# Miniature Literary Marketplaces: Conceptions of Authorship in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Fiction

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Cardiff University

2020

# Abstract

Drawing together Braddon's writing and the rapidly evolving Victorian literary world, this thesis examines the remarkable number of fictional authors in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novels. Miniature literary marketplaces are found in the pages of *The Doctor's Wife, The Lady's Mile, Birds of Prey, Charlotte's Inheritance, Dead-Sea Fruit, Hostages to Fortune, Vixen, One Thing Needful, His Darling Sin,* and *The Infidel,* an array of novels stretching across Braddon's exceptional career. The first chapter traces Braddon's life and literary career as she negotiated between capitalising on her (in)famous status as queen of sensation fiction and influentially participating in contemporary literary fashions. The second chapter explores the practicalities of the literary profession illustrated in Braddon's novels. Braddon unflinchingly acknowledges the marriages, households, and collaborations intertwined with professional authorship. Serialisation was integral to the Victorian literary profession and chapter three hones in on *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation in *Belgravia*; I examine Braddon as author and editor strategically confronting her position as target for fears surrounding the commodification of literature and anxieties about the place of women writers in the Victorian literary sphere. The final chapter makes the unlikely pairing of Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Sarah Grand, and their metafictional novels *The Infidel* and *The Beth Book*. Despite their differences, these women writers used their fictional writers to consciously enter contemporary conversations on female authorship.

The project examines how Braddon's metafiction depicts not only her experience as a writer but her understanding of the multifarious Victorian literary marketplace, love of literature, and commitment to forging a commercially successful career. Braddon's conflicting desires and contentious place in the periodical press are echoed in her self-conscious and often confrontational representations of authorship. This thesis explores these fascinating fictional writers as a window into Braddon's career and the Victorian literary marketplace.

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost I wish to thank my supervisor Professor Holly Furneaux for constantly inspiring and endlessly encouraging me. My heartfelt thanks for her generosity, invaluable enthusiasm for my research, and understanding.

Great thanks go to Professor Julia Thomas for investing her interest in my project throughout, but particularly for offering reassurance and expertise when she was my cover supervisor.

I am grateful to the School of English, Communication, and Philosophy for the research community, funding for conferences, and I have loved teaching. Many academic and professional staff have offered help, and I especially appreciate Dr Becky Munford and Rhian Rattray for their kind encouragement and support.

Over all the years I have worked alongside amazing fellow PhD students who have brought a wealth of discussions, appreciated feedback on ideas, and emotional support: I am grateful for every last one of those chats, cups of tea, and pieces of cake. I particularly appreciate Emily Blewitt, Siriol McAvoy, Devika Karnard, Alaa Alghamdi, Lucy Whitehead, David Mason, and Nick Viner for sharing their time and knowledgeable advice; special thanks are to Laura Foster for her insight and our shared love of Silent Witness. I am indebted to a multitude of friends beyond the PhD world for their understanding. Particularly big thanks go to Jo Clark, Darren and Lucilla Scott-Jones, and Katie-Jayne Thomas for their patience and cheering me on through it all.

An enormous thank you to my brother for always spurring me on and making me laugh. Utmost gratitude is for my Mum’s and Dad’s support in a myriad of ways, and their unwavering trust in me; you have my thanks and loves.

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# Introduction

*Miss Braddon said to us, with a smile,*
*"I can quite truthfully say that from the time I was able to read a story without having to whisper the words as I read them books have been my chief delight"*[1]

Mary Elizabeth Braddon spoke these words in an interview for the *Bookman* in 1912 at tzahe very end of her exceptional career; books were her '"chief delight"', her fame, and her income for her whole life. Braddon's remarkably successful and prolific career as a professional author offers a fascinating and unique insight into the literary marketplace through the second half of the nineteenth century, even into the beginning of the twentieth, with her final novel, *Mary*, published posthumously in 1916.[2] The diversity of genres, styles, and readerships of Mary Elizabeth Braddon's writing, as well as the multiplicity of authorial roles she occupied, exemplify the complexity and instability of the Victorian literary sphere. Metatextual moments pervade her fiction; most overtly, Braddon's fictional writers exemplify her self-consciousness and contentious place within the commercial literary sphere. This thesis explores the Victorian literary marketplace and Braddon's construction of professional authorship within her novels. Examining the dual perspective that Braddon's fictional writers offer, the project considers how Braddon herself is constructed by the literary marketplace, in reviews, in readerships, and in popularity. In tandem it looks at the construction of authorship in Braddon's novels from the beginning of her career in the 1860s to its end in the 1910s.

