



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong
Research Online

Faculty of Arts - Papers (Archive)

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

2011

America, the forbidden fruit: anti-American sentiment in "Robbery Under Arms"

James Dahlstrom
University of Wollongong

Publication Details

Dahlstrom, J. 2011, 'America, the forbidden fruit: anti-American sentiment in "Robbery Under Arms"', *Antipodes*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 145-150.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:
research-pubs@uow.edu.au

America, the Forbidden Fruit: Anti-American Sentiment in *Robbery Under Arms*

JAMES DAHLSTROM
The University of Wollongong

WHILE ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT AND QUESTIONS OF Americanization in Australian Literature emerged in earnest after World War II (Mosler and Catley 26–7), historical research suggests that Australians have had a love–hate relationship with Americans since the establishment of the first colonies. Adverse feelings toward citizens of the United States seemed to intensify during periods of dynamic social change such as Australia’s gold rush and these anti-American attitudes can be found, for example, in Rolf Boldrewood’s adventure narrative *Robbery Under Arms*. Australian conservatives of this period often feared that American values and influences would threaten Australia’s British foundations, leading to chaos and a disruption of the order instilled by the British establishment. This belief seemed to be based on California’s reputation for lawlessness, due in part to the establishment of vigilance committees.¹ Likewise, the gold rush itself turned the British class system on its head, creating what appeared to be an American society by reversing, through sudden wealth, the master–servant relationship that had existed for centuries. Conservatives argued that a pastoral life with a focus on domesticity was the only way to combat the over-excitement brought about by gold rush society, an idea that seemed at odds with contemporary American thought. This anti-American sentiment can be drawn out by examining the novel in its historical context, by placing the author in this historical context, and by treating the novel as colonial narrative.

Robbery Under Arms is a very popular novel, which according to Ken Goodwin is “probably the best of the bushranger novels” (4), and while much work has been written on the narrative, the question of America’s influence has largely been ignored. The novel is a first-person narrative written by Dick Marston, a man who is in jail on charges of murder. It is a reflection on his life and the mistakes he has made. Likewise, it is a tale of adventure, beginning with his and his brother’s experiences of helping their father with cattle and horse stealing and then chronicling their ultimate demise as they enter into large-scale cattle stealing and bushranging. A portion of the novel shows Dick and his brother working on the goldfields. Even though their next-door neighbor, George Storefield, is seldom present in the narrative, he might be understood to represent the life that Dick and Jim could have and should have had. His patience, persistence, and hard work are rewarded as he amasses a fortune and becomes a respected pillar of the community. The success of his life—a stark contrast to the principles attributed

to the Americans—is built upon the ideals of agriculture and domesticity and sharply differs from the fate of the Marston brothers: Dick is in jail and Jim is shot and killed. After Dick has served twelve years in jail, George provides him with a job on an outback station, which sees him return to his agricultural roots and overcome the disruption that bushranging and gold mining proved to be.

AMERICA’S INVOLVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA AND PERCEPTIONS OF AMERICANS

The events leading up to Australia’s gold rush are suggestive of the importance of America’s contributions, which would continue throughout the period. To begin with, the gold discoveries in 1851 that started Australia’s rush were made by Jim Esmond in Victoria at Clunes and Edward Hammond Hargraves in New South Wales at Lewis Ponds Creek. Both men were miners returned from California who found the landscapes of Australia and California to be remarkably similar and who used the skills they had learned in America to begin prospecting (Aitchison 45). With these gold discoveries came an influx of immigration to Australia. Its “total population trebled from 430,000 in 1851 to 1.7 million in 1871” (“The Australian”), with approximately 39% of these new immigrants being “Californians” (Potts and Potts 50). In 1853, “Australia eclipsed California as *the El Dorado* [. . .] drawing many Americans who would never have considered going to California” (Potts and Potts 34). In addition to the population explosion, technological advances and new products were being introduced into the country; many of these were American, often the result of California’s previous experience with a gold rush. In order to encourage trade, the governments of the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria gave British and American ships equal access to ports and abolished preferential duties so that goods from America began pouring into the country (Bartlett 125).

