

# “Ariel” and Australian Nineteenth-Century Serial Fiction: A Case of Mistaken Attribution

JIM CLEARY AND CATRIONA MILLS

In 2002, Harold Love described nineteenth-century journalism as “the largely unmapped *terra incognita* of attribution studies,” emphasising that “for minor literary authors and politicians and all professional journalists, the determination of authorship is often crucial to whether a career can be mapped out in the first place.”<sup>1</sup> This paper outlines an instance of mistaken attribution in nineteenth-century Australian serial fiction, in which an early Australian author disappeared from the record when the bulk of her published output was attributed to another writer. The focus of this paper is five long tales published under the pseudonym “Ariel” in *The Sydney Mail* between 1860 and 1878: “Bitter Sweet—So Is The World” (25 Aug. 1860–16 Mar. 1861), “Which Wins? A Tale of Life’s Impulses” (19 Oct. 1861–10 May 1862), “A Lonely Lot” (4 July 1863–20 Feb. 1864), “Fallen By The Way” (1 July 1871–20 Jan. 1872), and “Mrs Ord” (10 Aug.–16 Nov. 1878). In the last quarter of the twentieth century, an increasingly stable attribution to Eliza Winstanley, an English-born actress and writer, developed on the basis of an initial unsubstantiated attribution by Eric Irvin. We wish to demonstrate conclusively that Menie Parkes, the daughter of NSW Premier Sir Henry Parkes, was Ariel.

## The Conditions of Nineteenth-Century Publishing

Pseudonymous publication by an author who remains obscure or unknown is not uncommon in nineteenth-century publishing. The intriguing aspect of the Ariel stories is how they came to be firmly but erroneously attributed to another author. As Love indicates, the publishing conditions of Victorian periodicals render their authors particularly susceptible to disappearance and misattributions. One such condition is the prevalence of anonymous publications. In 1959, W. E. Houghton, first and primary editor of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, wrote that “[t]he almost universal custom of anonymity or of pseudonymity (including initials) in the Victorian journals means that perhaps only three per cent of the articles in the whole period are signed, and before 1870, closer to one per cent, if that many.”<sup>2</sup> For the better-known authors of the period, anonymous or pseudonymous works are often traceable through

<sup>1</sup> Harold Love, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Walter E. Houghton, “British Periodicals of the Victorian Age: Bibliographies and Indexes,” *Library Trends* 7 (1959): 561.

ancillary sources: correspondence, advertisements, marked files of periodicals, or subsequent republication identifying the author. Nor, perhaps, would the attribution of a single text or small body of works substantially alter the reputation or canon of an established author; as Furbank and Owens argue in relation to Daniel Defoe, "they would remain the same author with or without the disputed works."<sup>3</sup> The same cannot be said of the minor authors who exist in such proliferation in this period.

Victorian periodicals cover a vast spectrum of texts and authors. As Houghton noted in 1979, "the Victorians published not only over 25,000 journals of all kinds including newspapers, but also a few hundred reviews, magazines, and weeklies that could claim to be 'literature'."<sup>4</sup> In such a publishing environment, the likelihood that an unattributed work's author might be completely unknown is extremely high. Authorship attribution in nineteenth-century periodicals partakes of the same concerns that Furbank and Owens identify in eighteenth-century pamphleteering, "where authors, known and unknown, exist in such profusion, and where the fear that only faintly nags at the student of Elizabethan drama, that a work might be by an author nobody has ever heard of, becomes horribly insistent."<sup>5</sup> This is especially so when the work in question appears not in one of the "few hundred" periodicals that could claim to be publishing 'literature', but in one of those journals aimed at the 'common reader', whose authors were often anonymous and frequently obscure. As bibliographical work on G. W. M. Reynolds and Thomas Peckett Prest demonstrates, the output of even the most prolific of these authors is not always clearly understood.<sup>6</sup>

Nineteenth-century periodicals therefore cause specific attribution difficulties, both by reason of their practice of anonymous or pseudonymous publication and because of the strong possibility that the author in question might be completely unknown. In England and the United States, these concerns are exacerbated by the size of the mid-nineteenth-century literary marketplace. But periodicals in the smaller Australian marketplace bring their own complications, such as the regular practice of piracy and republication between periodicals in Australia, England, and the United States.<sup>7</sup> This creates

<sup>3</sup> P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 43.

