Fictional Systems: 
Mass-Digitisation, Network Analysis, and Nineteenth-Century Australian Newspapers 
Katherine Bode

Among the extensive volume of fiction published in nineteenth-century newspapers, some titles appeared only once, in a single publication for a single readership. But many were published multiple times, in various forms and locations, as part of a broad culture of reprinting and repurposing content. Fiction reprinting has been studied for the insights it enables into the social, commercial, and institutional operations and structures underpinning the production and circulation of periodical fiction in this period. As numerous studies have shown, the practice was increasingly formalised as the nineteenth century progressed: unauthorised “borrowings” by individual editors developed into mutual systems of “exchange” and, from the 1870s, companies dedicated to supplying fiction to “syndicates” of newspapers. However, the reliance of such studies on manually searching analogue archives has meant they are based on relatively small and selective samples: whether of the fiction in particular (typically major metropolitan) newspapers, by particular (predominantly canonical) authors, or as recorded in particular (surviving) records of syndication agencies. Now, as with so many other areas of literary and book history, significantly expanded access to periodical content provided by mass-digitisation transforms the possibilities for research.

Based on a sample of over 9,200 extended fictional works, appearing in 257 newspapers, and identified through analysis of the largest mass-digitised collection of historical newspapers available internationally – the National Library of Australia’s Trove Newspaper Database – this article radically revises existing accounts of fiction reprinting in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers, including their connection to global practices and systems. Existing accounts emphasise the dominance of Tillotson’s Fiction Bureau and associated ascendancy of syndicated British over local writing. I demonstrate that Tillotson’s was only one participant among many in the colonial market, and offer a new account of the nature, timing, and effect of its engagement. Previously, the company has been associated only with major city periodicals. I show that it primarily engaged with second tier metropolitan and provincial newspapers, and that this occurred earlier, and more systematically, than has been recognised. The consistent presence of local writing for at least a decade after the arrival of syndicated British fiction refutes the claim that Tillotson’s and other overseas agencies ended opportunities for colonial authors. Moving beyond the practices of known agencies and agents, I confirm a significant shift in syndication practices in the 1890s,
while demonstrating the role of specific Australian metropolitan newspapers in sourcing and distributing fiction for the colonies.

Where my analysis of fiction reprinting in metropolitan newspapers challenges key elements of the established narrative, in turning to the provincial press – which has previously received almost no attention – it reveals an entirely new set of activities and actors. Significantly, I show that provincial newspapers both published and reprinted more fiction than their metropolitan counterparts. Such reprinting involved a range of semi-formal editor- and author-led arrangements. But most extended fiction in provincial newspapers was supplied by an extensive, active, and hitherto essentially unrecognised array of syndication agencies, operating within and beyond the colonies. This new account of fiction reprinting and syndication in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers reveals a significantly more complex, varied, and populated array of processes and structures – local and global – than has been appreciated. It also highlights the extent to which past studies have approached the larger, previously largely-intractable, newspaper archive through the lens of smaller, more tractable ones, and how this perspective has shaped and distorted understandings of colonial literary culture and its connection to the international fiction market.

I Mass-Digitisation and the Fictions of Network Analysis

Of course, digital resources and methods are far from neutral lenses: they institute their own partial view. Periodical studies has been at the forefront of humanities research in recognising such partiality: contributions to the field were among the first to emphasise the large proportion of the archive not digitised, as well as multiple issues affecting access to the contents of mass-digitised collections. However, periodical studies is yet to move coherently beyond acknowledging partiality to identifying its scope and effects, and devising strategies for interpreting results in that context. Indeed, a predominant framework through which the field imagines and increasingly represents engagement with the contents of mass-digitised collections – the network – tends to inhibit rather than enable nuanced historical analysis by obscuring the relationship between model and evidence. Periodical studies’ increasingly frequent encounters with what are inevitably incomplete, though enormous, datasets make elaborating these issues essential as a precondition for this study of fiction reprinting in colonial newspapers, and for clarifying directions in the field broadly.

As already noted, Trove offers the largest collection of digitised historical newspapers internationally. On the date I ceased harvesting fiction for this article (16 July 2015) it made 17,620,635 searchable pages available, compared with 9,728,249 pages for Chronicling America, 11,162,283 pages for the British Newspaper Archive, and 10 million searchable pages for Europeana Newspapers. Although this page count is impressive, based on comparison with historical records I estimate that Trove’s holdings represent approximately one fifth of nineteenths-
For digital periodical research in general, this proportion should underscore the partiality of other major mass-digitised newspaper collections, where the number of pages available is significantly less, even as the number of historical newspapers was considerably more. For the current project it indicates that most Australian newspapers are omitted from my study of reprinting. Despite the substantial gap in the digitised record, based on further historical comparison, I feel confident describing my dataset as broadly representative, with the caveats that South Australian and metropolitan newspapers, those from colonies with smaller populations, and those operating earlier in the century are somewhat overrepresented.

I also believe my method for analysing Trove has identified most of the extended fiction in newspapers digitised at the time I ceased harvesting data. Due to its interaction with features of Trove, my paratextual method is largely unaffected by Optical Character Recognition errors. However, two issues – one arising from the method, the other from collection practices – did affect the type and range of fiction discovered. The first is the necessary limit on the number of paratextual terms used to identify relevant results. “Chapter,” “serial,” “story,” “novelist,” “tales,” “sketches,” and “storyteller” proved very effective, but additional terms would extend the discovery of fiction. Ultimately I had to balance the number of terms used, and their utility, against the finite time available to conduct this study (a condition for any research, but especially pertinent to the task of creating a stable, analysable dataset from an ever-expanding mass-digitised collection).

Discovery of fiction in provincial newspapers was specifically impacted by the patchiness of analogue holdings for such publications and by another, well-known problem for periodical studies: the common exclusion of supplements (where most of the fiction in provincial newspapers was published) from the collection procedures underpinning Trove. These issues, combined with the general underrepresentation of provincial newspapers, mean that my findings understate the presence and reprinting of fiction outside metropolitan centres.

Such an assessment – of the scope of the mass-digitised collection/s investigated, of the means of analysis employed, and of the representativeness of the derived data – is necessary to establish the viability of the large datasets increasingly employed for periodical studies. But the methods for representing and interpreting data also require careful consideration. Given my focus on newspapers that publish the same fiction, network analysis would appear the obvious choice for this project. The reason for the method’s popularity is clear: its depiction of edges (relationships) between nodes (entities) mirrors the established, system-based understanding of print culture. Applied to the extensive datasets harvested from mass-digitised collections, the attractive network visualisations offered by programs such as Gephi appear to bring connections and configurations within periodical culture literally into view. However, at least as it is currently employed in periodical studies – and arguably inevitably for research based on mass-digitised collections –
network analysis inhibits effective engagement with historical evidence. In particular, a focus on network visualisation impedes scholars’ understanding of the evidence available to construct and interpret such models, and creates perhaps insurmountable barriers to recognising and accommodating the evidence that is absent.

Perhaps encouraged by the routine designation of digital methods as “distant reading”16 – perhaps necessitated by a lack of statistical literacy – scholars in periodical studies tend to present and approach the results of network analysis as visual representations that can be interpreted or “read” to discover the operations of historical systems. The most basic way this strategy impedes apprehension of historical evidence is by rendering implicit the decisions and assumptions by which literary data are constituted and arranged. Humanities researchers increasingly recognise data as artefacts rather than facts,17 and algorithms as arguments that should not be black-boxed.18 But presenting network models as visual images – without publishing the data underpinning and produced by them – precludes assessment of these underlying procedures and their effects.

When the data underpinning the visualisation are unavailable, the default position is to accept network connections as categorically meaningful and equivalent. This approach risks mistaking the effects of data construction for historical processes, and is made increasingly likely as the scale of data increases and/or when such data are derived from automatic data mining, including of mass-digitised collections (both situations limit the capacity to confirm the nature of the individual entities and relationships represented). For analyses of fiction reprinting, for instance, assuming the equivalence of connections created by newspapers publishing the same story conflates the multiple possible routes by which a title is obtained: some newspaper editors might have bought the story from the author, others from those purchasing newspapers, or from a syndication agency; others, still, might have “borrowed” it from another newspaper, without payment and with or without acknowledgement.19 While periodical research seeks to understand these underlying processes, the appearance of meaning and equivalence presented by connections in network models serves to deflect attention from the range, complexity, and conceivable contradiction of historical phenomena.

More generally, network visualisations compound the danger of anachronism associated with metaphoric references to the past in terms of networks. As a number of historians have argued, such metaphors risk projecting “contemporary, much faster, networked flows” – most obviously, those of the Internet – onto the historical context.20 Translating metaphor into material form increases the rhetorical impact of this projection, with the sense of immediacy, uniformity, and cohesion presented by network visualisations working against recognition of the specific and variable distances, extended temporalities, and complicated social, economic, and political negotiations involved in nineteenth-century periodical culture.
Although, in the embrace of network analysis in periodical studies, these challenges have not been adequately articulated, individual projects employ various strategies to forestall such misapprehension of the available evidence. When focusing on specific instances of reprinting rather than the large networks arising from the Viral Texts Project, Ryan Cordell offers nuanced insights into the operations of early American print culture.21 Richard So and Hoyt Long distinguish between the edges in their network model and connections in modernist literary culture by carefully delineating their assumptions underlying their data construction.22 Likewise, in her work on nineteenth-century genre formation, Anne DeWitt avoids mistaking the potential patterns arising from data mining for historical processes by reading each of the “thousands” of articles resulting from searching six databases for seven theological titles. Although returning her to the challenge of evidentiary excess that network analysis is intended to overcome, this approach means all 355 articles in her model meet her definition of genre formation (the claim by a reviewer of likeness between two or more titles).23 While all of these projects rely on visual representations of networks – and indeed, where DeWitt identifies the value of network analysis as the “advances in the visualization of data” it offers – such strategies avoid key challenges this method presents to apprehending the available evidence.

They do not, however, counter the more pernicious problem of the representational approach to network analysis: its incapacity to identify and accommodate the effects of evidence not available to be modelled. For a number of digital methods employed in periodical studies, it is sufficient to establish a broadly representative dataset (as I do above) or one where areas of partiality are identified and taken into account in subsequent investigations. None of the above projects provide such an assessment.24 But even if they did, this would not constitute a sufficient basis for network analysis because the method dramatically amplifies the challenges of and potential misconstructions arising from working with partial data.