The mid-nineteenth century saw a seismic change in how the author was constructed as writers shaped the refashioning of the figure as a professional. Integral to the relationship between the writer, the novel, and the reader are the interactions between the producer, the commodity, and the buyer. Professional authorship remained a topic of debate and contention throughout the Victorian period. The figures of the author and the professional press challenged constructions of respectability, commerce, and gender. Fictional authors populate a large number of nineteenth-century novels, perhaps the most well-known being Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850), Thackeray's *Pendennis* (1850), and Gissing's *New Grub Street*

[1] Clive Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, July 1912, pp. 149–157 (p. 155).
[2] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Mary* (London: Hutchinson, 1916).

(1891). Braddon was not forging her own literary technique, but, perhaps more importantly, was appropriating and manipulating the literary trope for her own ends. A remarkable number of Braddon's novels have characters who are authors, journalists, readers, editors, and reviewers. The diversity of these figures challenges the idea that they are straightforwardly autobiographical characters and my work examines how they reflect the contradictory, complex, and consuming literary world of which Braddon was at the heart. By using these characters as the lens for my project, the research turns away from Braddon as a sensation fiction writer in the mid-nineteenth century, to Braddon as an active participant and influence on the literary marketplace and culture throughout the whole Victorian period.

## What is an Author?

The tension between the individual and the institution pervaded Victorian concepts of professionalism, including authorship. In 1897 Herbert Spencer wrote on the idea of social organization formed by professional institutions.[3] Sociological perspectives on the radical reinvention of defining professionalism through the nineteenth century are offered by critics including Maglia Sarfatti Larson.[4] Arlene Young gives an historical perspective on professional women in the nineteenth century and the (re)definition of femininity that accompanied it.[5] Mariaconcetta Costantini also looks at wider concepts of professionalism across multiple roles and the periodical press as a site for discussions; she argues that the professional was 'a double-edged symbol of liberal individualism […] combining freedom with conformity to social rules'.[6] Costantini identifies the opposing ideals faced by authors that were tied up with the nineteenth-century redefinitions and reevaluations of profit, high- and low-brow forms, and genius.[7]

In the 1970s–80s, there was a cluster of seminal theoretical texts examining the concept of the author centred around the work of Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, whose

[3] See Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology* (1897–96), 3 vol. (New York: D. Appleton, 1897).
[4] See Maglia Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977).
[5] Young's work is on Victorian nurses and typists, but examines the broad cultural shifts in the dynamic between professional and the domestic, including examining the influence of fictional depictions on the social constructions. See Arlene Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman: Middle-Class Women and Work in Victorian England* (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019).
[6] Mariaconcetta Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism in the Victorian Novel* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015), p. 20 and p. 11.
[7] Ibid., p. 20.

essays, 'The Death of the Author' and 'What is an Author?' respectively, paved the way for a theoretical trend deconstructing the image of the isolated genius.[8] Both works criticise reading a literary work as the reflection of the author's emotions or their biography. Barthes argues for the 'removal of the Author' and seeing and reading only the language rather than the author.[9] Barthes's essay discusses the cost and limitations produced by the privileging of the author: 'To Assign an Author to a text is to impose a brake on it, to furnish it with a final signified, to close writing'.[10] Barthes instead constructs the reader as the space of cultural context, as they begin the act of reading separate from the text: the 'birth of the reader' is offered as the counterpoint to the 'death of the Author'.[11] Foucault argues that it is 'not enough, however, to repeat the empty affirmation that the author has disappeared'.[12] 'What is an Author?' examines the impact of the author's name, their oeuvre, ownership or appropriation, and the definition of literature on how critics and the public perceive the text and its writer. Acknowledging the influence of social context, Foucault explores the author's function or effect beyond each text, using the term 'sphere of discourse'.[13] Foucault emphatically removes the image of 'a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention' but does not claim to entirely remove the concept of the author themselves.[14] Foucault ends with the question, 'what difference does it make who is speaking?'[15]