<sup>4</sup> Walter E. Houghton, "Victorian Periodical Literature and the Articulate Classes," *Victorian Studies* 22 (1979): 389.

<sup>5</sup> Furbank and Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe*, 31.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, E. F. Bleiler's introduction to G. W. M. Reynolds's *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf*, vii-xviii (New York: Dover, 1975), and Helen R. Smith's *New Light on Sweeney Todd: Thomas Peckett Prest, James Malcolm Rymer, and Elizabeth Caroline Grey* (London: Jarndyce, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Toni Johnson-Woods, "The Virtual Reading Communities of the *London Journal*, the *New York Ledger* and the *Australian Journal*," in *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, and David Finkelstein (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), 350-61.

an additional difficulty for the attribution scholar, as an unknown author might not be an obscure Australian author but an equally obscure American or English writer. Such exchanges are difficult to trace, since indexes to the contents of inexpensive periodicals are still comparatively rare.

The unusual constriction of the Australian literary marketplace adds another degree of complexity. When John Sutherland explored the demographics of nineteenth-century authorship in England, he traced even relatively obscure authors—though not the most obscure—through library holdings of three-volume novels, a more visible form of publication than serial fiction.<sup>8</sup> But publishing in three-volume form was far more difficult in Australia. As Elizabeth Webby asserts, “[d]uring the nineteenth century it was virtually impossible for writers to publish novels in Australia unless they were willing and able to bear the costs of their publication.... [T]hey were more likely to lose money than gain it by self-publication.”<sup>9</sup> Such conditions made serial publishing of vital importance to local authors, but the conditions of serial publishing made it more likely that the output of local authors would be difficult for modern critics to trace.

Given these publishing conditions, it is unsurprising that nineteenth-century periodical fiction has largely remained the *terra incognita* of attribution studies. As Ellen Jordan, Hugh Craig, and Alexis Antonia argue, most attribution work on nineteenth-century periodicals has focused on external evidence, so that “[t]he more obvious literary and archival sources have, in consequence, been largely wrung dry, while the authorship of many interesting articles still remains unidentified.”<sup>10</sup> Implicit in their summation is an awareness that such work must focus on comparatively major authors or periodicals, since ancillary materials for minor publishing houses and authors are, if they still exist, scattered and incomplete.

Many of the traditional attribution techniques that employ internal evidence, on the other hand, are designed to facilitate comparison between two or three authors, as in, for example, much of the Shakespearean attribution work surveyed by Samuel Schoenbaum in *Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship*.<sup>11</sup> As such, they are not applicable to anonymous, nineteenth-century serials where there is a multiplicity of likely authors. The intensive techniques of stylometry and non-traditional, computer-assisted attribution are often equally

<sup>8</sup> John Sutherland, “The Victorian Novelists: Who Were They?,” in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (London: Routledge, 2002), 259–68.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Webby, “Australia,” in *Periodicals of Queen Victoria's Empire*, ed. J. DonVann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 46.