Network models are contingent on the data available for analysis to an extent that is poor appreciated by humanities scholars, and inadequately addressed by an approach based on visualization. With the exception of geospatial formats, network models arrange nodes entirely according to the proprieties of the available. In a force-directed graph, for instance, algorithms position nodes based on the number of edges they share with others, and their strength.25 As a result, adding new nodes or edges – an inescapable prospect in a field where only a very small proportion of the archive is digitised – will always change the position of all entities depicted, often radically. The considerable gaps in what is available to be modelled in periodical studies mean that network visualisations based on mining mass-digitised collections invariably present fictitious systems: arrangements that are a function of what has been digitised as much if not more so than how a literary historical system operated. Projects that base literary historical arguments on the
structure of network models (for instance, describing the “betweenness” of a particular work, author, or site of publication) ignore this radical contingency and implicitly maintain that all data (or all data conceivably relevant to understanding a particular historical system) is available. This approach reinforces the false sense of completeness – of coherent and self-contained systems – that the visualisation of network models projects.

The apparent completeness of network models obscures another gap in the evidence needed to interpret such structures: of the documents explaining the nature and function of the entities and relationships proposed. Although mass-digitisation is understood in terms of evidentiary excess, it concurrently creates a profound evidentiary imbalance for data-rich literary history, between extensive (though incomplete) information on the contents of books and periodicals, and very limited availability of the documents needed to understand the actors and institutions responsible for creating and distributing those contents. For this project, it is not only that the causal factors underpinning different instances of reprinting are multiple, though they are; the documents needed to determine what cause applied in what cases are usually unavailable: rarely digitised, and for the most part, no longer in existence. Indeed, a key reason Tillotson’s has received so much attention in studies of fiction reprinting is because its archive, though “scrappy” with multiple gaps, is a comparatively “rich” resource in a context where most of the names of syndication agencies, let alone their business activities, are lost to history.

Statistics offer an alternative to a representational approach to network analysis, one capable of identifying and accommodating incompleteness in the data available to be modelled and interpreted. The measures I am referring to are not those built into programs such as Gephi (for instance, graph density, modularity, or weighted degree). These characterise the effects of network modelling on the available dataset; they do not accommodate gaps in evidence. Scientific and social scientific applications of network analysis employ alternative statistical approaches to this end. Measures of probability, for instance, assess the likelihood that stated characteristics of a modelled network would remain true if all data were available, while “forest” networks address questions of causality when the processes underpinning particular relationships are unknown but from a finite set. Such approaches recognise that questions relating to system structures and their dynamics are especially sensitive to data completeness: that even with a representative dataset, for the results of network modelling to serve as a justifiable foundation for argument, the likelihood that they are the products of data availability or of random chance needs to be established, and shown to be low.

Certainly, it would be possible to apply these statistical approaches to characterising and accommodating gaps in data generated from mass-digitised collections, including for this project; and some quarters of the digital humanities are advocating the inclusion of more sophisticated statistical methods into humanities research. But even if periodical scholars developed the
literacies needed to conduct and interpret such measures – and narrowed the form of the questions asked of network models accordingly (more, what are the structural effects of interrupting this type of relationship than, how does this system work) – I do not think network analysis, alone, would support an adequate encounter with historical evidence. The probability measures needed to model systems based on highly incomplete datasets (such as those derived from mass-digitised periodical collections) are at odds with the centrality of documentary evidence to historical argument. Literary historians focus on what occurred and why, not what might have taken place based on a series of assumptions and probabilities. And even if mass-digitisation continues to the extent that probability measures relating to periodical contents could be employed without too many statistical accommodations (a situation that appears a long way in the future if achievable at all), the inevitable distinction between such content and the evidence needed to understand underlying historical processes means that network analysis could only offer part of the methodological toolkit for any study.

In light of these issues, I have not based any of the arguments below on the outcomes of network analysis, nor do I offer any network visualisations. But I do employ the method for specific practical and exploratory purposes. Gephi’s Multimodal Networks Projection feature enabled me to create a more manageable dataset by converting thousands of connections between fictional titles and newspapers into hundreds of connections between newspapers, associated with one another in terms of the number of fictional titles they shared in common. The network models I produced from this dataset showed interesting patterns: for instance, that certain newspapers (such as Melbourne’s Leader) were highly connected, and that metropolitan and provincial newspapers tended to cluster together, with few connections between them. However, in exploring these models I remained acutely conscious of their contingency and partiality: their status as algorithmic projections of an available dataset, describing only the potential effects of historical processes, and excluding most of the actors and enterprises, local and global, implicated in the system I am investigating (not only the four fifths of nineteenth-century Australian newspapers not digitised by Trove, but other colonial and overseas periodicals, authors, syndication agencies, literary agents, publishers, and so on, involved with fiction reprinting in the colonies).

In other words, I treated the connections and patterns proposed by network analysis as potential indicators of reprinting practices, not evidence of them or their meaning. Instead, to construct my arguments, I approached these results with the type of questions that scholars have long asked in literary and book history, and based my answers on forms of evidence the field has traditionally relied upon. If newspapers published multiple titles in common I asked: Who owned these newspapers? What was the physical distance between them? What was the specific sequencing of republication for different titles and did it remain the same over time? I studied
digitised newspaper pages to query: Are page layout and typographical features the same in all instances of publication? Are illustrations – and the same illustrations – present? Is the source of the fiction acknowledged? I searched critical bibliographies and published records of syndication agencies to find out: Who else published this story? How much was the author paid, who represented them, and what other authors did they work with? And so on.

The resulting perspective on nineteenth-century reprinting practices is significantly extended by mass-digitisation and by the exploratory capacities of network analysis. But it is not based exclusively on the contents of a mass-digitised collection and the alignments suggested by a digital method for analysing them; nor is it a comprehensive view. Rather than delineating a literary historical system, my analysis constructs a narrative out of multiple pieces of evidence, providing important insights but also acknowledging multiple dead ends: places where gaps in the evidence (relating to periodical content and/or to the documents needed to interpret it) mean I can go no further.

II Metropolitan Newspapers

In existing accounts of fiction reprinting in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers, the mid- to late-1880s are identified as a period of dramatic change, instituted by the arrival and immediate dominance of British syndication agencies, principally Tillotson’s. Prior to this time, critics agree that no established systems existed for sourcing overseas content. Discussing imported fiction in this period, Toni Johnson-Woods writes that, “how they came to Australia remains a mystery,” while noting the likelihood of piracy, especially of American fiction. Others have described how colonial newspaper editors obtained fiction by contracting with individual British authors, and through “unauthorized ‘borrowings’,” with short fiction more likely to come from local publications, and extended fiction from overseas.

Law ascribes Tillotson’s dedicated involvement with the colonial market to “financial pressures in their home market.” Where the company experienced strong growth in sales to English newspapers from its beginnings in 1873 to the mid-1880s, towards the end of that decade Tillotson’s was compelled “to search more energetically for returns elsewhere … [through] ventures into America, the Colonies, and Europe”. In making this move, Law argues that the agency dealt only with “major city journals”, and the “standard arrangement for works by well-known writers like [Mary Elizabeth] Braddon” was for Tillotson’s “to offer serial rights in a single colony for £75, or entire Australian and New Zealand rights for £100, thus leaving a Colonial editor or agent to sell on copy to other journals.” Paul Eggert concurs with Law’s timing when he argues that overseas “agents … saturated the local market with imported serials” from the mid-1880s, while others join Law in emphasising the particular dominance of Tillotson’s. Johnson-Woods, for
instance, notes that Tillotson’s provided “[n]early all of [the] imported stories” in major metropolitan newspapers.\textsuperscript{39} Scholars also generally agree that the entry of overseas syndicates into the Australian market had a deleterious effect on local literary production. Christopher Hilliard argues that fiction was supplied to the Australian colonies so cheaply by overseas syndication agencies, Tillotson’s in particular, that local literary production was significantly constrained.\textsuperscript{40}

This established account would lead us to anticipate relatively haphazard and minor incidents of fiction reprinting in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers until the mid- to late-1880s, followed by a sudden, and substantial increase and consistency in the practice. The solid grey line in Figure 1, indicating the proportion of titles reprinted among metropolitan publications per year,\textsuperscript{41} shows rather the opposite of this trend: high (though uneven) rates of reprinting prior to the mid-1880s, followed by an overall decline. These results require qualification, however, due to a phenomenon I will call companion reprinting. From the late 1850s, multiple daily metropolitan newspapers established weekly companions. As might be expected – and as the dotted black line in Figure 1 indicates – these jointly owned, and often jointly edited, publications frequently published the same stories.

Most fiction reprinted among metropolitan newspapers prior to the mid-1880s falls into this category of companion reprinted. The daily \textit{Brisbane Courier} and the weekly \textit{Queenslander} were the first to engage in the practice routinely, with a particular emphasis on American fiction.
(Perhaps the editors thought the content of these stories would speak to Queensland’s frontier society; more likely, they felt justified in publishing such fiction for free, due to the lack of American acknowledgement of international copyright.\textsuperscript{42} A number of other daily and weekly companions (including the \textit{Evening Journal} and the \textit{Adelaide Observer} in South Australia, the \textit{Telegraph} and the \textit{Week} in Queensland, and the \textit{Evening News} and the \textit{Australian Town and Country Journal} in New South Wales) also frequently published the same stories.\textsuperscript{43} Still others – among them the largest and most culturally significant metropolitan newspapers – published significant amounts of fiction individually, but rarely, if ever, together.\textsuperscript{44}

When companion reprinting is excluded, rates of fiction reprinting among metropolitan newspapers more closely resemble the established narrative. As the solid black line in Figure 1 indicates, the proportion of reprinted titles increased across the nineteenth century, from under 10% prior to the mid-1880s to between 10 and 20% in the following decade, albeit with a sharp decline in the second half of the 1890s. This period of more extensive reprinting corresponds with the time Tillotson’s supposedly entered and dominated the colonial market, but demonstrates nothing of the dramatic and abrupt shift in fiction reprinting that might be expected. Comparing titles syndicated by Tillotson’s with fiction identified in this study (see Appendix 1\textsuperscript{45}) further disrupts the prevailing account of that company’s activities. The first five instances in this table, occurring between 1873 and 1878, were not organised by Tillotson’s (definitely not for the three titles by Braddon,\textsuperscript{46} and probably not in the other two cases\textsuperscript{47}). However, from 1880, almost all the fiction syndicated by Tillotson’s appeared either that same or following year in one or more colonial newspapers.