'The Death of the Author' and 'What is an Author?' had a seismic effect on conceptions of authorship in literary theory. Barthes's and Foucault's presence in key works on literary theory such as Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory* and Catherine Belsey's *Critical Practice* attests to their impact.[16] In Eagleton's work, Barthes and Foucault are not dominant, yet the question 'What is Literature?' and the term 'authorial intention' pervade the discussion.[17] By exploring him alongside critics including Althusser, Derrida, and Lacan,

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[8] See Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', *The Rustle of Language*, trans., by Richard Howard (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 49–55 [originally in French 1967] and Michel Foucault, 'What is an author?', trans,. Josie V. Haran, *Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Robinson (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp. 101–120. [taken from 'Death of the Author', trans., Josie V. Haran, *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralisms Criticism*, ed. by Josie V. Haran, pp. 141–160 [1979] [originally in French in, *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie*].
[9] See Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', p. 51.
[10] Ibid., p. 53.
[11] Ibid., p. 55.
[12] Foucault, 'What is an Author?', p. 105.
[13] Interestingly, the example given to represent the entirety of nineteenth-century authors is Ann Radcliff as the founder of Gothic fiction, but found lacking compared to Freud or Marx. Ibid., p. 113.
[14] Ibid., p. 119.
[15] The question is a given by Foucault as a quotation from Beckett. Ibid., p. 120.
[16] See Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1st ed. 1983, last ed., 2008) and Catherine Belsey, *Critical Practice* (London: Routledge, 1st ed. 1980, 2nd ed. 2002).
[17] Eagleton considers the question 'What is Literature?' in his introduction and chapter two is centered around the concept of 'authorial intention'. See Eagleton, *Literary Theory*.

Belsey demonstrates Barthes's centrality to major shifts in literary theory, including examining the challenges made by post-Saussurean theorists on concepts of literature as an individual's reflection of reality stemming from Barthes.[18] Andrew Bennett's work explores how 'The Death of the Author' and 'What is an Author?' 'laid the foundations for later literary-critical and theoretical thinking about authors' and how the unstable dynamic between the author and their social context, their desires and emotions is inherent in literary criticism.[19] Seán Burke uses the title to overtly place his work within the trend, arguing that, paradoxically, 'the concept of the author is never more alive than when pronounced dead'.[20]

Rachel Sagner Buurma, however, argues that the Victorians already held the ideas which Barthes and Foucault offer; examining 'a collective notion of authorship' in the 1880–90s, she argues for a greater critical appreciation of interdependence, accusing Barthes and Foucault and others for oversimplifying Victorian print culture and concepts of the author.[21] Jennifer Ruth's *Novel Professions* offers a valuable examination of the powerful influence discussions around the reconceptualization of the author have had for Victorian literary studies.[22] Ruth argues that '[c]ritics of my generation inherited a set of profoundly influential Foucauldian works that revised the way we read the Victorian novel'.[23] Ruth also considers Marxism and Bourdieu, arguably choosing Bourdieu over Foucault, and the principal literary critics she examines are Mary Poovey, Philippa Levine, Daniel Hack, Nancy Armstrong, and Clare Pettitt.[24] Ruth criticizes Poovey's understanding of professionalism and the

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[18] Belsey also analyses the influence and failings of twentieth-century challenges of expressive realism, particularly New Criticism, Northrop Frye, Reader-Power. See Belsey, *Critical Practice*, pp. 4–7 and p. 13. Interestingly, Belsey's work, from the first edition in 1980 to the second in 2002, itself spans the changes with literary criticism. Belsey uses the term 'expressive realism' which is tied to the nineteenth century but continues in research, to define concepts of language as one individual's reflection of reality. Belsey states that, 'I use the term "post-Saussurean" not simply as in a chronological sense, but to identify work which traces a direct descent from the radical elements in Saussure's theory of the sign […] In Saussure's theory, language is a system of signs'. Ibid., p. 36.