<sup>10</sup> Ellen Jordan, Hugh Craig, and Alexis Antonia, “The Brontë Sisters and the *Christian Remembrancer*: A Pilot Study in the Use of the ‘Burrows Method’ to Identify Authorship of Unsigned Articles in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 39 (2006): 22.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Schoenbaum, *Internal Evidence and Elizabethan Dramatic Authorship* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966).

inapplicable, since they are largely predicated on the existence or creation of electronic versions of the texts. Stylometric analyses can be performed manually without such aids, as Alvar Ellegård did in part in *Who was Junius?*<sup>12</sup> However, they are still not the most productive approach when dealing with more than two candidates for authorship.<sup>13</sup> As Jordan, Craig, and Antonia phrase it in their application of the computer-assisted "Burrows method" to anonymous reviews of the Brontë sisters' works, such methods rely "on testing hypotheses that must be devised by the scholars concerned."<sup>14</sup> To be effective, such hypotheses generally require a narrowing of the range of possible authors. Some of these concerns will be ameliorated as digital-scholarship projects and business ventures such as Google Books continue to increase holdings of digital copies. However, inexpensive periodicals are not a priority for these projects. Even with digital copies, the paucity of indexes to inexpensive periodicals and the incomplete understanding of the authors who wrote for these publications would make attribution through standard methods difficult if not, in many cases, impossible. The more visible authors in inexpensive periodicals, such as Eliza Winstanley, therefore attract the attention of bibliographers and attribution scholars.

### Tracing the Mistaken Attribution

Eliza Winstanley's name was not attached to the Ariel serials until well into the twentieth century. The first association of Winstanley with such a pseudonym seems to lie with an entry in Bruce Nesbitt and Susan Hadfield's *Australian Literary Pseudonyms: An Index, with Selected New Zealand References* (1972).<sup>15</sup> They assert that Winstanley used the pseudonym "Ariele," but they do not list any specific works published under this pseudonym or offer a source to support their assertion. The index's primary source is E. Morris Miller and Frederick Macartney's *Australian Literature: A Bibliography*, but Miller and Macartney, concerned with works published in volume form, make no mention of the Ariel serials.<sup>16</sup> Since Nesbitt and Hadfield do not specify their other sources beyond describing them as "standard bibliographies, biographies and critical works," their assertion cannot be traced to its source.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Alvar Ellegård, *Who Was Junius?* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962).

<sup>13</sup> Furbank and Owens make a similar point regarding the value of stylometry to Defoe attributions, emphasising that the problems are not two-candidate ones (a choice between Defoe or X) but rather a choice between Defoe and an unknown or anonymous author (see p. 178).

<sup>14</sup> Jordan, Craig, and Antonia, "The Brontë Sisters and the *Christian Remembrancer*," 22.

<sup>15</sup> Bruce Nesbitt and Susan Hadfield, *Australian Literary Pseudonyms: An Index, with Selected New Zealand References* (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1972), 132.

<sup>16</sup> E. Morris Miller and Frederick T. Macartney, *Australian Literature: A Bibliography to 1938 Extended to 1950* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1956), 40.

<sup>17</sup> Nesbitt and Hadfield, *Australian Literary Pseudonyms*, viii.

The first critic to state the attribution firmly was Eric Irvin, who asserted Winstanley's authorship of some of the Ariel serials in the article "Australia for Family Reading" (1978).<sup>18</sup> Irvin does not provide his reasons for attributing the works to Winstanley, nor does he suggest that he is drawing from an earlier attribution, though he may have been influenced by Nesbitt and Hadfield. Irvin devotes "Australia for Family Reading" to broadening the (at the time) rudimentary understanding of Winstanley's literary output, and the Ariel attribution is a function of this purpose: Irvin also attributes the novel *Lucy Cooper* to Winstanley, though it is now generally attributed to John Lang.<sup>19</sup> Even without reference to external or internal evidence, Irvin's attribution has authority: to use Furbank and Owens's phrasing, once an attribution has been made, "there will now be a presumption in favour of its authenticity."<sup>20</sup>