Tillotson’s systematic involvement with colonial newspapers from 1880 indicates the company acted offensively rather than defensively in its international expansion. The alignment between the authors published in colonial newspapers prior to 1880, and those syndicated by Tillotson’s after this time, suggests an explanation for this earlier and alternative mode of engagement. Well before Tillotson’s was created, multiple authors later associated with that company were published – and published extensively – in colonial newspapers. In addition to Braddon, in the decade prior to 1875, multiple titles by Wilkie Collins, B. L. Farjeon, George Manville Fenn, James Payn, Charles Reade, and F. W. Robinson appeared in metropolitan newspapers, with a number reprinted two or more times;\textsuperscript{48} the second half of the 1870s witnessed more fiction by these and other authors later syndicated by Tillotson’s including Walter Besant and James Rice, William Black, Eliza Lynn Linton, Justin McCarthy, George Macdonald, Margaret Oliphant, and Dora Russell, again (though less) often appearing in two or more metropolitan newspapers.\textsuperscript{49}

While pirating probably explains early, though much less extensive, appearances by some of these same high-profile British authors in provincial Australian newspapers,\textsuperscript{50} metropolitan
publications frequently published well-known British authors with explicit statements about copyright. Some of these claims regarding the purchase of rights to publication were general – for instance, that the title is “Published by special arrangement with the author,” or that the “Right of republishing … has been purchased by the proprietors” of the particular newspaper – while others were highly specific regarding the extent and nature of copyright – for instance, that it was for Australasia as a whole or in a specific colony; and exclusive or with the right to reprinting. Combined with what Sarah Ailwood and Maree Sainsbury describe as the exceptional adherence of the Australian colonies, of all British dominions, to imperial copyright law, such prominent and prevalent assertions of copyright strongly imply that these well-known British authors were published in metropolitan newspapers under contract and with payment. By 1870, then, and throughout that decade, many of the very authors Tillotson’s would later seek to court were already negotiating extensively with the Australian press, in person or through agents. Instead of waiting until the mid- to late-1880s, and a decline in profits from syndication in Britain, it seems much more likely that Tillotson’s was urged by its authors to engage with the established Australian market from its origins.

The type of newspapers Tillotson’s dealt with also reconfigures its relationship to the colonial market, and explains why its earlier, systematic involvement has been overlooked. Where previous studies have stated or assumed that Tillotson’s worked only with major metropolitan publications, and targeted their analyses accordingly, in fact, the company was much more likely to engage with second-tier metropolitan newspapers. As Appendix 1 details, the South Australian Chronicle was a leading colonial customer of Tillotson’s, as were the Adelaide Observer and the Evening News from South Australia, and the Week and the Telegraph from Queensland. As the 1880s progressed, and especially in the 1890s, Tillotson’s was also increasingly likely to contract with provincial publications, at first the earlier and larger newspapers in this category – such as the Bendigo Advertiser, the Capricornian, the Goulburn Herald, and the Morning Bulletin – proceeding to multiple, smaller enterprises, including the Barrier Miner, the Clarence and Richmond Examiner, the Elsternwick Leader, the Launceston Daily Telegraph, the Launceston Examiner, and the Oakleigh Leader. By comparison, the major metropolitan dailies and weeklies typically associated with Tillotson’s – the Age, the Australian Town and Country Journal, the Illustrated Sydney News, the Leader, the Sydney Mail – published very few titles syndicated by that company.

An exception to this latter trend occurs with what Law calls the “expensive serials” of the 1890s. Tillotson’s paid large amounts for these titles by prominent authors, which were not published in its own Bolton newspaper group. Law argues that this fiction was “purchased particularly or exclusively for the American market”, but as Appendix 1 shows, it was also acquired by major metropolitan newspapers, including the Age, the Australian Town and Country
Journal, the Leader, and the Sydney Mail. Although these major periodicals thereby engaged with Tillotson’s, the company’s primary involvement with second-tier metropolitan and provincial newspapers shows it moved into the Australian market via the same approach it pursued in Britain: by sourcing fiction for newspapers that lacked the resources to pursue content independently. The focus of earlier studies on major metropolitan newspapers provides the obvious, practical reason why this parallel in Tillotson’s activities in Britain and Australia has been overlooked. But arguably, the notorious Australian “cultural cringe” has also played a role, encouraging to the perception that Tillotson’s – as a British company, and despite its provincial position in the home market – would naturally occupy a privileged position in the colonial cultural sphere, dealing only with the most prestigious newspapers.

![Figure 2: Proportion of fiction/unique titles in metropolitan newspapers, 1865 to 1899, by author nationality (excluding authors of unknown origins)](image)

Given the empirical evidence to the contrary, we might perceive this same bias in the widespread view that Tillotson’s entry into Australia immediately ended opportunities for local authors. The assumption that Australian newspaper editors would invariably select the imported over the local product is challenged by the results in Figure 2, indicating the proportion of American, Australian, British, and other fiction published. The solid lines in this graph indicate yearly proportions overall (including titles reprinted a number of times in a single year), while the dotted lines represent proportions of unique titles (a more accurate means of assessing opportunities for local authors, who were less likely than British writers to have their fiction reprinted in
metropolitan newspapers). Although British writing is clearly dominant, Australian fiction has a sustained presence through the 1870s and much of the 1880s, often comprising over 30% of the fiction available and, as late as 1887, 28% of all known fiction, and 33% of unique titles. In other words, for a decade after Tillotson’s entered the Australian market in the late 1870s, and for seven years after the company began systematically to sell fiction to colonial newspapers, Australian authors clearly had opportunities for metropolitan publication.

The trends discussed thus far clearly indicate that Tillotson’s was not the predominant actor in colonial fiction publishing that previous histories have claimed. But understanding what companies, individuals, and practices supplied fiction to colonial newspapers in the absence of this prior explanatory framework presents a challenge. Based predominantly on indexes of major metropolitan newspapers, advertisements in industry publications, and/or surviving correspondence, Law, Johanningsmeier, and others have noted the involvement of various overseas agents and agencies in the Australian market, including the major American enterprises (McClure’s and Bacheller’s), and British literary agent, A. P. Watt. For this latter figure, the concurrence of the titles he syndicated in Britain with their appearance in Australian newspapers indicates that Watt’s role in colonial fiction publication was much more organised and consistent than has been appreciated. It is also clear, based on copyright descriptions in metropolitan newspapers, that Cassells was active in supplying the Australian newspapers market. However, without more information about the specific titles syndicated by these and other agents and agencies, and the terms under which they were contracted, it is impossible to be precise about the extent of their activities, including in comparison with Tillotson’s.

A more general perspective on the syndication industry and its operations is possible by assessing the presence in metropolitan newspapers of fiction by approximately 100 authors, associated by various sources with well-known syndication agencies and agents (the Authors’ Alliance, Authors’ Syndicate, Northern Newspaper Syndicate and W. C. Leng as well as Tillotson’s, McClure’s, Bachelor’s, and Watt). Comparing these 100 or so authors with the rest of the field affirms the established and efficient mechanisms through which syndication agencies operated, in that the average number of titles by associated authors in metropolitan newspapers is considerably higher than for other writers. Indeed, all but two of the top twenty, and many of the top forty, most published authors in colonial metropolitan newspapers was aligned with these particular organisations.

Yet the perceived dominance of these particular agents and agencies in the Australian market is simultaneously challenged by the relatively small contribution that these associated authors make to fiction in colonial metropolitan newspapers, and its decline over time. Figures 3 and 4 compare the proportions of fiction supplied by associated and non-associated authors: the
former overall, the latter for British authors only. The high proportion of fiction by non-associated authors in Figure 3 – with the exception of two years (1891 and 1892) always over 60%, and typically in excess of 70% – is especially surprising given the high average number of titles that associated authors contributed. Although my list of authors is undoubtedly incomplete, and small relative to the size of this publishing context, this result emphasises how much we do not know about the source of fiction in colonial newspapers: what Johnson-Woods describes as a “mystery” before 1870, remains largely a mystery after 1880. Certainly, Figure 3 indicates a situation very distinct from Tillotson’s supplying “nearly all” of the fiction imported into the colonies.

Figure 3: Proportion of fiction in metropolitan newspapers, all authors, 1880 to 1899

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Associated</th>
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<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>1892</td>
<td>20%</td>
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To some degree, Figure 4 suggests a more recognisable narrative. It shows the 100 or so authors associated with known syndication agencies and literary agents supplied the majority of British fiction in metropolitan colonial newspapers, and 70% of that published between 1882 and 1892. However, the subsequent fall in this proportion, to 50% or less, suggests a significant shift in the supply of fiction to the colonies. Though less obvious, the same trend is present in Figure 3, where the overall proportion of fiction by authors associated with these specific agencies falls from 40% in 1892 to 20% at the end of that decade.

Further reinforcing the sense of change in the early 1890s is the resonance between these results and two trends from previous graphs. The first is the decline in the proportion of fiction reprinted among metropolitan newspapers in the second half of the 1890s. As Figure 1 shows,
where 22% of extended fiction in metropolitan newspapers appeared in two or more (non-companion) periodicals in 1895, by 1899 this proportion has fallen to only 8%. The second is the decline in Australian fiction in these periodicals. Although not as definitive as would be expected from existing accounts of overseas agencies saturating the local market, the reduction in Australian writing shown in Figure 2 – from 28% of fiction (or 33% of unique titles) in 1887, to 21% (or 24%) by 1899 – implies a shift in the source of fiction for metropolitan colonial newspapers. The most probable explanation of these combined trends is increased competition in the Australian market from new, overseas agencies. More agencies, syndicating overseas fiction at reduced prices, would logically produce a decline in the market-share of earlier syndicators, while increasing the presence of non-Australian fiction. Lower prices, in reducing the need for metropolitan newspapers to join together to purchase particular stories, would also explain the reduced incidence of reprinting among such publications.

In fact, Elizabeth Morrison has proposed this interpretation already, describing the entry of new overseas syndicators, and growth in competition, as a feature of the colonial fiction market in the 1890s. But her claim that these new companies were American is countered by the national origins of fiction published. As Figure 2 shows, British fiction increased as a proportion of titles in colonial metropolitan newspapers from the late 1880s, while American fiction remained stable, and even declined. Although American companies are known to have syndicated British fiction,
including for Australian newspapers, one would expect some growth in the presence of American titles if such companies constituted the majority of competition in the market. The fact that British authors were responsible for around 60 to 70% of the fiction in colonial metropolitan newspapers in the 1890s suggests some, if not a considerable part, of this increased competition was supplied by British enterprises.

While much about overseas influences on the Australian market in the late 1880s and 1890s remains unclear, the manner in which particular newspapers engaged in fiction reprinting before and during this time offers new insights into the local industry’s operations and structure. Two newspapers – Melbourne’s Leader and the South Australian Chronicle – and three companion publications – the Brisbane Courier and the Queenslander, the Evening Journal and the Adelaide Observer, and in the 1890s, the Telegraph and the Week – emerge as so central to the colonial metropolitan culture of reprinting that, in the available dataset, few instances of the phenomenon do not involve one or more of these newspapers. The fact that these newspapers also published the most fiction overall affirms the importance of reprinting as a means by which metropolitan newspapers accessed content. More specifically, the sequence of reprinting among these papers and others indicates the important roles they played in distributing fiction throughout the colonies.