People from America brought with them a variety of commodities and technology, including prefabricated houses, Oregon lumber, ring-barking, hickory-handled axes, windmill pumps, barbed wire, methods of irrigation, stoves, canned vegetables, sewing machines, and India-rubber clothing. Australian miners welcomed American technological influences such as rockers, sluicing, ore crushing, belt pumps, hydraulic engineering, and also welcomed the persistence of Americans who have

been credited with the discovery of several of Australia's gold fields (Potts and Potts 52–62). Americans were responsible for the establishment of fire brigades in Melbourne, raising \$16,000 in a few hours, after several fires destroyed much of the new settlement (Aitchison 51). Nonetheless, for those conservative segments of Australian society who viewed the gold rush in negative terms, these advancements were further proof that America was a driving force behind an event which they labeled the “great curse” (Goodman 170).

Not only did Americans bring their commodities and technical knowledge, which were seen to be Americanizing Australia, but also an American, George Train, was responsible for establishing telegraph lines—built by Sam McGowan, another American who emigrated to Australia in 1853—and a railway between Melbourne's dock and the city's central business district. Additionally, the operators of the first outback trains and coaches were Americans (Aitchison 52; Bartlett 125, 130, 132, 151; Bell and Bell 19–20). American carts, buggies and coaches proved useful in Australia's outback, making their way through terrain that had previously been thought of as impassable for such vehicles (R. Ward 162–3). At the same time, many visitors believed that Melbourne “with its grid-plan, style of architecture and bristling telegraph and telephone poles, had an American look” (Bartlett 169). George Train wrote in a letter home, “You will be surprised to see how fast this place is becoming Americanised” (qtd. in Aitchison 51).

While some embraced America's influence, there was another segment of Australian society that resented it, “foreseeing the time when Americans would make Victoria more lawless even than California” (Potts and Potts 28). In late 1851, the *Melbourne Morning Herald* wrote that Victoria would soon be another California where “robbery and murder will be rife on every side, and Judge Lynch will take his seat among us” (qtd. in Goodman 70). Meanwhile, William Howitt, a traveling English author, complained in his 1855 publication *Two Years in Victoria* that the Victorian colonists “pride themselves on fast assuming the American type [. . .] They go ahead in everything except order, cleanliness, effective police, good taste and security of property” (22). A fear surfaced during the gold rush that America was secretly planning to annex Australia through the “Order of the Lone Star,” and credits Americans with fuelling the Eureka uprising (Potts and Potts 176; Aitchison 56).

CONTEMPORARY REACTIONS TO AMERICA'S INFLUENCE

Contemporary conservative thinkers characterized the Americans as a passion-governed, restless and fickle people and saw California's lawless reputation as a contradiction to the institutional solidity and calm that was supposed to be a part of the fabric of a British colony (Potts and Potts 161). Historian James Ward, for example, remarked on the “higher social discipline” on Australian gold fields that lacked the presence of the “reckless, rollicking, devil-may-care, desperado character” found in California (15). The *Mount Alexander Mail* commented that “the ‘Vigilance Committees’ in California could not be emulated on the Gold Fields of this colony without disorganising our whole social system” (qtd. in Goodman 70). Moreover, gold

was a threat to the established British hierarchy, which assured that positions of governance and dominance were appropriately held. The master-servant relationship was being turned on its head as strength was rewarded over cerebral talents (Goodman 41–2, 61). This reversal seemed to be a model of American society. In 1858, the *Dublin University Magazine* exemplified a commonly held perception of America when it claimed that Americans did not have “the nucleus of an organised society” (“The Homes” 298). In this context, one could argue that the aforementioned disruption to the class structure seemed to be a signal that Australia was becoming too much like America.