[19] Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 8.

[20] Seán Burke, *The Death and Return of the Author* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1st ed. 1992, 3rd ed. 2008), p. xvi. Interestingly Burke categorizes authorship as either at the heart of philosophical understandings of the human mind, or a small section of literary criticism. Ibid., p. xxii.

[21] Rachel Sagner Buurma, 'Anonymity, Corporate Authority, and the Archive: The Production of Authorship in Late-Victorian England', *Victorian Studies*, 50.1 (2007), 15–42. Buurma is building on Marxist research such as Marcus who, in 'The Profession of the Author' (1995), examines Marxist ideas of 'alienation' and 'abstraction', the impact of advertising on femininity, commerce and the body. See Sharon Marcus, 'The Profession of the Author: Abstraction, Advertising, and *Jane Eyre*', *PMLA*, 110.2 (March, 1995), 206–219.

[22] Interestingly Ruth does not include Barthes in her work on professional authorship. See Jennifer Ruth, *Novel Professions* (Columbus: Ohio, 2006).

[23] Ibid., p. 8. Ruth lists works including, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), *Uneven Developments* (1988), and *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990). Pervading Ruth's work is the idea of the entanglement of Victorian studies' conceptions of professionalism and its own conceptions of contemporary professionalism in academia.

[24] See Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Philippa Levine, *Victorian Feminism 1850–1990* (London:

marketplace arguing that, '[w]e have been operating ever since under the assumption that the nineteenth-century professional fostered the illusion that he transcended the market upon which he exchanged his services'.[25] Both Poovey and Ruth identify market relations, class stability, and the domestic as contributing to making the writer both socially conventional and individual.[26] Beth Palmer expands the concept of the professional author to include roles in the professional press, turning the gaze to writers as also editors and journalists and deconstructing the image of the individual, isolated author.[27]

The conflict between commerce and femininity, the public and the domestic are at the centre of constructions of the professional, both in Victorian debates and literary criticism. Joanne Shattock examines the physical act of authorship and the necessity of income through the networks integral to professionalism in the nineteenth century.[28] In *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* essays examine women writers' position within and outside the domestic, in both the public and private spheres; the sense of a double pull and double motivation for women writers pervades the chapters of the collection.[29] Judith Johnston and Hilary Fraser examine authorship as a double-edged profession and life; in many respects women are faced with a struggle to overcome the 'ideological prescriptions that constructed women as passive, self-sacrificing, domestic goddesses who inhabited the private sphere rather than the noisy world of public debate'.[30] A fundamental part of women writers' identity and responsibility is within the domestic sphere of their life. However, as a profession that would be done in the home, authorship offered a gateway to the public sphere

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Hutchinson Education, 1987), Daniel Hack, 'Literary Paupers and Professional Authors: The Guild of Literature and Art', *Studies in English Literature*, 39.4 (1999), 691–713, Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (USE: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Clare Pettitt, *Patent Inventions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[25] Ruth, *Novel Professions*, p. 9. Poovey describes writing for the periodical press as 'anti-individualising' […] but because, of a paradox central to the concept of the individual in class society, the individualisation of authorship actually "solved" the contradiction between the two images of writer—the "genius" and the cog of the capitalist machine—at the same time that it assured the writer a constructive and relatively lucrative social role'. See Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, p. 106.

[26] Ruth employs the term 'individual Liberalism' when discussing independence and dependence on commerce, consequently what constitutes professionalism. See Ruth, *Novel Professions*.

[27] See Beth Palmer, *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies* (Oxford Scholarship Online: May 2011).

[28] See Joanne Shattock, 'Professional Networking, Masculine and Feminine', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 44.2 (2011), 128–140.

[29] Particularly relevant to my research is Elizabeth Langland, 'Women's Writing and the Domestic Sphere', *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 119–141.