Table 1: Instances and sequence of reprinting among non-companion Australian metropolitan newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1865-1879</th>
<th>1880s</th>
<th>1890s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total incidents of reprinting</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Published first/simultaneously 12, published subsequently 1</td>
<td>16, 7</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Chronicle</td>
<td>Published first/simultaneously 3, published subsequently 6</td>
<td>13, 24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane Courier and/or Queenslander</td>
<td>Published first/simultaneously 4, published subsequently 2</td>
<td>12, 4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening Journal and/or Adelaide Observer</td>
<td>Published first/simultaneously 1, published subsequently 6</td>
<td>12, 8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph and/or Week</td>
<td>Published first/simultaneously 0, published subsequently 0</td>
<td>6, 9</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 summarises instances of reprinting involving these newspapers, and whether they published first or subsequently. It shows that the Leader routinely published fiction that subsequently appeared in other Australian newspapers, suggesting its editors sourced and sold titles within the colonies, particularly to those newspapers I have described as second-tier metropolitan publications. Most of the reprinted fiction initially published by the Leader was by authors associated above with known syndication agents and agencies. But only a small number of these
titles (one in the 1880s, four in the 1890s) can be tied directly to Tillotson’s. In this respect, the Leader’s position in the colonial culture of reprinting demonstrates the practice Law proposed as standard – for Tillotson’s to sell fiction by well-known authors to a single metropolitan publication, leaving it to distribute rights within the colonies while emphasising that Tillotson’s was not the only company pursuing this approach; the Leader was connected to international syndication networks, not reliant on one organisation for its fiction.

Although involved in almost as many incidents of reprinting as the Leader, until the 1890s the South Australian Chronicle adopted the opposite approach: tending to feature fiction already published in other colonial newspapers. The Leader was its single main source of fiction; but the South Australian Chronicle reprinted titles from a range of other newspapers, including major metropolitan publications (such as the Age, the Illustrated Sydney News, the Australian Town and Country Journal, and the Australasian), smaller metropolitan newspapers (including the Express and Telegraph, the Queenslander, the Telegraph, the Week, and the West Australian). This wide range of sources refutes the view that only major metropolitan periodicals supplied fiction to other colonial publications, while further dismantling existing perceptions of Tillotson’s dominance in the market. Earlier, I identified the South Australian Chronicle as one of Tillotson’s main colonial customers, alone or in conjunction with other periodicals. Here, Tillotson’s is repositioned as only one source of its fiction among other enterprises, including numerous colonial newspapers.

For the companion newspapers listed in Table 1, the fiction they published following its appearance in other local newspapers was typically by high-profile British authors, and often sourced from the Leader. In contrast, the fiction they published first, and then supplied to other newspapers (including each other) was by lesser-known (or unknown) authors. This latter sequence suggests that the Brisbane Courier and the Queenslander, the Adelaide Observer and the Evening Journal, and in the 1890s, the Telegraph and the Week were colonial conduits for cheaper sources of fiction. In this respect, growth over time in the number and proportion of titles first published by these newspapers corresponds with the idea of a structural shift in the sources of colonial fiction in the late 1880s and 1890s. It suggests that these newspapers were contracting with newer fiction syndicators, providing a key avenue through which these enterprises entered the colonial market to compete with, and ultimately to substantially displace, established agencies.

III Provincial Newspapers

The account offered thus far radically expands previous conceptions of colonial fiction reprinting and syndication, indicating much more varied and complex positions within a dynamic system than have hitherto been recognised. The complexity of that system increases considerably when provincial newspapers – regarded by most existing scholarship as uninvolved in fiction publishing –
are included. The multiple, semi-formal and formal systems of fiction distribution discovered in this context – operating for the most part, entirely apart from the metropolitan press – indicate new dimensions of the nineteenth-century circulation of fiction, within the Australian colonies and globally.
As Figure 1 did for metropolitan newspapers, Figure 5 shows the number of titles published in, and proportion reprinted among, provincial newspapers, per year, from 1865 to 1899. Prior to the mid-1870s, provincial newspapers published relatively little extended fiction, and the small amount of reprinting that occurred was from metropolitan (predominantly British, but also some Australian) periodicals. When fiction reprinting among provincial newspapers became more common, as in the metropolitan context some of this activity was between companion publications (although in this case, the trend occurred a decade later and involved only one pair of newspapers: the daily *Morning Bulletin* and the weekly *Capricornian*, which in fact published more titles in common than any other newspapers in my sample).

Even without these companion publications, the solid black line in Figure 5 shows a clear correlation, from the mid-1870s, between growth in extended fiction in provincial newspapers and incidences of reprinting among such publications. Indeed, almost as soon as reprinting began, it became a major – in some periods the dominant – source of fiction for provincial newspapers, regularly comprising around 40 to 50%, and up to 60%, of titles published (in contrast, among non-companion metropolitan newspapers this figure only once exceeds 20%, and is often less than 10). Just as importantly, comparing that graph with Figure 1 (resized here for that purpose) shows that provincial newspapers published dramatically more fiction than metropolitan ones: even though fiction only became a common feature of provincial newspapers from the mid-1870s, this project has discovered approximately 5,200 titles in their pages, compared with 3,800 in metropolitan newspapers. Both findings are hugely important in and of themselves, and bear repeating: fiction publication was more active and interrelated in the provincial than in the metropolitan press, even as discussion of this phenomenon – including its structural features – has focused almost exclusively on the latter publications.

Some reprinting among provincial newspapers resulted from editor- and author-led endeavours, of varying formality. In addition to their shared publications, the *Morning Bulletin* and the *Capricornian* published multiple stories in conjunction with other provincial newspapers, including a number each with the *Armidale Express*, the *Bendigo Advertiser*, the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, and the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*. These titles were typically acknowledged as reprinted from British periodicals (most often *Chambers*) and the majority appeared first, by a few weeks, in the *Morning Bulletin* and the *Capricornian*, although the reverse also occurred. This pattern of reprinting suggests an exchange system, where the *Morning Bulletin* and/or the *Capricornian* were sent to other provincial editors in return for their newspapers. A more formal – though more limited – reprinting arrangement was practiced by the *Goulburn Herald*, at different times with the *Hay Standard* and the *Cootamundra Herald*. The layout and timing of these publications indicates that the *Goulburn Herald* sold partly printed sheets to the other two
newspapers,\textsuperscript{71} while the unattributed nature of these stories – even those by famous authors such as Wilkie Collins – suggests that the \textit{Goulburn Herald} did not reduce this income stream by paying writers or intermediaries for the right to publish and reprint.

Another, semi-formal system of reprinting is associated with an enterprising local author: David Hennessey. As a journalist, editor and publisher, Hennessey had access to the networks required to syndicate his fiction, and did so with at least five titles.\textsuperscript{72} There is also substantial evidence that his ambitions extended beyond placement of his own work, with Hennessey establishing a number of publishing enterprises.\textsuperscript{73} One of these, Hennessey and Harper, advertised itself as “Authors’ Agents, Press Correspondents, Advertisement Contractors, Publishers, etc. etc.,” listing among its services: “The Printing and Publishing of Books, Serial Stories, etc., arranged for in England or the Colonies”.\textsuperscript{74} Despite the advertisement’s claim, with one possible exception,\textsuperscript{75} I have only discovered examples of Hennessey syndicating his own writing. Even so, his success in placing fiction in the provincial press represents a significantly more substantial example of authorial syndication than the only previously identified colonial example: James “Skipp” Borlase’s abortive attempt to establish a fiction syndication agency in the 1860s.\textsuperscript{76}

\begin{table}
\centering
\caption{Summary of fiction syndicates in colonial provincial newspapers, 1877 to 1899}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Years} & \textbf{Newspapers} & \textbf{Newspaper Colony} & \textbf{Titles} & \textbf{National Origin of Titles} \\
\hline
1 & 1877–1892 & 39 & NSW (14); QLD (6); SA (7); TAS (1); VIC (11); WA (0) & 73; Am (17); Aust (39); Brit (8); Other (1); Unk (8) \\
\hline
2 & 1883–1893 & 18 & NSW (3); QLD (0); SA (3); TAS (1); VIC (11); WA (0) & 29; Am (8); Aust (1); Brit (6); Other (1); Unk (13) \\
\hline
3 & 1885–1890 & 9 & NSW (0); QLD (3); SA (2); TAS (0); VIC (4); WA (0) & 15; Am (4); Aust (3); Brit (2); Other (1); Unk (5) \\
\hline
4 & 1886–1893 & 28 & NSW (2); QLD (1); SA (4); TAS (0); VIC (21); WA (0) & 33; Am (8); Aust (0); Brit (22); Other (0); Unk (3) \\
\hline
5 & 1887–1893 & 11 & NSW (8); QLD (2); SA (1); TAS (0); VIC (0); WA (0) & 20; Am (8); Aust (3); Brit (5); Other (1); Unk (3) \\
\hline
6 & 1891–1899 & 45 & NSW (7); QLD (6); SA (6); TAS (2); VIC (23); WA (1) & 50; Am (7); Aust (12); Brit (6); Other (4); Unk (21) \\
\hline
7 & 1892–1899 & 13 & NSW (4); QLD (0); SA (1); TAS (0); VIC (8); WA (0) & 34; Am (11); Aust (3); Brit (13); Other (0); Unk (7) \\
\hline
8 & 1892–1899 & 23 & NSW (0); QLD (0); SA (2); TAS (0); VIC (21); WA (0) & 71; Am (20); Aust (5); Brit (17); Other (5); Unk (24) \\
\hline
9 & 1893–1899 & 13 & NSW (11); QLD (0); SA (1); TAS (0); VIC (0); WA (1) & 28; Am (17); Aust (3); Brit (5); Other (0); Unk (3) \\
\hline
10 & 1897–1899 & 21 & NSW (18); QLD (0); SA (0); TAS (1); VIC (2); WA (0) & 9; Am (1); Aust (3); Brit (1); Other (0); Unk (4) \\
\hline
11 & 1897–1899 & 20 & NSW (9); QLD (0); SA (2); TAS (1); VIC (7); WA (1) & 10; Am (2); Aust (2); Brit (4); Other (2); Unk (0) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}
While editor- and author-led endeavours contributed to the practice, the vast majority of fiction reprinting among provincial newspapers occurred through formal syndicates. In contrast to the metropolitan context, where instances of reprinting typically involved two or three periodicals, provincial syndicates were extensive, encompassing multiple newspapers and titles. Identifying these syndicates is necessarily a provisional exercise (particularly for the 1890s, when stereotype and reprint columns rather than ready printed – largely identical – supplements became increasingly common). However, patterns of reprinting in the available sample indicate at least eleven substantial syndicates operating in the provincial market, summarised in Table 2 (with details, including specific titles, authors, and dates of publication in Appendix 2). Given the large number of nineteenth-century Australian newspapers (particularly provincial ones) not digitised, and the tendency for collection practices to exclude supplements, I have no doubt the number of newspapers involved in these syndicates – and probably the number of syndicates in operation – was substantially greater than I have been able to discern. But even on the available evidence, with newspapers the main source of fiction in the Australian colonies, and more fiction in provincial than metropolitan publications, these provincial syndicates should be recognised as the leading publishers of fiction for nineteenth-century Australian readers.

