Anglo-conformity. Other characters with large admixtures of “Indian” blood are either criminals themselves or ignorant men easily

swayed by the more intelligent, nefarious mixed-race villains. In the delicacy of the “pure” natives and the strength of the “half-breed,” Spence marries the “romance of extinction” with “the specter of the ‘half-caste menace’” which would replace extinction discourse as the nineteenth century wound to a close (Wolfe 872).

In an instance of what Gayatri Spivak terms, “white men saving brown women from brown men” (287), Hugh facilitates further whitening of Liliard by competing with Ninian for her affections and winning them. Hugh appreciates those Columbans who, like Liliard, have seemingly moved beyond their indigenous forbearers to exemplify the most advanced of the new, emergent “race,” which is little different from “pure” Anglo-Saxon. The success of the practice of handfasting manifests in the degree to which non-white racial characteristics are made invisible, with characters like Liliard passing for some version of white. Indeed, the entire premise of Spence’s advocacy for racial admixture is its assimilative premise that Anglo-Saxon “race,” which is already conceived as an amalgamation, will dominate and absorb weaker native characteristics. Failing that, aberrant savagery can be socially subjugated, since characters like Ninian barely exist within the margins of society and those like Sam Peters are wholly ejected from it.

Wolfe’s argument that American Indians and Aboriginal peoples in Australia were the subjects of similar assimilation policies goes some way toward explaining why Spence’s idealized portrait of race-mixing is set in the American West or Southwest (867). Indigenous groups on both continents were both subject to the same policies, but to Spence, indigenous North Americans may have fit her Anglo-conformist model of marriage more easily. White Australians viewed aboriginal Australian peoples as “the absolute antithesis of progress and civilization” (Brantlinger, *Dark* 117; cf. ch. 1). Native American groups, on the other hand,

frequently received more romantic treatments, and though Spence argues that American Indians “were not on the whole such interesting savages as Fenimore Cooper described” (66), they may have nevertheless seemed to be better candidates for assimilation than contemporary Australians believed aboriginal peoples were. Whatever the case, assimilation of indigenous peoples was, along with expectations of racial vanishing, a primary strategy across “Greater British” settler space.

Spence’s ideas about how to treat “children of the State” present an inkling of where the intersections of racism and the developing paternalistic welfare State might go in twentieth-century Australia. As Liliard argues,

We cannot tell what might come of [deserted or neglected children] if they were separated from the depressing and demoralising companionship of their fellows. We know that the surroundings here are stifling to ambition. The parish children in Scotland are all boarded out with respectable poor people and show no marked deficiency in intellect or morals. We are all too apt to attach too much to heredity. (333)

Spence makes a strong push here for a foster care system as an alternative to workhouses, and indeed she strongly advocated this same system in her own career. After 1872, Spence worked with the Boarding-Out Society and according to the Society’s first annual statement, their intention was to find homes for children among “the better class of our labouring population” in which they will receive “the advantages of education with religious and moral training, and to restore them as far as possible to that family life which is the institution of our Great Creator Himself” (“Boarding-Out Society” 3). Though the group did not target aboriginal children, it doesn’t take much of a leap to see how this same logic might be—and was subsequently—

applied to aboriginal Australians, who supposedly had no clear family structures (C. Hall 64). As the *Bring Them Home* report indicates, from 1910 and 1970, between one in three and one in ten aboriginal children were removed from their families in order to facilitate assimilation, many of them placed in abusive foster families or sent to boarding or mission schools (Human Rights 37).

While this may not be Spence's intention, her treatment of "children of the State" in her feminist utopia is suggestive. Indeed, if Columba's "God's bairns" might signify the possibilities of colonial independence in their removal from traditional family, they also serve as a haunting reminder to twenty-first century audiences of the kind of logic that justified removing the aboriginal "Stolen Generations"—and also U.S. American and Canadian Native American children—from their families. Indeed, Spence's efforts were part of an increasingly global movement for child rescue,⁹³ which culminated in her participation in conversations about the "children of the state" at the World's Congress Auxiliary of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 (Spence, "Address" 460).