In contrast to the social thought in America where self-interest was seen as an incentive to ultimately creating a better society, in Australia self-interest was a vice to overcome by attributes that were perceived as nobler and more social (Goodman 14). “The gold rushes,” as Goodman explains, “presented the spectacle of a society made up of men pursuing wealth to the neglect of all else” (24), and Melbourne's Anglican Bishop, Charles Perry, worried that gold might cause the destruction of social order, based on the example of contemporary California (58). He was concerned that those gaining wealth would not know how to use it and would waste it and believed that the acquisition of wealth by gold digging did not reflect a person's true worth. Finally, he argued that men pursuing gold weakened the family by abandoning them in the pursuit (Goodman 58–9, 170).

Perry's arguments seemed to be a rebuttal to the perceptions held about society in contemporary California. For example, there was a radical belief proposed in 1852 by the Miners and Settlers Convention in California that “the gold rush was supposed to create and support a society of equals.” America was also characterized by social mobility and a lack of fixity; Californians praised the “irresponsible freedom” of youth (Goodman 14, 55, 211). Another negative perception, as historian Kevin Starr argues, was that California was “characterized by an essential selfishness and an underlying instability, a fixation upon the quick acquisition of wealth” which he argues were seen as American traits (65–6). The picture that emerges from an Australian conservative position is one of American selfishness, individuality, and disregard for societal traditions contrasted against the collectivist ethos developing in Australia.

As evident in Perry's objections, contemporary conservative and religious leaders often addressed the problems brought about by greed for gold using the language of agrarianism and domesticity (Goodman 158). However, the realities of contemporary Californian society seemed at odds with the ideals of agrarianism and domesticity. For example, in 1850 the census revealed that 92 percent of California's population was male (Paul 82). According to Hinton Helper, American author and social critic, this lack of female presence was responsible for the “wild excitement, degeneracy, dissipation and deplorable conditions of affairs” in California (114). Henry Veel Huntley wrote that excitement “is the food of the American mind; with it the American acknowledges no restraint—without it, his exertions scarcely supply his wants; he is either impetuously bounding forward, or idly depending upon others” (222). Thus America was often depicted as a place that existed in opposition to the

calm and orderly lifestyle supposedly characteristic of British society; domesticity and agrarianism were encouraged to prevent Australia from becoming the next California. This is the social backdrop against which *Robbery Under Arms* was written.

THE CONTEXT OF BROWNE'S BACKGROUND

Rolf Boldrewood is the *nom de plum* used by Thomas Alexander Browne and a reading of the *Robbery Under Arms* that draws out its anti-American sentiment suggest that Browne subscribed to the conservative and religious beliefs and attitudes of his time. According to T. Inglis Moore, Browne "had the beliefs and prejudices of his age and his class [. . .] He cherished an almost naïve respect of aristocracy [. . .] As a conservative squatter he disapproved of democracy" (28). Having been raised with all the best advantages in his home and schooling, he seems to have had a desire to be thought of as "high society," as indicated by the addition of the "e" to his name in the 1860s (Moore 1, 4–5, 28). The significance of this additional "e" is illuminated in Miles Franklin's *Up the Country*, when a "scion of the English aristocracy" who was "reared with all the refinements of the professional classes of the old country" adds the "e" to her new husband's last name in an attempt to give her progeny all the advantages that high society afforded (27, 31, 108).

Reading *Robbery Under Arms* for its anti-American sentiment, it becomes apparent that Browne too viewed the gold rush as an unwanted disruption to the established class system and the order of traditional British society, and like his conservative and religious contemporaries, he found the answer to this disruption in a proposed return to agrarianism and a focus on domesticity. One could read Boldrewood's novel *The Miner's Right* as confirmation that he held the views of his contemporaries; for as Goodman argues, it poses "a set of challenges to order and authority. The ability of men to shed their past on the fields was a part of this threat [to society]" (9). Keeping this in mind, when one contrasts the lives of Dick Marston, the narrator, his brother Jim, and his neighbor George Storefield, *Robbery Under Arms* can be read as a contemporary conservative and religious reaction to the perceived threat to established British society in Australia that the gold rush and associated American influence posed.