To my knowledge, the first syndicate in Table 2 is the only one that has been described. Morrison, one of the few scholars to consider provincial colonial newspapers in any detail, identifies this syndicate as owned and managed by Donald Cameron, under the Cameron, Laing and Co. imprint. To Morrison’s excellent account I can add only a little. Although many early and later titles in the syndicate were from overseas (especially America), as Morrison notes Cameron, Laing and Co. focused on local fiction. Morrison emphasises the significance of this investment in colonial writing; but I think the claim could be pushed further, to identify this local syndicate as one of the most prolific publisher of Australian novels at least in the nineteenth, and probably well into the twentieth century. Highlighting the role of newspapers as one of the few avenues of publication for colonial authors, only a small number of the titles syndicated by Cameron, Laing and Co. were ever issued as books. As a consequence, although written by well-known and popular writers of the period, many are missing from the existing Australian bibliographical record. Comparing the sequence of titles published by this syndicate with those in New Zealand newspapers – digitised through Papers Past – suggests Cameron, Laing and Co. operated beyond the Australian colonies as well as between them, and where Morrison proposes that the syndicate ended in 1888, the evidence amassed here suggests it continued beyond that time, until at least 1892.

While I do not know who owned the other enterprises listed in Table 2, their practices, including the fiction they issued, help to characterise the different syndicates, and the provincial
fiction market, in various ways. The most notable dynamic is a rupture in the early 1890s, when Syndicates 1 through to 5 ceased operating and Syndicates 6 through to 9 began. The syndicates in the first group had the same basic format: two partly printed sheets, usually published as a supplement to the newspaper (which was often only an additional two or four pages in total). Supplements typically started with a poem, followed by an instalment of a story and sometimes a short story or two. The remainder was comprised of what Morrison describes, in reference to Cameron, Laing and Co., as “a melange of reprinted material, most of the latter extracted from overseas – chiefly American – magazines and newspapers.” Yet within this standard format, the syndicates demonstrated significant variation.

On the available evidence, they differed markedly in scale, with Syndicates 3 and 5 noticeably smaller than the others. Where most offered a mixture of short, medium and full-length serial fiction, with a preponderance of the latter, Syndicate 2 mainly dealt in short serials (completed in two or three issues). The short stories serialised in Syndicate 2 were predominantly of overseas origin, with the large proportion of unknown authors suggesting unauthorised borrowings from overseas periodicals. But the Australian content incorporated elsewhere in its supplements – in the form of poems and illustrations – implies that Syndicate 2, like Syndicate 1, was of local origin.

Syndicate 4 published no local fiction, and was exceptional in other ways too. Where the other syndicates in this period published one lengthy serial at a time, Syndicate 4 offered multiple serials concurrently, and where the others published the same sequence of titles, but often months apart in the different newspapers, in Syndicate 4, publication occurred within a few days across all periodicals. This clear difference in timing suggests that Syndicate 4 was highly organised from its origins, whereas the other syndicates grew more organically, with newspapers able to join at different stages, receiving the full run of partly printed sheets in sequence.

The authors published by Syndicate 4 indicate that it was closely aligned with the international fiction market of the period. Many of its titles were by the high-profile British writers associated above with known syndication agents and agencies (including titles by Besant, Clarke, Doyle, Fenn, Henty, Quiller-Couch, and Stevenson), and two of its stories – Braddon’s “Like and Unlike” and Caine’s “The Bondman” – were specifically syndicated by Tillotson’s (in fact appearing in provincial newspapers before colonial metropolitan publication). Whether organised from within the colonies or imported, Syndicate 4’s distinct practices and well-known authors quickly won market share, with multiple newspapers transferring to it from other syndicates, especially Cameron, Laing and Co. Yet even with this apparent success, Syndicate 4 shared the fate of the other enterprises in this first group, ceasing operations in the early 1890s as a new group entered the market, either out-competing earlier syndicates, or filling a void left by their demise. Two further syndicates, 10 and 11, began operations in the final years of the nineteenth century.
A number of other features, besides timing, differentiate this second group of syndicates from the first. Where those in the first group traded in partly printed sheets, most in the second offered more flexible reprinting formats, allowing editors to incorporate syndicated contents (for instance, three columns worth for an instalment of the serial story) with their own advertising. Earlier syndicates can be clearly differentiated from each other, but this is less true of later enterprises. Although Syndicates 6 and 10 featured local fiction quite regularly, the others published a more general, international mix of titles, including a substantial number by authors of unknown origins. Movement of newspapers between syndicates also occurred more regularly, suggesting greater competition in the market and the agency of provincial editors.

Of this second group, Syndicates 6 and 10 were probably local. As well as featuring local fiction, the former included a small amount of local advertising on some of its partly printed pages, while the latter incorporated local content among its general interest materials (for instance, an article on the “Improvement of New South Wales Stock” in a syndicate largely comprised of provincial New South Wales newspapers). Syndicates 8 and 9 were probably American imports: both, but particularly 9, featured American fiction, while 8 incorporated advertising for American products and services (for instance, “Genuine Magic Soap,” “Patents” lawyers, and “Murray and Lanman’s Florida Water”). If American, they could be any of the multiple enterprises Johanningsmeier identifies as emerging in the 1890s, but for which little, if any, evidence survives. Based on the contents of the remaining two syndicates, 7 and 11 could be either local or American.

These provincial syndicates present exciting possibilities for future research: confirming local enterprises (beyond Cameron, Laing and Co.) would expand the history of Australian fiction publishing (and displace the longstanding view that this activity did not occur until the late twentieth century); associating these syndicates with specific American or other overseas companies would add an important new transnational dimension to colonial periodical studies and nineteenth-century literary culture broadly. While I hope others might find evidence to support their own arguments in the sequence of titles I have constructed, here we reach the limits of what the extensive sample of fiction used in this study can indicate. As discussed earlier, mass-digitisation of historical newspapers significantly expands access to periodical contents, and offers an important new foundation for research. But this evidence is not complete, or sufficient, in and of itself. The sample I have employed, though representative, is a partial reflection of fiction in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers, fiction that appeared as a consequence of institutional and social configurations and practices that are often not discernible from periodical contents, and only discoverable – if at all – based on other sources of evidence.
Even with many questions remaining, this study profoundly refigures existing conceptions of fiction reprinting in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers. Writing in the *Melbourne Review* in 1878, James Smith described Australian literature as eclipsed beneath “the shadow of England’s mighty and ever-spreading literature”. While this contemporaneous description resonates with claims by subsequent literary historians and periodical scholars, trends in fiction reprinting in Australian newspapers indicate a considerably more complicated situation. At the time Smith was writing, and for at least a decade after, local fiction had a sustained presence in the pages of both metropolitan and provincial newspapers. In the former group, Tillotson’s Fiction Bureau was not the central and dominant influence that has been proposed, but one participant among many in a colonial market where both local and overseas enterprises played active roles.

Nor were metropolitan publications the dominant purveyors of fiction in the colonies: provincial newspapers published much more, supplied by an extensive group of syndication agencies operating in the colonies and beyond. And when international fiction became more prevalent – with British fiction increasingly prominent in metropolitan newspapers and American fiction in provincial ones – this occurred at a time of decline in the importance of reprinting as a mechanism for attaining and distributing fiction in the colonies, and indeed, of newspapers as fiction publishers. Continuing mass-digitisation will present further opportunities to explore the fiction in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers, and the means by which it was published and republished. But the view that British fiction and syndication agencies – let alone a single British company, Tillotson’s – dominated the colonial market and its supply of fiction cannot offer the framework for future investigations.
Bibliography


Notes

1 The culture of reprinting encompassed general social practices such as scrapbooking (Garvey, *Writing*) and was endemic to nineteenth-century journalism, where identifying and reprinting relevant or interesting content was a central part of the newspaper editor’s job. Although “scissor-and-paste” journalism was discussed in a pejorative sense, as Bob Nicholson writes, there was no “clear professional consensus … about how much copying was too much, or how soon was too soon to reprint another paper’s material” (Nicholson, “‘You’,” 275; for discussion of reprinting as a feature of nineteenth-century Australian journalism see Kirkpatrick, *Sworn*).


3 According to Johanningsmeier, this manual approach has yielded critical bibliographies that are “perfunctory and inadequate” for studying fiction reprinting because they tend either to list limited examples of fiction reprinting, or to provide a number without indicating if titles were originally sourced, “borrowed,” or syndicated (Johanningsmeier, “Frank,” 285).

4 Identifying and analysing reprinted content has been a focus of prominent projects in digital periodical studies: Nicholson used keyword searches to identify reprinted American jokes and slang in British newspapers (Nicholson, “Looming”); more ambitiously, the Viral Texts Project employs a text reuse discovery algorithm to identify reprinted passages in multiple genres (“Viral Texts: Mapping Networks of Reprinting in 19th-Century Newspapers and Magazines,” http://viraltexts.org/; see also, Cordell, “Reprinting”; Smith, Cordell and Mullen, “Computational”).

5 Most of the titles considered in this study (98%) are extended due to serialization (publication over at least two, usually many more, editions of a newspaper); some (2%) appeared in a single edition while comprising 10,000 words or more (often much more, with some titles identified in this project amounting to more than 60,000 words in a single, usually a Christmas, newspaper edition). This project also discovered over 7,000 short fiction titles, completed in a single edition and also extensively reprinted. Where these single-edition stories suggest incidental publishing and reading – with content perhaps selected simply to fill a particular number of column inches, and read in a casual manner – the extended stories I focus on imply more deliberation: both editors and readers would have had to commit to a story over an extended period.

The full dataset used in this study, and for the individual figures, is available at: https://katherinebode.files.wordpress.com/vpr_data-and-figures.xlsx. I am in the process of creating a searchable and downloadable database for all of the fiction discovered, which I aim to release in late 2017.

6 These 257 newspapers operated under 324 banners. Although extended fiction appeared in Australian newspapers as early as 1828, I concentrate on the period from 1865 to 1899, when over 98% of titles discovered in this project were published.


8 Such effects include errors introduced in Optical Character Recognition (OCR) rendering of searchable text; quality and zoning issues implicated in the composition of digital collections; and the modelling of contents by search and relevance ranking algorithms and other features of collection interfaces. For early work in periodical studies highlighting the partiality of mass-digitised collections see Mussell, *Nineteenth-Century* and Solberg, “Googling.”
This estimate is achieved by comparing titles digitised by Trove with those listed in the three editions of the *Australian Newspaper Directory* (Gordon and Gotch, 1886, 1888, 1892), and averaging the results. Of the newspapers published at least once a week (the category predominantly digitised by Trove) Gordon and Gotch identify 749, 868, and 647 in these years respectively. In contrast, at the time I ceased harvesting fiction from Trove, that collection contained 142, 161, and 171 newspapers operating in those respective years, equivalent to 19, 19, and 26% of those in operation, or an overall average of 21%. (Note: the total number of digitised newspapers for 1892 excludes West Australian and Tasmanian titles, as these colonies are not included in the *Directory* I have consulted for this period.) For discussion of gaps in analogue holdings of Australian newspapers see Morrison, “Archaeology” and “Retrieving”.