IV. Conclusion

Only after its relative success at assimilating indigenous women is handfasting extended to relationships between the settlers. From a response to "savage" indigeneity, the primitive, ancient tradition of handfasting transforms into a newly liberating practice. Thus Spence represents progressive, utopian, and feminist social possibilities as the product partly of cultural genocide. What is so jarring about such a representation is that this underlying premise of

⁹³ See Shirley Swain, Margot Hillel, and Belinda Sweeney's "Being Thankful for their Birth in a Christian Land": Interrogating Intersection between Whiteness and Child Rescue" in *Re-Orienting Whiteness* for more on child rescue as an international phenomenon.

feminist utopianism is far less fantastic than other elements of Spence's utopia. Indeed, assimilative policies toward indigenous populations designed to destroy indigenous families dominated settler colonial practices in the United States, Canada, and Australia throughout the late nineteenth century and continuing long into the twentieth (Wolfe, "Land" 867).⁹⁴

Considering this history of "Greater Britain," then, the most striking aspect of Spence's depiction of handfasting is its frank presentation of colonial management as central to her feminist project. She not only confirms Margaret D. Jacobs's claim that participation in the colonial project became a way for many white women to surpass their own marginalization within white societies (456), but also illustrates the degree to which utopian feminism itself was embedded in a settler colonial imaginary.

Spence herself escaped marginalization through engagement with a multitude of political and social issues in Australia's development and by the time of her death she was known as the "Grand Old Woman of Australia" (Magarey). Though not initially a supporter of suffragism, as the nineteenth century wound to a close she joined the ranks of feminists seeking women's rights and even became the first Australian woman to stand for a political office (albeit unsuccessfully) in 1897. Her attempts and the attempts of others to attach to the Australian colonies a sense of progressive modernity were realized when it came to women's rights, for white women were enfranchised in South Australia in 1894 and in the newly federated Commonwealth of Australia in 1902—a full twenty-six years before women won voting rights in Britain (Grimshaw 559). Yet in the very same document conferring Australian white women's rights, the Commonwealth

⁹⁴ These practices included, among others, aboriginal child removal, boarding out and military schools for indigenous children in the U.S., Australia, and Canada, and arranged marriages between aboriginal women and white men in Australia.

Electoral Act of 1902 simultaneously denied all immigrant people of color and indigenous Australians—both men and women—the right to appear on voter rolls (Grimshaw 559-61).

As recent historical work has shown,⁹⁵ such couplings of egalitarian social movement with simultaneously-enacted racist social policies were ubiquitous across Britain's former and current settler colonies. As Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis argue, "In settler societies, the advancement of racially/ethnically dominant women was predicated on assumptions of the inferiority and backwardness of indigenous and minority women" (16). This relation, I argue, was part of a larger process of producing a narrative of a global and imperial *white* modernity: a "Greater Britain." Spence critiques British gender norms and advocates for divergent settler modernities as productive components of a global modernity, yet these aspects are overshadowed by the more cohesive transnational structure of Anglo-Saxonism her novel espouses. If, as Spence and Dilke suggest, some diversity of evolutionary possibility can be embraced within "Greater Britain," it is nevertheless a restrictive, assimilative and hegemonically *white* possibility. It is also one that, as Spence uncritically depicts, expansively colonizes territories. Spence's *Handfasted* reveals the degree to which white feminist progressive fantasies of social transformation in the settler colonies depended upon a suppressed, racialized other. Without the settlement process and its logic of elimination, the utopian possibilities of Columba would not exist, nor would the conditions that generate feminist modernity itself.

⁹⁵ See, for example, Iveta Jusova's *The New Woman and Empire* (2005), Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis's introduction to *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (1995) and Vron Ware's *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History* (1992). Also, see Margaret Jacobs "Maternal Colonialism" (2005) and Patricia Grimshaw's "Settler Anxieties, Indigenous Peoples, and Women's Suffrage in the Colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Hawai'i, 1888 to 1902" (2000).

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