This presumption of authenticity prompts the unsubstantiated repetition of the Winstanley attribution in other sources, rendering it increasingly stable. Patricia Clarke in *Pen Portraits* (1988) attributes "Bitter Sweet" (and *Lucy Cooper*) to Winstanley.<sup>21</sup> Debra Adelaide, in her *Bibliography of Australian Women's Literature 1795–1990* (1991), mentions the pseudonym "Ariele" in relation to Winstanley, though she does not list any of the Ariel stories.<sup>22</sup> Toni Johnson-Woods's *Index to Serials in Australian Periodicals and Newspapers* (2001) is the first bibliography to list all five Ariel stories as the work of one author, but also attributes them to Winstanley;<sup>23</sup> by this point, however, the attribution has been circulating for some twenty years. Johnson-Woods's bibliography, in turn, seems to have been the source of the attribution on the AustLit database, where Jim found it (as we outline below). An increasingly stable attribution of five lengthy serials, then, develops from the original unsubstantiated attribution.

### Correcting the Mistaken Attribution

The two authors of this paper came across the misattribution and identified the correct author during independent research projects. Jim was an AustLit researcher

<sup>18</sup> Eric Irvin, "Australia for Family Reading: The Novels of Eliza Winstanley," *Southerly* 38 (1978): 207–22.

<sup>19</sup> The attribution to John Lang was first made by Victor Crittenden in his edition of *Lucy Cooper: An Australian Tale* (Canberra: Mulini Press, 1992), but is now widely accepted.

<sup>20</sup> Furbank and Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe*, 29–30.

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Clarke, *Pen Portraits: Women Writers and Journalists in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988).

<sup>22</sup> Debra Adelaide, *Bibliography of Australian Women's Literature 1795–1990: A Listing of Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Non-Fiction Published in Monograph Form Arranged Alphabetically by Author* (Port Melbourne: Thorpe, 1991), 5.

<sup>23</sup> Toni Johnson-Woods, *Index to Serials in Australian Periodicals and Newspapers: Nineteenth Century* (Canberra: Mulini, 2001), 82.

working on the *Bibliography of Australian Literature* in 2007 when he first became aware of Menie Parkes. Researchers were assigned lists of one hundred or more writers at a time, and required to review the AustLit database biographies and bibliographical records for accuracy and comprehensiveness. The AustLit entry had no biographical information for Parkes, and followed Miller and Macartney's *Australian Literature* in ascribing to her only a slender volume of *Poems* (1866).<sup>24</sup> As a trained historian, Jim noted the accompanying entries for Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, and his son Varney. He assumed Menie Parkes was a daughter, and immediately turned to A. W. Martin's biography of Sir Henry Parkes. In locating the biography in the online catalogue, he also noticed that Martin had edited *Letters from Menie: Sir Henry Parkes and His Daughter* (1983).

The very full correspondence between father and daughter on which Martin draws documents Menie Parkes's efforts to write for the press. Most importantly, the diary that Sir Henry kept on his 1861–63 visit to England refers to his friendship with Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857), to whom he showed the manuscript of his daughter's novel, "Bitter Sweet." Jim had not heard of this novel and immediately checked it on AustLit, only to find it listed as written by Eliza Winstanley, an attribution he found supported by Johnson-Woods's *Index to Serials in Australian Periodicals and Newspapers*.<sup>25</sup> But in turning back to *Letters from Menie*, Jim found conclusive documentation that all Ariel's serials were by Menie Parkes.

Almost simultaneously, Catriona had come across the works as part of a broader project on Eliza Winstanley. The attribution seemed sufficiently stable that there was no reason to question it, until the serials' dissimilarity from works signed by Winstanley became apparent. If we use Harold Love's definition that "[b]roadly speaking, internal evidence is that from the work itself and external evidence that from the social world within which the work is created, promulgated and read,"<sup>26</sup> then both external and internal evidence rendered the attribution to Winstanley uncertain. The time and place in which the serials appeared raised questions about Winstanley's authorship. Could she, working in England, have published in the *Sydney Mail* only seven weeks after its inception? And why would the newspaper not capitalise on her authorship? The external evidence is suggestive by its very absence, in the failure of the paper to even hint that the author had once been the colony's pre-eminent actress. The content of the serials was also problematic. Why would Winstanley link the theatre to debauchery and drunkenness? She had been a successful actress herself, and many of her signed works depict the theatre as a wholesome working environment. And could she have Ariel's intensely local and contemporary knowledge of Sydney, when she had left Australia in 1846?