For instance, compared with 647 daily and weekly newspapers available in Australia in 1892 (see footnote 9), or even 740 when fortnightly and monthly newspapers are included (Gordon and Gotch, 1892), Johanningsmeier identifies 15,205 (2,226 daily, and 12,979 weekly) operating in America in 1899 (Johanningsmeier, *Fiction*, 17).

Based on comparison with the three Gordon and Gotch indexes, for most colonies, metropolitan newspapers are almost twice as likely to be digitised as provincial ones. The exceptions are Victoria (where an average 20% of metropolitan newspapers are digitised as opposed to 25% of provincial newspapers) and South Australia (where the average is 62 and 71% respectively). These averages are the extreme ends of another effect of the digitisation process: newspapers from colonies with smaller populations (Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and particularly South Australia) are more represented in Trove than those from larger colonies (New South Wales and Victoria). For the years covered by the Gordon and Gotch directories, an overall average of 40% of newspapers from the former group are digitised, compared with 23% from the latter.

As described in footnote 9, of the newspapers listed by Gordon and Gotch, a higher proportion (26%) are digitised for the final year (1892) than for the previous two years (with 19% coverage for 1886 and 1888). While this result indicates increased coverage over time, the opposite trend is suggested by comparing Trove’s holdings with Rod Kirkpatrick’s totals for provincial newspapers in the colony of New South Wales. In this case, 100% of titles identified by Kirkpatrick in 1850 are digitised, decreasing to 71% in 1860, 37% in 1870, 33% in 1880, and 28% in 1890 (Kirkpatrick, *Country*). I am strongly inclined to believe the trend indicated by comparison with Kirkpatrick’s study for three reasons. First, overrepresentation of early titles makes logical sense: given the overall, and substantial, growth in the number of newspapers operating in Australia across the nineteenth century, digitising a relatively small number of titles in early decades captures a relatively large proportion of the historical total (the same logic applies to the smaller/larger colony comparison discussed above). Second, despite the much smaller range of newspapers listed, Kirkpatrick’s longitudinal span makes it a more reliable indicator of trends over time. Finally, and I think most convincingly, the increased proportion of newspapers digitised in 1892 based on the Gordon and Gotch comparison is attributable to a particular combination of historical factors (significant economic depression in Australia in 1890) and collection practices (a gradually increasing number of newspapers digitised by Trove). Where Trove’s strategy is designed to ensure relatively consistent representation of periodicals in a context where the number of titles generally increases, the significant decline in Australian newspapers created by the 1890 recession (from 868 in 1888 to 647 in 1892 – see footnote 9) produces overrepresentation in this instance.
This method identified fiction by searching for terms used in their paratext and harvesting, then processing, the results. The success of this approach derived from the interaction of relevant search terms with four features of Trove’s interface: its page segmentation, relevance ranking algorithm, manual correction of title information, and Application Programming Interface (API). In contrast to Chronicling America, and much of Europeana Newspapers, Trove segments or zones pages into articles, enabling targeted searching of content. The relevance ranking algorithm increased the likelihood of identifying fiction by returning to the top of the list of results articles where the search term appears in the title (defined as the first four lines of text) and/or is recurrent in the article body. “Chapter” was the most successful search term employed in this project because it is frequently used both to introduce (appearing in the title) and to segment (appearing throughout the body of) fiction instalments. Given the focus on terms used in article titles, manual correction of this information – to 99% accuracy – ensured that OCR errors did not significantly affect search results. Finally, Trove’s API enabled me to export search results wholesale, and in a form amenable to automatic and semi-automatic data processing. For in-depth discussion of the technical, bibliographical and epistemological challenges of automatically identifying and harvesting fiction from digitised historical newspapers see Bode and Hetherington, “Retrieving.”

Brake, “Lost.”

The extent to which newspaper supplements were excluded from collection practices underpinning Trove only became apparent through this study of reprinting. As discussed in the final section of this article, because occurring in syndicated supplements, most of the fiction in provincial newspapers appeared in a common sequence in multiple newspapers (often on identical, ready printed sheets). Exploring provincial newspaper fiction, I discovered a number of instances where particular provincial newspapers appeared to publish an irregular number of titles – or only one – in a sequence. Occasionally, further investigation confirmed an irregular or one-off publication: the newspaper simply happened to publish the same story – often sourced from a popular British or American periodical – around the same time as the syndicate, perhaps coincidentally, perhaps motivated by that story’s syndicated appearance. Much more frequently, a newspaper’s apparently singular or irregular publication of the same titles as a syndicate turned out to be an effect of missing supplements (or less commonly, other factors, particularly very limited availability of editions for digitisation or poor quality microfilm, leading to digital pages so illegible that only limited instances of recurrent reprinting were discoverable by automatic means).

“Distant reading” is a term coined by Franco Moretti (“Conjectures”), now widely employed in periodical studies (see for example Liddle, “Genre”). For a detailed critique of “distant reading,” including its association with the decontextualizing strategies of “close reading,” see Bode, “Equivalence.”

Gitelman, Raw.

Nowviskie, “a game.”

Not only did editors adapt content supplied in stereotype columns and reprinted sheets to their specific purposes, thus changing its appearance from publication to publication, but in the Australian context at least, reprinted fiction was often presented in such a way as to suggest to readers they were receiving something new or original: for instance, as “Now First Published” or “An Original Story.”

Lester, “Imperial,” 134. Frederick Cooper, for instance, argues that this process erases so-called “lumps” in space: “places where power coalesces surrounded by those where it does not, places
where social relations become dense amid others that are diffuse” (*Colonialism*, 91; see also Potter, “Webs”).

21 Cordell, “Reprinting.”

22 As the authors write, “The principal assumptions organizing this particular ‘arrangement’ of the historical record are, first, that publication in a specific periodical can be taken as a measure of a poet’s objective relation to other poets publishing in that periodical for a given time span. And second, that the combined weight of these relations can be calculated across many hundreds of poets and many thousands of poems” (So and Long, “Network,” 148).

23 DeWitt, “Advances.”

24 Cordell and his colleagues extensively – and usefully – discuss issues with the mass-digitised collection and their algorithm that means that their “analysis necessarily misses far more reprinted pieces than it identifies” (Cordell, “Reprinting,” Supplementary Data). However, with respect to the relationship between *Chronicling America*’s holdings and the historical context they are investigating, “significant gaps” are acknowledged without details of their nature and extent.

25 Even in geospatial formats the size and strength of the nodes and edges, if not the position of the nodes, is purely a function of the data available.

26 When he departs from particular examples to characterise relationships within early American print culture more broadly, Cordell uses statistical descriptions of network models: for instance, “Brownlow’s Knoxville *Whig* has the highest betweenness centrality in this network” (Cordell, “Reprinting,” 432). More recent work appears to draw back from this approach in seeking alternative ways of rendering network models so as to “discern the links that truly seem indicative of historical connections rather than data artifacts,” including by according instances of reprinting with temporal or geographical proximity additional weight. Such inclusion of historical constraints is promising in terms of the capacity to use network models for exploratory purposes. But it does not overcome the broader problem I am articulating – one that Cordell also foregrounds in this recent reflection – of constructing networks based on the highly partial datasets derived from mining mass-digitised collections. Indeed, the way in which Cordell references this issue – noting that “far more of the network remains invisible than visible, even when drawing from many thousands of digitized newspapers” – arguably sustains the illusion that the network is a representation of historical phenomena (with some parts – maybe large parts – missing) rather than a projection of what is available to model, wherein the inclusion of a newly digitised newspaper, let alone thousands of them, will change the structure of the network proposed by the model, probably radically (Cordell, “Two”).


28 In this method, millions of networks, containing all possible combinations of causes, are created to explore and contrast the range of possible dynamics.

29 For instance, I could use statistical measures of probability to extrapolate from observed republication instances in the various types of newspapers to calculate the probability that the 50% of titles appearing only once in my sample would be republished if the approximately 80% of colonial newspapers not digitised by Trove were included. Alternatively, a “forest” network could be devised to explore the system dynamics that result when all possible causes of reprinting in nineteenth-century newspapers are considered.
While digitisation will surely continue in some form, the funding available for this process is declining even as large parts of the historical record remain undigitised. Although Trove is world-leading in its approach to digitising historical newspapers, as I write this paper the Australian Government has announced large cuts to the National Library of Australia, certain to impact the pace and perhaps even the possibility of future digitisation efforts (see, for example, Hitch, “Trove”).


Law, *Serialising*, 80. Although Law locates Tillotson’s regular involvement with the colonial market in the mid- to late-1880s, he identifies four earlier – irregular – instances when fiction handled by Tillotson’s appeared in Australian newspapers: Dora Russell’s “Beneath the Wave,” and B. L. Farjeon’s “No. 119 Great Porter Square,” in the Melbourne-based *Australian Journal* (a magazine rather than a newspaper) in 1879 and 1881 respectively; and Eliza Lynn Linton’s “My Love!” and John Saunders’s “Victor or Victim?” in the *Age* in 1881 (Law, *Serialising*, 75–76).

Law, *Serialising*, 76.

Eggert, “Robbery,” 129.

Johnson-Woods, *Index*, 6. The newspapers referenced are the *Australasian*, *Leader*, *Australian Town and Country Journal*, *Sydney Mail* and *Queenslander*.

Hilliard, “Provincial,” 662.

Measuring the number of unique and reprinted titles within a calendar year is designed to limit the inclusion of instances where two newspapers published the same story from different sources (this happened, but was much less likely to occur in the same year). However, because this approach excludes a limited number of instances of reprinting that occurred in consecutive years (for example, when one newspaper began publishing a story in December of one year, and another in January of the next) it underestimates the incidents of reprinting present in the dataset.

Statements in the colonial press at the time reinforce the latter explanation. For instance, responding to a correspondent’s accusation of plagiarism, the *Australian Journal* asserts that, “we see our own original papers – both stories and poetry – so frequently copied by American periodicals, that we never have any hesitation about extracting American productions that are worth copying” (cited in Johnson-Woods, *Index*, 7).

I have discovered 70 titles shared by the *Brisbane Courier* and the *Queenslander* (most actively in the late 1860s and 1870s); 102 by the *Evening Journal* and the *Adelaide Observer* (most intensively in the 1880s and early 1890s); 77 by the *Telegraph* and the *Week* (particularly in the 1880s); and 31 by the *Evening News* and the *Australian Town and Country Journal* (fairly evenly spread across the 1870s, 1880s and early 1890s). Strictly speaking, the daily *Evening Journal* and
weekly *Adelaide Observer* were not companions: the latter was specifically aligned with the daily *South Australian Register*. However, the same proprietors published all three, meaning the same structure and rationale as companion reprinting underpins the stories shared by the former two newspapers.