To begin with, Boldrewood's narrator, Dick Marston, makes it clear that he is writing in the hopes of teaching a lesson to his readers and sparing them from the tragedies that have befallen him (Boldrewood 5). While in jail he "repents" of all that he has done wrong—describing his descent into a life of crime as a "wrong turn-off" that made him "lose his way"—and decides to be a better person (487). The subtext of these passages represents his life as a gold miner and a bushranger as a disruption to the life that he should have been living, the life to which he ultimately returns: a pastoral and agricultural one. As Goodman explains, "The pastoral narrative provided a language for naming the disruption of the colonial—it held out possibilities for colonial life which were quite at odds with the gold-mining present" (134)² that according to Browne and his cohorts had been negatively affected by American practices and American values. Thus it is in the language of the pastoral—Dick returning to a

life on a farm—that Boldrewood restores not only his protagonist but also a fledgling Australia.

THE MARSTONS AND THEIR HOMESTEAD

As the novel opens, Dick introduces his readers to himself and to his family. His father Ben is a Protestant Englishman transported to Australia for poaching, while his mother is Irish, Catholic and a free settler. His sister Aileen, like their mother, is imbued with the typical characteristics attributed to females in the Victorian period who were associated with "the home, consumption, reproduction—a domestic set of virtues" (Goodman 154). This combination allows the family to represent all aspects of Australia's settler society and, as Sargeson argues, allows Dick to speak "for a whole continent" (264). He and Jim are, according to H. M. Green, "the first thoroughly Australian characters in fiction" (255). Therefore, one might conclude that Dick's thoughts, attitudes, and experiences are representative of the Australian society to which Dick belongs.

This representation can also be extended to the Marston homestead. It is a small farm, and while Dick does write that it only produces enough for the family to survive, there is a sense throughout the novel that if their father had only worked steadily and honestly, he would have been successful (Boldrewood 15, 35, 235, 461). Instead Dick's father is regularly involved in stealing cattle. One might initially conclude that the stealing of cattle was necessary to support the family. However, Dick makes it clear that while the land may not have always provided them with an abundance of crops, and while they may have had some hard times, the farm certainly produced enough for them to live on (7). The reason that his father steals is because he has sworn vengeance upon the aristocracy for his transportation to Australia over a single hare (33, 50). It is not for want that Ben Marston steals cattle; instead, Dick's Australia is full of opportunity for those who are willing to work honestly for it. Thus later in the novel, the reason that Dick wants to leave his farm and go to America is not because it lacks potential, but because he is running away from the law.

This is a crucial concept in the narrative for two overlapping reasons. The first goes back to the notion that *Robbery Under Arms* is a didactic tale. The lesson is that crime is unnecessary and will ultimately lead to a person's failure. If his father had needed to steal in order to feed the family, it would have served to contradict the basic moral that Dick is trying to teach. The second reason is that Browne's story is trying to promote an agricultural and pastoral lifestyle, which reflects the contemporary agrarian ideal that farming would end unemployment and create happy and prosperous homes (Goodman 120). George Storefield has a farm much like the Marston's and he is never required to engage in criminal activity to succeed. Such a circumstance—that Dick's father *needed* to steal cattle to help feed his family—would undermine the novel's assertion that true success and upward social mobility are available to diligent, patient, and persistent people (Docker 143), and might discourage its readers from accepting the agricultural lifestyle that is otherwise promoted therein.³ In this setting one can sense that for Browne, Australia is the land of opportunity, while America is presented

more like a mirage, the pursuit of which ultimately leaves the Marstons unfulfilled.