[30] Judith Johnston and Hilary Fraser, 'The Professionalization of Women's Writing', *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 231–250 (p. 234).

and an active role in Victorian society. These opposing facets are integral to understanding and constructing professional authorship.

Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, and Beth Rogers emphatically see authorship as collaborative; instead of placing authors as at the mercy of commercial systems they argue that 'active participation with the press was an instrumental facet of the literary labour of Victorian authors'.[31] For these critics the literary context, namely the periodical press, imposes constraints, particularly upon female authors, but, generally, writers act strategically, rather than as either individualistic or passive victims of capitalism.[32] Braddon's position in the literary marketplace, her collaborative production, and the interactions between literary characters in her novels, anticipates theoretical underminings, a century later, of the author figured as solitary genius. To view a text as a self-contained entity and the product of an isolated author is a misconception of periodical fiction; nineteenth-century literature did not fully present the image of the author that Barthes and Foucault were deconstructing.

## 'Metafiction'

Another facet to critical work from Barthes and Foucault, as well as influential theorists including Saussure, Jakobson, and Derrida, is the concept of metafiction conceived as a dimension of postmodernism. The term 'Metafiction' was first used by William H. Gass in 1970 to name self-conscious fictions about fiction.[33] Prominent in theoretical work on metafiction is the instability of the term, the multiple forms, and the absence of a strict definition, but a prevailing association between metafiction and postmodernism. *Metafiction* (1995) edited by Mark Currie provides a collection of extracts from key works on the concept of metafiction by critics including Waugh, Hutcheon, Barth, White, and Lodge.[34] Perhaps

[31] Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers, 'Constructing Women Readers and Writers: Introduction', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900s: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 395–398 (p. 395).
[32] Easley, Gill, and Rogers argue that 'women, who regularly looked to the ever-expanding periodical press for opportunities to attract a reading audience for their work […] For some, the press was a strategic vehicle through which to access the male networks of book publishing, for others, writing for periodicals and newspapers was their exclusive professional focus (intentionally or otherwise), and for others still, a literary career involved balancing the demands of both markets'. Ibid.
[33] See William H. Gass, *Fictions and the Figures of Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970). Berry, in his chapter 'metafiction', considers Gass' definition. See R. M. Berry, 'Metafiction', *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature* (2012)
[34] The collection considers how there are different forms of metafiction which reveal 'authorial intervention' or 'integrated dramatisation'. As Mark Currie identifies, the term 'metafiction' is connected with 'metatheory', 'metalanguage', and 'metaphilosophy'. Currie's introduction gives a history of metafiction criticism through the

most significantly, Currie identifies the 'contradictory problems' and the paradox at the heart of postmodern criticism and fiction as 'unconscious self-consciousness'.[35] In recent criticism the concepts of metafiction, particularly historiographic metafiction, are used to examine authors (re)constructing the histories in their fictions and engaging with contemporary social contexts.[36]

Patricia Waugh's *Metafiction* (1984) is a seminal work in the development and critical use of the term 'metafiction'.[37] *Metafiction* defends the novel arguing that the inherent self-consciousness created vitality rather than the 'death of the author'.[38] Waugh defines metafiction as 'a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality'.[39] The definition does not insist upon the presence of fictional writers for novels to be classed as metafictional. However, Waugh's construction of metafiction is founded on the presence or absence of the authorial figure, voice, or authority; conflict between the individual and the collective pervades *Metafiction*.[40] Importantly, Waugh sees metafiction as 'an elastic term' and her work 'traces the "sliding" scale of metafictional practices'.[41] Reflecting the performativity of metafiction, Waugh uses the

twentieth century. See Mark Currie, 'Introduction', *Metafiction*, ed. by and introduction by Mark Currie (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 1–18. There was a shift to a form coined 'Historiographic Metafiction' by Linda Hutcheon in 1987. See Linda Hutcheon, 'Beginning to Theorize Postmodernism', *Textual Practice*, 1 (1987), 10–31 and Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988). As Michael Butter sets outs, 'historiographic metafiction adds a further dimension to such reflections: texts that can be subsumed under the heading not only explore the workings of literature and lay bare its ontological status as fiction. They additionally engage and unveil the parallels between writing literature and historiography – the practice of writing history'. See Michael Butter, 'Historiographic Metafiction', *The Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Fiction: Volume II American Fiction A–Z* (Wiley Online Library, 2010).