For instance, the *Argus* and the *Australasian* published 27 and 207 titles respectively, but none together; the *Age* and the *Leader* published 57 and 302 titles respectively, but only one together (Robert Louis Stevenson’s “The South Seas” in 1891); the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Sydney Mail* published 15 and 222 titles respectively, but only four together (all prior to 1865); the *West Australian Times* and the *Western Mail* published 77 and 123 titles respectively, but only one together (Mrs H. Smith’s “Love and Liking,” published as “Topsy Turvy” in 1885); and the *Adelaide Advertiser* and the *South Australian Chronicle* published 9 and 251 titles respectively, but only six together.

The list of titles in Appendix 1 is certainly incomplete. As noted already, I have not identified all fiction in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers, and Law mentions authors in connection with Tillotson’s – including F. W. Robinson, George MacDonald and Henry Lucy – without listing the titles syndicated (Law, *Serialising*, 77).

Law shows that John Maxwell, Braddon’s agent and husband, syndicated these three titles. Where Law identifies “To the Bitter End,” appearing in the *Age* in 1872, as the first title by Braddon to be syndicated in the colonies (Law, *Serialising*), I would propose a publication discovered in this project – “My Sister Caroline,” in the *Leader* in 1870 – as an earlier instance. In contrast, two even earlier publications – of Braddon’s “Eleanor’s Victory” and “Henry Dunbar,” in the *Goulburn Herald* in 1864 and 1865 respectively – were probably unauthorised and unattributed borrowings from British periodicals. (Both were published without attribution, and in the latter case, under a different title: “The Outcasts.” The text of “Henry Dunbar” is the same as that of the 1863 *London Journal* publication of the work.) A number of Braddon’s novels not listed by Law as syndicated (by Maxwell or Tillotson’s) also appeared in metropolitan colonial newspapers between 1872 and 1880 – including “Strangers and Pilgrims” (*Australian Town and Country Journal*, *Evening News*, 1873), and “Lucius Davoren; or, Publicans and Sinners,” published under the title “Publicans and Sinners” (*Sydney Mail*, 1873).

Due to the predominantly metropolitan newspapers that Tillotson’s dealt with in the 1880s, it seems likely that the two other, early instances – Dora Russell’s “Footprints in the Snow” (syndicated by Tillotson’s in 1876 and appearing in the *Maitland Mercury* in 1877) and Florence Marryat’s “Her Father’s Name” (serialised in Britain in 1876 and by the *Newcastle Morning Herald* in 1878) – were “borrowed” by these provincial publications.

(Evening News, 1867) and “Put Yourself in His Place” (Evening News, 1872); and Robinson’s “The Man From Glasgow” (Australian Town and Country Journal, Evening News, 1871), and “True to Herself” (Evening News, 1873).

49 Titles and the metropolitan newspapers in which they appeared in for this period are: Besant and Rice’s “When the Ship Comes Home” (Leader, 1876), “By Celia’s Arbour” (Sydney Mail, 1877), “Shepherds All and Maidens Fair” (Leader, 1876), “The Monks of Thelma” (Leader, 1878), and “Le Chien D’Or (Australasian, 1878); Black’s “Three Feathers” (Australian Town and Country Journal, 1875), “The Marriage of Moira Fergus” (Sydney Mail, 1875), “Madcap Violet” (Leader, South Australian Chronicle, 1876), “Green Pastures and Piccadilly” (Leader, 1877), and “Macleod of Dare” (Brisbane Courier, Leader, Queenslander, 1878); Collins’s “The Two Destinies” (South Australian Chronicle, 1876), “The Captain’s Last Love” (Age, 1877), “The Haunted Hotel” (Evening Journal, 1878), and “The Fallen Leaves” (Evening Journal, 1879); Farjeon’s “The King of No-Land” (Sydney Mail, 1875), “An Island Pearl” (Evening Journal, Sydney Mail, 1876), “The Duchess of Rosemary Lane” (Sydney Mail, 1876), “Love’s Victory” (Evening New, 1876), and “Solomon Isaacs” (Evening News, 1877); Fenn’s “Both Sides of the Mirror” (South Australian Chronicle, 1875) and “Hard to Win” (South Australian Chronicle, 1879); Linton’s “Under Which Lord” (Australasian, 1879); Macdonald’s “St Michael and St George” (Sydney Mail, 1875), “The Gifts the Christ Child Brought” (Sydney Mail, 1876), and “Sir Gibbie” (Sydney Mail, 1879); McCarthy’s “Miss Misanthrope” (Australasian, 1877) and “Donna Quixote” (Evening Journal, 1879); Oliphant’s “May” (Australasian Town and Country Journal, 1876), “Carita” (Australasian Town and Country Journal, 1876), and “Within the Precincts” (Sydney Mail, 1878); Payn’s “Halves” (South Australian Chronicle, 1875), “Walter’s Word” (Australasian, 1875), “Fallen Fortunes” (Evening Journal, 1876), “The Best of Husbands” (Evening Journal, 1876), “What He Cost Her” (Australasian, 1877), “Less Black Than We’re Painted” (Evening Journal, 1878), and “Under One Roof” (Evening Journal, 1879); Reade’s “Hard Cash” (Evening News, 1877); Robinson’s “A Bridge of Glass” (Australian Town and Country Journal, 1875), “A Woman’s Ransom” (Evening News, 1875), and “Poor Zeph!” (Evening News, 1878); and Russell’s “Beneath the Wave” (South Australian Chronicle, 1878) and Footprints in the Snow” (South Australian Chronicle, 1878). Not included in this survey are American authors such as Mark Twain and Bret Harte. Although they were published in Australian newspapers in this period, they were not part of the publishing context that Tillotson’s arose from, and did not become involved with that company until after it had already expanded internationally, into the American market.

50 Collins’s novels, for instance, appeared in a number of provincial newspapers before 1880, including the Goulburn Herald (“Armadel,” 1868), the Bellena Ensign (“Miss or Mrs?” 1874), and the Capricornian (“Fata” Fortune,” 1875; “The Captain’s Last Love,” 1877). The same is true of stories by Farjeon (“Grif: A Story of Australian Life,” Newcastle Morning Herald, 1873; “Shadows on the Snow,” Fremantle Herald, Northern Star, 1877), Reade (“Put Yourself in His Place,” Newcastle Morning Herald, 1876), and Robinson (“Under the Spell,” “One-and-Twenty,” “Carry’s Confession,” and “Aynard's Roost,” all in the Goulburn Herald, 1870, 1871, 1871, and 1873 respectively).

51 On occasion, these specific claims about copyright combine into a coherent narrative regarding the colonial purchase and resale of rights. In May 1872, Farjeon’s “London’s Heart” appeared in the Sydney Mail with the claim that, “The sole right of publishing in this colony Mr Farjeon’s new story has been purchased by the proprietors of this journal” (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/162663731). The Adelaide Observer reprinted the story in June 1872 with the notice, “The exclusive right of republishing ‘London’s Heart’ in South Australia has been purchased by the Proprietors of the Adelaide Observer” (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/18824068); then, in July 1872, the Evening Journal – owned by the same proprietors – began the story with the
statement: “The exclusive right of republishing ‘London’s Heart’ in South Australia has been purchased by the Proprietors of this paper” (http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/196741453).

52 Ailwood and Sainsbury, “Copyright.”

53 As Appendix 1 details, of the 47 instances I have found where a title syndicated Tillotson’s appeared in colonial metropolitan newspapers in the 1880s, the *South Australian Chronicle* was involved in 20, in addition to 12 of 52 in the 1890s. Another weekly South Australian newspaper, the *Adelaide Observer*, and/or its daily affiliate, the *Evening News*, were involved in 12 of these syndicated publications in the 1880s and 13 in the 1890s. Queensland-based companions, the *Telegraph* and the *Week*, also published a significant number of titles syndicated by Tillotson’s, either singly or together: 10 in the 1880s and 20 in the 1890s. J. Monk Foster’s “A Miner’s Million” appeared in colonial newspapers three years prior to its syndication by Tillotson’s in England.


55 Johanningsmeier notes McClure’s connection with Australia based on author correspondence and the publication of Twain’s “The American Claimant” – secured at great expense by McClure in 1892 – in the *Age* in that same year (Johanningsmeier, *Fiction*, 76). This expanded sample shows that Twain’s story also featured in the *Adelaide Observer* and the *Evening Journal* in 1892, suggesting McClure moved beyond the leading metropolitan papers in his engagement with the colonial market.

56 Titles syndicated by Watt in Britain and published the same month in Australian newspapers include: Payn’s “The Heir of the Ages” (*Illustrated London News* and *Leader, South Australian Chronicle*, and *West Australian Times* from January 1886); Besant’s “The World Went Very Well Then” (*Illustrated London News* and *Sydney Mail* from July 1886); Black’s “Wolfenburg” (*The Graphic* and *Sydney Mail* from July 1892); and S. R. Crockett’s “The Grey Man” (*The Graphic* and *Sydney Mail* from January 1896). Titles that appeared in Australian newspapers a month after their British appearance include: Black’s “Sunrise” (monthly parts, Sampson Low from April 1880, and *Leader* from May 1880); Besant’s “All Sorts and Conditions of Men” (*Belgravia* from January 1882, and *Adelaide Observer* and *Evening Journal* from February 1882); and Robert Buchanan’s “Master of the Mine” (*Illustrated London News*, from July 1885, and *South Australian Observer* from August 1885). For a list of Watt’s “belt and braces” publications see Law, *Serialising*, 106–7.


Most of these authors are British, but American (Boyesen, French, Harris, Harte, Hawthorne, Hay, Jewett, Stillwell, and Twain), Canadian (Allen and Parker), French (Verne and Zola) and Australian (Boothby) authors are also represented. Those for whom I have not found sufficient biographical information to allocate them a nationality are: Mary H. Tennyson, Frederick Talbot, and Walter Wood.

59 See Colby, “Tale”; Jones, “Tillotson’s”; Johanningsmeier, Fiction; Law, Serialising; Turner, “Tillotson’s.” While Colby, Jones, and Turner focus on Tillotson’s authors, Johanningsmeier considers American syndication broadly, and Law explores a number of Tillotson’s competitors, including individual agents and companies.