<sup>24</sup> Miller and Macartney, *Australian Literature: A Bibliography to 1938 Extended to 1950*, 373.

<sup>25</sup> Johnson-Woods, *Index*, 82.

<sup>26</sup> Love, *Attributing Authorship*, 51.



Though an attribution based solely on what Love terms “[e]vidence from the themes, ideas, beliefs and conceptions of genre manifested in the work”<sup>27</sup> would be uncertain, neither can such evidence be automatically dismissed.

The questions raised in a reading of the works were, however, urgent enough to prompt a search for an attribution method that would yield plausible results in this instance, which Catriona found in a 1919 article that examined the authorship of the “Piers Plowman” manuscripts by comparing quotations. In this article, R. W. Chambers argues that “an imitator can easily emulate the phraseology and tricks of style of his original: but the imitator cannot emulate a habit of apt quotation unless he, too, has his brain stored with passages from these works.”<sup>28</sup> Since both Winstanley and Ariel quoted heavily from other texts, this seemed a plausible method.

Catriona isolated 295 quotations in the Ariel stories. Eighty-six were eliminated because their origin was unidentifiable. Such quotations were largely proverbial, as with “still waters run deep,” or so common as to confound identification, as with “dish of gossip” or “turned her face to the wall.” A comparable range of quotations came from six serials signed by Winstanley and published between 1859 and 1876, a range as close as possible to Ariel’s active years of 1860 to 1878. This yielded 222 quotations, of which only 24 were unidentifiable. Though this attribution method was later rendered redundant by external evidence, the results were convincing: for example, from a total sample of more than 400 identifiable quotations, over 55% of Ariel’s quotations came from the Bible and only 6.7% from Shakespeare, while over 73% of Winstanley’s quotations were from Shakespeare and only 3.5% from the Bible. Whoever Ariel was, it was unlikely that she was Eliza Winstanley.

Such a technique could not, of course, yield a positive result. To use Furbank and Owens’s phrasing, it amounted to an “extreme probability,”<sup>29</sup> suggesting who Ariel was not, but not revealing who she was. The question would perhaps have rested there, had it not been for the fortunate coincidence of Catriona finding, in Patricia Clarke’s biography of Louisa Atkinson, an 1872 letter from Atkinson that mentioned Ariel’s serial “Fallen by the Way.” Atkinson asserted that the serial was the work of “Miss Parks,” saying, “we [Atkinson and her husband] think it unnatural though clever and in the tension good—She appears to gather her estimate of character from books rather than life.”<sup>30</sup> The fact that this rare contemporary attribution originated with another *Sydney Mail* author, and one

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> R. W. Chambers, “The Three Texts of ‘Piers Plowman’ and Their Grammatical Forms,” *Modern Language Review* 14 (1919): 137.

<sup>29</sup> Furbank and Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Patricia Clarke, *Pioneer Writer: The Life of Louisa Atkinson, Novelist, Journalist, Naturalist* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1990), 218.

whose work often ran alongside that of Ariel, only made it more compelling. The available bibliographies of nineteenth-century Australian literature offered several "Parks," including Menie Parkes. The fact that the protagonist of "A Lonely Lot" shared the uncommon name "Menie" with Sir Henry's daughter made the latter a candidate worth pursuing further. Catriona, like Jim, turned to A. W. Martin and Menie Parkes's open acknowledgement of authorship. This, of course, rendered the attribution work unnecessary and effectively settled the question of whether Winstanley had written the serials. The problem of attribution became a problem of the author's disappearance from the record, and what this disappearance might mean for our understanding of the early Australian literary marketplace.