[35] *Metafiction*, p. 5 and p. 17.

[36] For example see *Metafiction and Metahistory in Contemporary Women's Writing*. Heilmann and Llewellyn argue that, these 'authors seek through the very act of writing to deconstruct and reinterpret aspects of the historical process which have previously silence or been closed to their female subjects'. The authors include, Angela Carter, Jeanette Winterson, Julia Kristeva, Adrienne Rich, A. S. Byatt, Alice Thompson, and Sarah Waters, although very few have fictional writers in the novels. See Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, 'Introduction', *Metafiction and Metahistory in Contemporary Women's Writing*, ed. by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 1–12 (p. 2).

[37] For Waugh 'Metafiction' is tied to conventionality, Bakhtin's 'dialogical', and cultural self-awareness. See Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1984), p. 21.

[38] Ibid., p. 5 and p. 68.

[39] Ibid., p. 2.

[40] Important in Waugh's concept of metafiction is parody as one form: 'Parody, as literary strategy, deliberately sets itself up to break norms that have become conventionalized'. The examples of popular or 'fringe' forms are: the thriller, especially spy thriller, science fiction, ghost stories, westerns, detective stories, popular romance – as ones which have been passed into twentieth-century cinema. Ibid., p. 65.

[41] Ibid., p. 18 and p. 115.

image of acts of a play to conceptualise the 'spectrum' of metafiction from a form of realism to surrealism.[42]

Act I, which Waugh claims is the 'most minimal form', examines the presence of characters who themselves assume a disguise, thus embodying the concept of a fictionalised individual.[43] Professional writers, actors, and painters are central to this form of metafiction and used to construct fears and obsessions with self-fictionalisation, mythologizing, and personal dissatisfaction.[44] This form of Waugh's is arguably the closest to Braddon's metafictional novels as they explicitly contain fictional writers and explore the process of constructing a narrative and characters. In Act II Waugh argues that metafictional writers face ideas of individual freedom, challenging social conventions, and the restrictions of fate. Waugh argues that metafiction explicitly creates narratively-constrained characters using the term, 'fictional creation/description paradox'.[45] Waugh sees preconceived plots and God's/author's authority as intimately connected to Victorian realism and social constraints, arguing metafiction uses fictional writers to manipulate the barriers inherent in realism. I suggest that Braddon may maintain many social conventions, but that her fictional writers are nevertheless used to question and undermine them.

In Act III Waugh identifies a turning point in her categories of metafiction from maintaining and deconstructing realism to 'surrealism, the grotesque, randomness, cut-up and fold-ins'.[46] Waugh sees the mode of narration as key to forms of metafiction and these fictions disturb the third-person fiction and its characters with the first-person.[47] Waugh explicitly connects with Barthes suggesting that metafiction is a 'paradoxical concept' in which the author is 'situated *in* the text at the very point where "he" asserts "his" authority outside it'.[48] Act IV is even more explicitly tied to postmodernism and organised using David Lodge's work categorizing it as, 'contradiction, permutation, discontinuity, randomness, excess, short circuit'.[49] These two forms are distant from Braddon's novels as, unlike hers,

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[42] The chapter on material practices moves from 'the context of the everyday world' to novels where the 'only "frame" of which the reader is certain is the front and back covers of the book he or she is holding'. Ibid., p. 115.
[43] Ibid., p. 116.
[44] Waugh identifies the fictional authors in these novels as pertinent instances: Gide, *The Counterfeiters* (1925); Nigel Williams, *My Life Closed Twice* (1977); Bernard Malamud, *The Tenants* (1971); Philip Roth, *The Ghost Writer* (1979); Iain Crichton-Smith, *Goodbye Mr Dixon* (1974); John Gardner, *Freddy's Book* (1890). Ibid.
[45] Ibid., p. 120 and 123.
[46] Waugh also sees a shift between predominantly British fiction and American novels. Ibid., p. 130.
[47] Waugh frequently uses the term 'metafictional dislocation'. See Ibid., p. 132.
[48] Ibid., p. 132–4.
[49] Ibid., p. 137. Additionally, Waugh identifies Contradiction – lack of resolution, which can be found in realist or modernist writing (p. 137); Paradox – paradoxes of infinity (p. 141); Metafictional collage – sets of lies (p. 145); Intertextual overkill; surrealism – challenges between different form of art but literature wins (p. 145).

they have dissolved the concept of reality and are playing word games, playing with language and narrative.