THE DISRUPTION

As the novel progresses, Dick explains how he and Jim are drawn into their father's life of crime. One of the reasons Dick gives for this is a lack of excitement on the farm (Boldrewood 17, 30). This concept that Dick's life lacks excitement is reinforced on his first visit to the gold diggings: "No wonder some of the young fellows kicked over the traces for a change—a change from [. . .] the same old thing every day [. . .] It does seem a dead-and-live kind of life after all we've seen and done since" (257–8). In this passage, Dick shows the seductive nature of the goldfields. The excitement that it holds tempts young men to give up their regular work, making it look as though the pastoral and agrarian lifestyle has very little to offer. Hence for Dick Marston the excitement of a life on the goldfields is a temptation to overcome; it is a disruption to the "norm" that will and should come to an end soon. This is made clear when the older Dick, who has succumbed to the temptation and has since seen the error of his ways, reminds his audience that it would have been better for all of them had they never left their agrarian employment (258). Despite its lack of excitement, life on the farm is presented as Dick's true calling—"the honest work he should always have done" (Docker 136)—and by association a general call for Australian society to value that work.

One might be asking: where are the Americans in all this? The answer lies in the previously discussed perceptions of America held by Browne's contemporaries that excitement, greed, and individualism were thought of as American traits. Docker argues that the goldfields represent an "American-style" society (140) and suggests that "what most excites the characters we are invited to sympathize with is urban and cosmopolitan life, preferably American" (139). Examining the above passage in *Robbery Under Arms* in this context reveals that Dick and the other young Australians who are leaving their employment in droves to mine for gold are being tempted away from their life's vocation by ideals that are attributed to Americans. This is not to deny that there were American thinkers who were also endorsing an agrarian lifestyle, but rather to acknowledge that the novel is a reflection of a particular strain of Australian thought that saw American values and America's influence as dangerous to Australia's settler lifestyle—as a temptation to overcome. This want of excitement, and the associated desire for something seen as American in nature, is a "thematic strand in the novel" (Turner 242). It is partly responsible for Dick's descent into a life of crime, his drinking, and his attraction to the gold fields. Thus, Dick's proclamation that he would have been better off staying on the farm suggests a disapproving reaction to American influence in Australia.

As the story continues, Dick shows his readers how he and Jim cross the line into a criminal life from which there is seemingly no return. Through this depiction, he also addresses contemporary questions of domesticity. A comparison of Dick to his brother Jim is the primary vehicle through which this discussion takes place. Jim is portrayed as tougher (69) and faster than Dick, beating him to Miss Falkland's rescue twice (75, 339).

He is more attractive to women and is much more comfortable around them, even rescuing Dick from an awkward silence with Grace (126–7). Aside from Grace Storefield, everyone likes Jim better (299). One of the lessons in the novel is that, had Dick followed Jim's advice instead of influencing Jim's decisions for the worse, the brothers would have been as successful as George Storefield. Thus, Jim is presented as a model man, one of the heroes of the novel, and his death is a tragedy, "particularly in light of his more 'evil' brother's salvation" (Rosenberg 13). Jim's character reflects a clear endorsement of the value of domesticity, whereas Dick's undomesticated lifestyle—a reflection of the reality of contemporary California society—is ultimately responsible for the tragedy that befalls Jim.

First, one of the consequences of their cattle stealing and bushranging lifestyle is that the Marston men cannot go home, and the women must fend for themselves. One might argue that this is characteristic of Australia's settler society, as seen in Henry Lawson's short story "The Drover's Wife," and reinforced in *Robbery Under Arms*, since even George leaves home for long periods of time as he is building up his business. The difference, however, is that George is still able to care for his family; his farm is constantly being improved and he even keeps the Marston women at his house when their farm is no longer fit for them to live on (368–9). Accordingly, Dick's narrative suggests that, in terms of a disruption to domestic life, gold mining is akin to cattle stealing and bushranging. As Goodman's aforementioned argument suggests, in both occupations men abandoned their families. It also implies that Australia's traditional pastoral lifestyle is compatible with the values of domesticity. Hence when, throughout the novel, Jim's character is cast as one who is not meant for the bushranging life,⁴ readers would not interpret this as a critique of Jim's masculinity, but rather an endorsement of the ideals of a domestic life, which stood in opposition to the realities of California's gold rush society: a society that Browne did not want to see replicated in Australia.