Menie Parkes (1839–1915)

Engraved frontispiece to her *Poems* (Sydney, 1866), from copy in the State Library of New South Wales, DSM/ A821/ P245.1/ 1A.



## Menie Parkes and the Ariel Stories

The basic events of Parkes's life are comprehensively covered in A. W. Martin's works, particularly in the reprinted letters to her father collected in *Letters from Menie*.<sup>31</sup> The letters show her close relationship with her father, her interest in politics, her desire to earn her own living, her lifelong religiosity, and the slow waning of her writing ambitions under the ennui of small-town life and the financial pressures of her husband's unremunerative ministries, her increasing family, and her early widowhood.

The letters also show that Parkes published a number of works in addition to the Ariel stories, beginning with two works in the *Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal* under the pseudonym "Patty Parsley": "Pet Perennials," a series of twelve tales published in 1859 and 1860, and "Miss Jesse's Schooldays, and What Came of Them," published in 1860. For *The Sydney Mail*, she published a number of other works, both non-fiction and fiction. Her non-fiction consisted of short essays published sequentially under a general title. The projected series "Common Thoughts on Common Things" apparently ran to only one article: "Growth," published in January 1863. The series "Things Known to All Men" ran to three articles: "Sunrise" (May 1868), "Home" (June 1868), and "Friendship" (July 1868). Her non-Ariel fiction included the short stories "Henry Muriel's Trial" (Apr. 1871) and "What She Should Do, and What She Did" (June 1871) and the serial "Benedicta" (June–Oct. 1867), the latter published under the new pseudonym, "Alecta."

The five stories published under her "Ariel" pseudonym are obscure enough now that it is worthwhile running briefly through their plots. "Bitter Sweet—So Is The World" recounts the inter-linked stories of Madonna Lea and her refusal to marry the cynical Stephen Thornley until he becomes a devout Christian, and Madonna's sister Selena and her attempts to find salvation for her half-Aboriginal husband John who, as a boy, murdered his father. In "Which Wins? A Tale of Life's Impulses," the illegitimate Isola is reconnected with her alcoholic mother and younger sister: she sustains her family by working as a governess, reconciles her mother and father, and marries the parson who had adopted her when she was a child, before drowning, with her husband and surviving child, in a boating accident. In "A Lonely Lot," Menie Vauleigh is in thrall to fashionable society, which leads to her being convicted of her uncle's murder and sentenced to hang. Saved, she lives her life as a missionary with the former suitor she has finally succeeded in converting. "Fallen By The Way" tells the story of the proud Rodney Hunt, who travels to the colonies and falls into bad company: after the deaths of

<sup>31</sup> *Letters from Menie: Sir Henry Parkes and His Daughter*, ed. A. W. Martin (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1983).

his pious wife, his father-in-law, his mother, his infant daughter, and his faithful servant, and his own imprisonment for forgery, he finds salvation and a new wife. In "Mrs Ord," a mysterious widow living in an unfashionable Melbourne suburb is reunited with the daughter whom she had abandoned, naked in the street, as an infant and the husband whom she thought was dead. Melodramatic and highly religious, each serial turns on the redemption of the central character, whose faith is strengthened through severe trials.

The eleven-page "Themes in Menie's Published Writing" that A. W. Martin appends to *Letters from Menie*—the only critical work addressing Parkes as an author—conveys Martin's ambivalence about the value of her work. He argues that "[l]ittle of this large output can now be thought of as creative writing worthy of preservation for its own sake," and argues that "[m]uch of it exhibits the worst flaws of 'potboiler' literature: an overpowering sentimentality that often drifts towards bathos; wooden characterisation; over-ingenious plots; prose which, however taut in places, too often veers towards the flaccid or the inflated."<sup>32</sup> His criticism centres on the idea that her fiction is not particularly fictional, but, rather, is "best seen as complementing her letters"<sup>33</sup> to her father: he argues that the "writings had a cathartic function, as a form of acceptable expression for a young woman imprisoned in a web of convention and responsibility" and, less ambiguously, that "Menie's creative writing is profoundly autobiographical."<sup>34</sup>