There may be a spectrum of definitions; however, Waugh does not see a spectrum in the time period seeing social conventions as the defining feature of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels and excluding them from metafiction. Similarly, Waugh sees twentieth-century, mostly modernist novels, as unable to overcome fraught oppositions between the individual and society. Waugh argues that metafiction, found only in the late-twentieth century and postmodernism, provides solutions 'by turning inwards to their own medium of expression, in order to examine the relationship between fictional form and social reality'.[50] Research on metafiction generally uses Waugh as the basis to their argument, but nineteenth-century criticism often challenges the adamant restriction to postmodern fiction. Of direct relevance to this thesis is the work of Madeline C. Seys, who confronts Waugh's dismissal using *The Doctor's Wife* as evidence.[51] She uses Waugh to define metafiction as 'self-consciously and systematically drawing attention to itself "as an artefact"'.[52] However, Seys argues that the 'characterisation of Isabel as reader-heroine refutes' Waugh's claim that the Victorian novel cannot be metafictional.[53] Seys also argues that Braddon's intimate dialogue with the social context, writers, and novels as well as her challenge to literary genres are fundamental to Braddon undermining Waugh's argument.[54]

A key text on fictional authors is Costantini's *Sensation and Professionalism*, but who does not employ the term metafiction or reference Waugh.[55] Instead, Costantini uses terms like 'emplotment', 'self-representation', and 'narrativization' to discuss constructions of professional writers in Victorian novels, namely Braddon, Reade, Wood, and Collins.[56] Costantini gives Ruth and Richard Salmon as key examples of criticism which discusses 'the frequency with which Victorian literati fictionalized their own occupational challenges';

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[50] Ibid., p. 11.
[51] See Madeline C. Seys, 'The Scenery and Dresses of Her Dreams: Reading and Reflecting (on) the Victorian Heroine in M. E. Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife*', *Changing the Victorian Subject*, ed. by Maggie Tonkin, Mandy Treagus, Madeline C. Seys and Sharon Crozier-De Rosa (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Press, 2014), pp. 177–200. Birns, is also relatively dismissive of nineteenth-century novelists. His work looks at Neo-Victorian novels, giving Collins's *The Moonstone* a degree of metafiction, but writes that of a 'nineteenth-century formal realism that, even in sensation writers such as Collins, Rhoda Broughton and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, rejected an obvious foregrounding of authorial presence'. Interestingly, Birns makes is no reference to Waugh. See Nicolas Birns, 'History Made Present: Hannah Kent and Eleanor Cotton', *Contemporary Australian Literature: A World Not Yet Dead* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2015), pp. 213–236 (p. 229).
[52] Seys, 'The Scenery and Dresses of Her Dreams', p. 184.
[53] Ibid., p. 184.
[54] Ibid., p. 184.
[55] See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*.
[56] Ibid.

interestingly, neither of these critics use the term 'metafiction' or reference Waugh.[57] Costantini 'aims at assessing the ideological impact of the genre's narrativization of professionalism' and sees fictional depictions of literary professionals as a view on their social and literary context.[58] Costantini argues that novelists themselves actively participated in the professionalisation of authorship. Palmer also provides a detailed reading of Braddon's fictional authors, a most detailed exploration of *Dead-Sea Fruit*.[59] My own research also sees the double effect of these novels, influencing both their contemporary context and literary criticism's understanding of the Victorian literary marketplace; however, my project opens up from Braddon as only a sensation fiction novelist dramatising mid-century professional authorship, but also as actively participating in and influencing reconceptualisations of the author until the *fin de siècle*.