Jim, Dick tells his readers, "was born good" and intended to lead a good life, but he had the misfortune of being related to Dick and their father (78). In the beginning of the novel, it is Jim who wants to work honestly, while Dick influences Jim's decisions (21–2, 30, 83–4). If it had been left in Jim's hands, the brothers never would have become criminals, and they would have been able to care for the Marston women the way George cared for his mother and sister. It is further significant when, after Dick's gang steals the huge herd of cattle to sell in Adelaide, Jim meets and falls in love with and ultimately marries Jeanie, because it shows that Jim is meant to live a domestic lifestyle. In contrast, Dick and Starlight both feel that bushrangers should not have any family ties (305). The important aspect of the relationship, however, is Jeanie's effect on Jim. Dick writes of Jim: "I really believe he'd made up his mind to go straight from the very hour he was buckled to Jeanie; and if he'd only had common luck he'd have been as square and right as George Storefield" (263). In this passage, one can read the contemporary conservative thought about man's need for woman, as Jeanie has the effect of turning Jim into a model citizen. Domesticity is the answer to Jim's restlessness and he willingly

embraces its values, becoming almost the perfect man. While it takes Dick longer to learn this lesson, ultimately domesticity cures his restlessness as well.

Domesticity, then, is presented in the novel as a way for Australia to avoid the kind of restless society that contemporary thinkers believed existed in California and the connection to America is reinforced by Dick's behavior after Jim gets married. Jim moves into a small cottage with Jeanie and begins spending all of his free time with her (272), which prompts Dick to associate more frequently with an American. Dick writes: "I wasn't married like Jim, and it not being very lively in the tent at night, Arizona Bill and I mostly used to stroll up to the Prospectors' Arms" (277). During these visits to the pub, Dick spends a lot of time "yarning" with Kate, the woman who betrays them, giving her the impression that he is still in love with her. Just before the brothers are planning to get away to America, Kate finds a letter from Grace Storefield, which prompts her betrayal (285-6). Again, it is Dick's need for excitement that motivates him to socialize with Arizona Bill, reinforcing a connection between America and excitement, and ultimately ends in Jim's tragic death. Through this incident, the text suggests that, had Dick been more like Jim and embraced the domestic life, Jim's death could have been avoided.

A RELIGIOUS VIEW OF AMERICA

As a final point, the question of excitement as an American trait underscores one of the novel's primary metaphors for America: a seductive anti-Eden. I have argued in an earlier essay that the novel can be read as a Christian allegory and one could therefore examine America's place in it in religious terms. In Christianity, excitement is often noted as a characteristic of sin, a concept that is derived from the depiction of the fruit of knowledge of good and evil that tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3: 1-6) and reinforced by John Milton's retelling of the event in *Paradise Lost* (4: 522-7; 9: 567-1045). In *Robbery Under Arms*, Dick's criminal life, his life of sin, is also portrayed as exciting. In the context of the contemporary thought that excitement is an American trait, the novel subtly associates America with a life of sin. This is especially apparent when Dick and Jim are planning their escape to America. For, as Docker notes, "America beckons to them as a 'new world [. . .] a new life', its society apparently an extension at large of the exciting bustling life of the Turon goldfields" (139). For the brothers, America seems like the fulfillment of their search for excitement (Boldrewood 258). It is not just a temptation, but it is the ultimate temptation. America, the text suggests, is the amplification of the forbidden fruit that tempted Eve.