Martin ties the style of Parkes's writing to the more ephemeral fiction of the day and its content to her own life. In doing so, he presents the author as an historical curiosity: a mid-Victorian wife and mother whose life and work is peculiarly recoverable due to her correspondence with her famous father. Had he not done so, it is likely that this puzzle of attribution would have remained a mystery, since none of the other sources that we consulted had the authority of Parkes's own claim to authorship: none could have offered anything more than Furbank and Owens's "extreme probability." In one sense, then, we too are using Menie Parkes as an historical curiosity: a minor Victorian writer who serves as a good example of the concerns with and difficulties of authorship attribution for nineteenth-century works precisely because her identity is unusually recoverable.

But in addition to this puzzle, we need to consider the letters' revelation of Parkes's literary ambitions, as well as the arguments of other critics (such as Elizabeth Webby and Pauline Kirk) about the centrality of Ariel to the *Sydney Mail*'s burgeoning focus on Australian fiction. Pauline Kirk, in particular, argues that the *Sydney Mail*, "unlike some earlier magazines, ... would not accept inferior writing whose only virtue was that it was Australian. It therefore provided some standard by which work could be judged in a time when literary

<sup>32</sup> *Letters from Menie*, 170.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

craftsmanship within the colony was generally haphazard and uneven.”<sup>35</sup> Though Kirk’s argument, much like Martin’s, centres on the perceived aesthetic value of the texts, it also suggests something of Parkes’s importance to an understanding of the burgeoning but “haphazard and uneven” Australian literary marketplace. Her serials were purchased and published, and the first three works ran, almost back to back, on the front page of *The Sydney Mail* over a period of five years. Their sentimental, Evangelical, Australian-focused plots seemed, then, to appeal to the paper’s readership. Rod Kirkpatrick argues, for example, that country townships provided a readership with nationalistic sympathies who were specifically interested in fiction by Australian writers.<sup>36</sup> One suspects that hers may have been a church-going readership in the burgeoning country districts of New South Wales at a time when, according to Beverley Kingston, there were more people in Bathurst and Goulburn than in Sydney, and almost four times as many living in the bush.<sup>37</sup>

Furbank and Owens, arguing against the unsubstantiated inflation of an author’s canon, suggest that the author “would remain the same author with or without the disputed works.”<sup>38</sup> In arguing that this is not always the case, especially with minor authors, we are in agreement with Harold Love. We might also ask, however, whether these would remain the same works with or without the disputed author. Attaching a different label to the works will not change their perceived quality: Martin would, presumably, find the prose as haphazard and the content as bathetic were the works written by Eliza Winstanley. But it does change the context through which we interpret the works. For example, the Ariel stories are unremittingly, even violently, evangelical. In one instance, when the heroine of “A Lonely Lot” becomes disgusted with fashionable life, she defaces and destroys her existing finery, locks the remnants in a trunk inscribed with the verse “She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Timothy 5:6), and spends the rest of the night rededicating herself to God in an empty church. Parkes’s characters carry their religious beliefs into their neighbours’ houses, and their servants do the same in kitchens and pantries. Secondary characters frequently become ministers—whether formally or informally—and devote their lives to the slums. The resolution of each story depends on the religious conversion of one or more characters. Elisabeth Jay has pointed out that a preoccupation with religion was not uncommon in fiction of the time,

<sup>35</sup> Pauline M. Kirk, “Colonial Literature for Colonial Readers!,” *Australian Literary Studies* 5 (1971): 136.

<sup>36</sup> Rod Kirkpatrick, *Country Conscience: A History of the New South Wales Provincial Press, 1841–1895* (Canberra: Infinite Harvest Publishing, 2000), 80.

<sup>37</sup> Beverley Kingston, *A History of New South Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 62.