60 The top twenty most published authors in colonial metropolitan newspapers between 1865 and 1899, including the number of publications, are: M. E. Braddon (64); Dora Russell (44); James Payn (33); Adeline Sergeant (31); B. L. Farjeon (29); Wilkie Collins (28); William Black (27); Ada Cambridge (25); George Manville Fenn (25); Mrs Oliphant (24); W. Clark Russell (24); Walter Besant (23); J. Monk Foster, Bret Harte and W. E. Norris (22); Henrietta Eliza Vaughan Stannard (writing as “John Winter Strange”) (20); G. A. Henty and Henry Herman (18); and David Christie Murray and F. W. Robinson (17). Cambridge, an Australian writer, and Herman, a British author, are the two exceptions in this list: highly published authors not associated with well-known syndicators in the sources I have consulted. The latter instance is probably an omission of the sources I have consulted rather than an actual lack of association, given Herman’s longstanding collaboration with Murray (also appearing in this top-twenty list; syndicated by Tillotson’s and represented by A. P. Watt). These two authors wrote several novels together, including two published in colonial newspapers: “A Dangerous Catspaw” (Australasian, 1889) and “He Fell Among Thieves” (Queenslander, 1890, South Australian Chronicle, 1891). Other writers associated with these well-known agencies and agents among the top forty most published authors in colonial newspapers in this period are: Hawley Smart (16); S. Baring-Gould, Joseph Hatton, and Margaret Hungerford (15); H. Rider Haggard, William Le Queux, and Eliza Lynn Linton (14); Robert Buchanan and John K. Leys (13); and Hall Caine and Thomas Hardy (12).

61 Given the extent of anonymous publication in nineteenth-century Australian newspapers (see Bode, “Thousands”) it is likely that the actual count of British authors was greater. Figure 4 only includes those whose identities have been verified.

62 On reduced fees to authors for syndication in the final decade of the nineteenth century see Law, Serialising, 85.

63 Morrison, “Retrieving,” 33.

64 Johanningsmeier, Fiction, 75–76.
Of the 175 and 220 instances of reprinting in metropolitan newspapers in the 1880s and 1890s, 15 and 37, respectively, do not involve one or more of these particular publications (with many of these exceptions comprised of reprinting between companions).

Of the eight newspapers centrally involved in reprinting fiction within the colonies five are the most prolific metropolitan publishers of fiction in this study, from both 1865 to 1899 and from 1880 to 1899. The overall totals are: Queenslander (323 titles), Leader (299), Adelaide Observer (273), Evening News (255), and South Australian Chronicle (251). The totals from 1880 to 1899 are: Adelaide Observer (247), Queenslander (234), South Australian Chronicle (213), Evening News (200), and Leader (180). The other newspapers I have identified as heavily involved in reprinting – the Evening Journal, Telegraph, Week and Brisbane Courier – are 9th, 10th, 11th, and 13th between 1865 to 1899 (with 175, 165, 163, and 93 titles published, respectively); and 9th, 6th, 10th, and 20th for the last two decades of the nineteenth century (with 145, 163, 137, and 38 titles, respectively).

The newspapers mostly involved in publishing fiction previously appearing in the Leader were the South Australian Chronicle, followed by the Adelaide Observer and the Evening Journal, the Western Mail, the West Australian, the Queenslander, and in the 1890s, the Telegraph and the Week.

Law, Serialising, 76.

As in Figure 1, rates of reprinting among provincial newspapers are assessed on a yearly basis: that is, in terms of the number and proportion of non-unique titles per year. While this approach is useful for the comparison, it understates the extent of reprinting among provincial newspapers, which tended, more than for metropolitan cases, to occur in consecutive years.

I have identified 124 titles published by both newspapers: predominantly short serials (across two or three editions) and most intensively from 1878 to 1882.

For the Hay Standard, located in Hay, a bit over 500 kilometres from Goulburn, publication typically began two weeks after it occurred in the Goulburn Herald; for the Cootamundra Herald, located in Cootamundra, a bit under 200 kilometres from Goulburn, publication occurred in the subsequent week. Altogether, the Goulburn Herald published 27 titles with the Hay Standard, and 16 titles with the Cootamundra Herald.

“Wynnum White’s Wickedness” appeared in at least nine provincial newspapers in 1895 (Armidale Chronicle, Bathurst Free Press, Gympie Times, Morwell Advertiser, Nepean Times, Port Macquarie News, Richmond River Herald, Traralgon Record, and Western Herald); “An Australian Bush Track” was serialised in the Bathurst Free Press, the Gympie Times, and the Western Grazier, and in the metropolitan companions, the Telegraph and the Week, in 1896; “The Dis-Honourable: A Mystery of the Brisbane Floods” was published in the Richmond River Herald in 1895 and in the Barrier Miner, the Bathurst Free Press, the Morwell Advertiser, and the Traralgon Record in 1896; “The Mystery of Sea-Cliff Towers” appeared in the Bendigo Independent, the Goulburn Herald, the Murrurundi Times, and the North Queensland Register, between 1897 and 1899; and “The Bells of Sydney” was serialised by the Clarence and Richmond Examiner and the Ulladulla and Milton Times in 1899 and 1900 respectively. Sampson Low, London, published the first three stories as books in 1896.

In its Richmond River Herald appearance in 1895, “The Dis-Honourable” was published under a pseudonym (Carey Grove) with the note: “Published by special arrangement with Hennessy’s Intercolonial Press Association” (http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page13502908). The agency also
published a book edition of the story in 1895, a year before its Sampson Low publication in London (Hennessey, *Dis-Honourable*).


75 The exception is Australian author, Price Warung, whose story, “An Endorsement in Red,” appeared alongside a title by Hennessey (“The Mystery of Sea-Cliff Towers”) in Hennessey and Harper’s 1898 Christmas Annual. Both stories were published elsewhere – Hennessey’s title in the *North Queensland Register* and the *Murrurundi Times*, in 1897 and 1898 respectively, and Warung’s story in the *Western Grazer* in 1898 – and given his other activities, it is possible that Hennessey organised these appearances.

76 Lucy Sussex describes an abortive attempt by Borlase to establish a syndication agency for original local fiction (it was announced by never appeared) (Sussex, “‘Bobbing’”).

77 Multiple short stories (completed in a single edition of a newspaper) discovered by this project were also published as part of these provincial newspapers syndicates. While these titles lend weight to the newspaper syndicates I have proposed in Appendix 2 they are beyond the scope of this paper.

78 Book sellers and lending libraries were scarce in the Australian colonies (Johanson, *A Study*, 213; Eggert, “Robbery,” 134), and local literary periodicals were short-lived (Stuart, *Nineteenth*, 1). Though imported literary magazines and journals were present and popular, they were significantly more expensive, and less prevalent, than the “large, vigorous and thriving” local newspaper press (Morrison, “Serial,” 308).

79 Morrison identified the Cameron, Laing and Co. syndicate based on advertising in the colonial press, and by comparing the list of titles provided there with fiction in a sample of provincial newspapers (Morrison, *Engines*, 210–12; 253–56; “Serial,” 317–18).

80 Cameron, Laing and Co. published 26 Australian titles from 1880 to 1884, plus an additional two that were almost certainly Australian (“Kitty Dunolly, My Schoolmate: A Victorian Sketch,” by G. E. C., and “Bonshaw: A Moreton Bay King,” by Magnus Badge). In contrast, George Robertson, the most prolific local book publisher, published nine Australian novels between 1860 and 1889 and 22 in the 1890s (Bode, *Reading*, 44, 49).

81 National Library of New Zealand, “Papers Past,” http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast. Titles published by Cameron, Laing and Co. that appeared in New Zealand newspapers such as the *Tuapeka Times, Hawera and Normanby Star*, or *Waikato Times* include “Denis Devine,” “In the Folds of the Serpent,” “The Mystery of Major Molineux,” “Bonshaw: A Moreton Bay King,” “Marc Grecli,” “Dora Dunbar,” and “Days of Crime and Years of Suffering.” The involvement of Australian syndication agency, S. & D. Reid, with New Zealand newspapers in the 1890s has been described (Harvey, “Sources”), but as far as I know, this earlier cross-Tasman connection has not previously been noted.

82 Morrison, *Engines*, 255.

83 I have decided, on the balance of evidence, that Syndicate 1 ceased operations in 1892; but it is also possible it continued, publishing fiction I have allocated to Syndicate 6. In support of the first interpretation are: the different newspapers involved (more than half of the periodicals associated with Cameron, Laing and Co. up to and including 1892 were no longer publishing the same fiction...
in 1893), the different location of these newspapers (Syndicate 6 worked mostly with Victorian rather than New South Wales publications), and the different type of fiction published (Syndicate 6 published a large proportion of titles by unknown authors). Supporting the second interpretation are: the common authors involved (a number of the Australian writers published by Syndicate 6 were previously associated with Cameron, Laing and Co., including James J. Wright – writing as Ivan Dexter and Captain Lacie – Kenneth Hamilton, Harold M. MacKenzie, and Atha Westbury) and the common newspapers (almost half of the periodicals previously associated with Syndicate 1 appear in Syndicate 6 – though two thirds of the newspapers in the latter were not previously aligned with Cameron, Laing and Co.). A change in ownership might explain such dramatic shifts in publishing and business practices. But Cameron, Laing and Co. was acquired by S. & D. Reid in 1888 (Harvey, “Sources”), so the timing seems to discount this explanation.


85 For example, Fenn’s “Commodore Junk,” Russell’s “The Frozen Pirate,” and a children’s serial – “My Plucky Boy Tom” by P. T. Barnum – were published concurrently by this syndicate.

86 The difference in timing relates to the day of the week these (typically bi- or tri-weekly) provincial newspapers were issued.

87 Where Syndicates 7 and 10 appear only to have traded in partly printed pages, Syndicates 6, 8, 9 and 11 offered a combination of partly printed and flexible reprinting.

88 Johanningsmeier provides a long list: “the American Short Story Company, the American Press Company, Frank Carpenter’s Newspaper Syndicate, the International Syndicate of Baltimore, the Albert Bigelow Paine Syndicate, Syndicate Exchange, the Lorraine Literary Press Association, the Authors’ Co-Operative Company, and the Wilson Press Syndicate” (Fiction, 96). Indeed, Johanningsmeier notes the difficulty of investigating even the major American syndicates – Bacheller’s and McClure’s, “ubiquitous in the Anglo-American literary publishing world of the 1880s and 1890s” – due to “the paucity of available manuscript and secondary materials” (Fiction, 67, 71).

89 For Syndicate 7, the inclusion of four serial stories by Bertha Clay (an author-name of disputed origin, but strongly associated with fiction syndication in America) could indicate an American company or an Australian agency that actively acquired fiction from American sources; alternatively, its inclusion of advertisements for colonial companies in its partly printed pages (for instance, for “Australian Explosives” and a Melbourne dentist) could indicate a locally based agency or an overseas syndicate producing partly printed pages specifically for the colonial market, and seeking advertising revenue in that context. For Syndicate 11, the mixture of international fiction and the inclusion of miscellaneous American materials could suggest an overseas company providing general material for the international market or a local company extracting such material from international newspapers for colonial publication.

90 Challenging the view that local publishing did not occur in Australia until the late twentieth century was also a key focus of my 2012 book (Bode, Reading, 27–103).

91 Smith cited in McCann, Marcus, 25.