There are other parallels in support of a reading of America as a forbidden fruit. Just as Eve initially resisted the temptation, so too do the brothers. In fact, at first the thought of getting away to America, Dick writes, is "like death" to them (107), just as the forbidden fruit would bring death to Adam and Eve (Gen 2:17). The use of this simile resonates with the fact that Adam and Eve did not literally die after eating the fruit (Gen 3:6). Then, after this initial resistance, the brothers are convinced that America is the only place where they can live freely (Boldrewood 438). "Once in

America," Dick explains, "we'd be in a new world, and there'd be nothing to stop us from leading a new life" (439). Just as Eve ultimately gave in to temptation, so too do the Marston brothers, even though they never actually make it to America. The phrase "new life" could also be read in religious terms. At the end of the novel, after Dick has served his time in jail, he claims that he is living a new life; he feels as if he were "just born" (502), which leaves the reader with the impression that he has experienced a spiritual rebirth. It is in the contrast between these two "new lives" that one gets a sense of how America is represented. In the second instance when he uses the phrase "new life," Dick has been caught and repented of his life of crime. The first instance, however, represents an escape from justice. So his "new life" in America represents a counterpoint to the "new life" he actually lives at the end. In religious terms, this is a reflection of the concept of virtue and vice as discussed, for example, by C. S. Lewis in his apology *Mere Christianity* (121). In this light, the novel represents America as the vice against which Australia is the virtue and seems to indicate that allowing Australia to become like America might result in the loss of an Australian paradise.

CONCLUSION

Robbery Under Arms is a novel that is set during a time in which Australia was experiencing major social upheaval because of the gold rush. For many prominent conservative thinkers, America was the driving force behind much of the social change. There was a reactionary movement that perceived the gold rush, and the involvement of Americans in that rush, as a threat to Australia's fledgling society based on established British norms. For these thinkers, the language of domesticity and agrarianism were the answer to the question of stability in Australia. The novel itself seems to reflect the view held by conservative and religious leaders that America's presence threatened Australian society. It is clear that Australia is Dick's paradise and America its counterpoint, for at the end of the novel Dick's redemption comes not from escape but from the generosity of his Australian neighbors. While he and Jim may have found some success on the goldfields, it is not the kind of success they could really take pride in. Instead, they intended to sneak away to America, an idea which at first seems like death to them. In moral terms, George Storefield, who stays on his farm and does not need the excitement that led Marstons astray, is the real hero of the story. He represents the transplanting of British values in Australia. By reading the novel in these terms, it becomes apparent that it, too, represents a reaction to American influence and portrays that influence in Australia in a disapproving light. □

NOTES

¹ For many people, California's government during the gold rush seemed to be inefficient, corrupt, and lacked the ability to cope with the massive surge in population. In response to the need for order, businessmen and other community leaders formed vigilance committees that took control of government functions and meted out justice as they saw fit, often disregarding the formalities of the United States Constitution and a person's right to due process.

² While it is true that David Goodman is an historian rather than a literary scholar, his interpretation of the colonial narrative is particularly useful in this situation as it is based on the cultural norms of the gold rush society in Australia.

³ One might argue that Browne's own failure as a pastoralist (Moore 8–9) informs a reading of the novel that would provide a rationale for Ben Marston's stealing of cattle and perhaps justify the occasional stealing of cattle. Considering Browne's conservative and religious affiliations, such an argument seems highly unlikely. Conservative thinking at the time maintained that agriculture would build the kind of society that Australia needed (Goodman 87), and, of course, in religious terms stealing is prohibited by the eighth commandment. Such an argument would also have to ignore the success of George Storefield and the numerous occasions in which Dick advises his readers that he would have been better had he kept working hard on the farm instead of being involved in stealing cattle.

⁴ Examples that might cause one to question Jim's masculinity and suitability for a bushranging life include his need for more sleep than the others (197, 342), his collapse after riding all night after he is rescued by Dick (299–300), his emotional frailty (287–8), and his general attitude about money and towards women (126, 256, 267).