<sup>38</sup> Furbank and Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe*, 43.

as it was assumed that religious life was so intrinsically bound up with social existence that it could not be ignored.<sup>39</sup>

In considering the Evangelical aspect of Parkes's writing, Jim noted the parallels with Ada Cambridge, five years her junior. Like Parkes, Cambridge was initially an Evangelical Christian, whose writing career started with hymns.<sup>40</sup> Cambridge also married a clergyman with an income of £250 per annum and had five children, just as Parkes had, although two died in early childhood. Both writers published serial fiction in the *Sydney Mail* and, in Cambridge's case, the *Australasian*. However, Cambridge sustained a greater output over a longer period, came to reject orthodox religion, and gained overseas publication in book form in the 1890s. Evangelical faith was no barrier to commercial success, as Harriet Beecher Stowe and Susan Warner—for whom the novel was a vehicle for moral elevation and religious instruction—demonstrated in America.<sup>41</sup> In Australia at this time, according to Walter Phillips, 58.6% of the adult population of New South Wales attended church and a goodly number were Evangelicals.<sup>42</sup> Before Parkes's writing output diminished in the wake of her husband's death and her inability to generate her own income, she was contributing heavily to Australian-focused Evangelical fiction.

Parkes's work also explores socio-cultural issues specific to colonial life, which invite further speculation. "Fallen by the Way," for example, makes the newly opened Parramatta to Sydney railway central to the increasing dissipation of the protagonist. The serial implies that this new suburbanisation of domesticity breaks down the closeness of family life by separating it from a man's working life in the city. In a more peculiarly Australian concern, the protagonist of her first Ariel story, "Bitter Sweet," is a half-Aboriginal man who works as a barrister, moves in the highest echelons of Sydney society, and marries a white woman, to the accompaniment of authorial asides about the mistreatment of Aboriginal Australians. And all this in 1860.

The point that this paper would like to emphasise is this: as the recent but increasingly stable misattribution of the Ariel stories shows, some nineteenth-century authors slip easily through the cracks, whether or not the identity behind the pseudonym was known at the time. Even when material asserting their identity is available now, as it was with Martin's collection of letters, the misattribution can stand: neither of the researchers for this paper would have

<sup>39</sup> Elisabeth Jay, *The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Audrey Tate, *Ada Cambridge: Her Life and Work 1844–1926* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1991), 32.

<sup>41</sup> Lynn S. Neal, *Romancing God: Evangelical Women and Inspirational Fiction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 20.

<sup>42</sup> Walter Phillips, "Religious Profession and Practice in New South Wales, 1850–1901: The Statistical Evidence," *Historical Studies* 15 (1972): 385.

consulted *Letters from Menie* had they not been directed there through a variety of other sources, since there was little apart from the letters to link Parkes directly to the works.

Perhaps, as Martin indicates, quality of fiction plays a role in such disappearances. But, more importantly, so too do the publishing conditions of nineteenth-century fiction and, more specifically, early Australian fiction. Anonymous or pseudonymous publications may never be traceable in the absence of ancillary sources. The inability to obtain, without personal expenditure, publication in three-volume form contributes directly (as John Sutherland's work shows) to the author's invisibility to modern scholars. In the absence of viable book publication, authors relied on periodicals as a reliable source of income; even if the periodicals themselves, always a more ephemeral form of publication, have not disappeared in the intervening century, their contents often remain unindexed and therefore obscure.

When we add to these factors the relative sparseness of Parkes's output, it becomes less inexplicable that she slipped away from her own work, to be replaced by an author who, though also relatively obscure, had a more lasting fame and a stronger public presence than did Parkes. At some future point, it might be valuable to think about Parkes's works in the broader field of nineteenth-century Evangelical fiction or fictional treatments of Aboriginal Australians. For now, it is sufficient to affirm that, despite disappearing from the record of Australian literature for over a century, Menie Parkes was the author of the Ariel stories.

*Griffith University and University of Queensland*