WORKS CITED

- Aitchison, Ray. *The Americans in Australia*. Melbourne, Australia: AE Press, 1986.
- Bartlett, Norman. *Australia and America Through 200 Years*. Sydney: Ure Smith, 1976.
- Bell, Phillip and Roger Bell. *Implicated: The United States in Australia*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1993.
- Boldrewood, Rolf. *Robbery Under Arms: A Story of Life and Adventure in the Bush and in the Goldfields of Australia*. South Melbourne: Macmillan of Australia, 1967.
- Dahlstrom, James. "Dick the Prophet: the 'Allegorical Tendencies' in *Robbery Under Arms*." *Antipodes* 25.1 (2011).
- Docker, John. "Postmodernism, Cultural History and the Feminist Legend of the Nineties: *Robbery Under Arms*, the Novel, the Play." *The 1890s: Australian Literature and Literary Culture*. Ed. Ken Stewart. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1996. 128–49.
- Franklin, Miles. *Up the Country: A Saga of Pioneering Days*. North Ryde, Australia: Angus & Robertson, 1984.
- Goodman, David. *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s*. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1994.
- Goodwin, Ken. *A History of Australian Literature*. London: Macmillan, 1986.
- Green, H. M. *A History of Australian Literature, Pure and Applied, Volume I*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1984.
- Helper, Hinton R. *The Land of Gold: Reality Versus Fiction*. Baltimore, MD: H. Taylor, 1855.
- Howitt, William. *Land Labour and Gold*. Kilmore, Australia: Lowden Publishing Co., 1972.
- Huntley, Henry Veil. *California: its Gold and its Inhabitants*. London: T. C. Newby, 1856.
- Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2005.
- Moore, T. Inglis. *Great Australians: Rolf Boldrewood*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Mosler, David and Bob Catley. *America and Americans in Australia*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1998.
- Paul, Rodman W. *Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1947.
- Potts, E. Daniel and Annette Potts. *Young America and Australian Gold: Americans and the Gold Rush of the 1850s*. St. Lucia: U of Queensland P, 1974.
- Rosenberg, Jerome H. "Narrative Perspective and Cultural History in *Robbery Under Arms*." *Australian Literary Studies* 6 (1973): 11–23.
- Sargeson, Frank. "Robbery Under Arms." *Landfall* 4 (1950): 262–5.
- Starr, Kevin. *Americans and the California Dream, 1850–1915*. New York: Oxford UP, 1973.
- "The Australian Gold Rush." *Australian Government: Culture and Recreation Portal*. 13 March 2009. <<http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/goldrush/>>.
- "The Homes of the South." *Dublin University Magazine* 52 (1858): 298–312. <<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030838422;page=root;view=image;size=100;seq=332;num=298>>.
- Turner, Graeme. "Ripping Yarns, Ideology and *Robbery Under Arms*." *Australian Literary Studies* 14 (1989): 239–50.
- The Bible: New International Version*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984. Accessed electronically in March 2009 at <<http://www.biblegateway.com/>>
- Ward, James. *A History of Gold as a Commodity and as a Measure of Value: its Fluctuations Both in Ancient and Modern Times, with an Estimate of the Probable Supplies from California and Australia*. London: W. S. Orr, 1852.
- Ward, Russel. *The Australian Legend*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, 1958.

JAMES DAHLSTROM graduated from Arizona State University with a BA in German and later completed a certificate in Secondary English Education. Recently, he completed a MA by Research in Australian Literature at the University of Wollongong and is hoping to begin a PhD at the University of Sydney soon.

Copyright of Full Text rests with the original copyright owner and, except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, copying this copyright material is prohibited without the permission of the owner or its exclusive licensee or agent or by way of a license from Copyright Agency Limited. For information about such licences contact Copyright Agency Limited on (02) 93947600 (ph) or (02) 93947601 (fax)