## What is a Book?

Integral to understanding definitions of the author and their relationship with the social context is the form of book that they produce. Arguably the form of the book is particularly pertinent in the nineteenth century due to the complication of the definition of the book in the Victorian periodical press. In the form of a serialised novel the idea of the book and its author as isolated is immediately challenged. Robert L. Patten asks the question 'When is a Book Not a Book?' In his work Patten champions the vital importance of reading Victorian novels as serialised fiction rather than individual material entities.[60] Patten emphasises the inherently collaborative nature of authorship in the nineteenth century. Focusing on *Oliver Twist*'s serialisation in *Bentley's Miscellany*, Patten constructs periodicals as a 'verbal and visual

[57] Ibid., p. 15. See Ruth, *Novel Professions*. Salmon, focusing on 1820s to the 1850s and writers including Carlyle, Dickens, Thackeray, Martineau and Barrett-Browning, looks at how their fictional writers contributed to debates on the 'Dignity of Literature', professional writer as hero, and the public view of the 'man of letters'. See Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[58] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 17 and p. 19.
[59] See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.
[60] See Robert L. Patten, 'When Is a Book Not a Book? *Oliver Twist* in Context', *New York Public Library's Online Exhibition Archive* (New York Public Library, 2020) [illustrated presentation] and Robert L. Patten, 'When Is a Book Not a Book? *Oliver Twist* in Context', *New York Public Library's Online Exhibition Archive* (New York Public Library, 2020) [illustrated presentation] [First published in *Biblion*, 4.2 (1996), 35–63; then the presentation; revised and published as, Robert L. Patten, 'Dickens as Serial Author: A Case of Multiple Identities', *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, David Finkelstein (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 137–53.]

polyphony' identifying the diverse professional roles forming the collaborative press.[61] He criticises,

> the distortions that our preference for the book version have imposed on our very conception of periodical fiction. Defining the text as an identifiably authored and self-contained book obscures the ways fictions were affected by the periodicals in which they first appeared.[62]

Patten suggests that the diverse juxtaposing material, including journalism, medicine, and adverts, gives serials 'permeable generic boundaries'.[63] The intimacy between serialised novels and wider social dialogues, coupled with the fictions being written, read, and reviewed throughout its creation, deconstructs the concept of a self-contained author and isolated fiction, argues Patten.[64] Importantly, Patten suggests that 'the best serial fiction in or out of magazines […] exploits that verbal and visual polyphony'.[65] Arguably metafiction is one way of exploiting the collaborative sphere of the Victorian literary marketplace. Patten ends by saying, '[t]o respond to the interrogative title of this presentation, "When is a book not a book?" one answer is, "When it is a serial". And that can make all the difference'.[66]

My research draws on Victorian periodicals research, critical work on both the material and the conceptual aspects of the nineteenth-century publishing world. Hence, my work explores how the social and literary context to an author, as Jerome J. McGann states, 'gives them their lives'.[67] Early in establishing book history as a critical field, McGann's work on the theoretical stance of textual research interrogates aspects of periodical research, including the 'Problem of Authorial Authority'.[68] Covering a broad span of literary history, McGann's analysis of the surrounding material is central to research bringing in wider publishing details rather than isolated authors.[69]

Analysing the collaborations, power dynamics and multiplicity of voices in the literary marketplace in a physical entity can also be seen in Gerard Genette's *Paratexts* which also encompasses many periods of literary history. Genette argues that the author is not an

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[61] Patten, 'When Is a Book Not a Book?', section 2. Patten discusses how Dickens provides an interesting perspective of anonymity and pseudonyms and Patten identifies the distortion caused by revealing Boz as Dickens as it breaks away from the intertextual references the fictional narrator made. Ibid.
[62] Ibid., section 1.
[63] Patten looks comprehensively at journalism, history, travel, poems, politics, medicine, and adverts. Ibid., section 5.
[64] Ibid., section 4.
[65] Ibid., section 2.
[66] Ibid., section 5.
[67] Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 81.
[68] The phrase, 'Problem of Authorial Authority' is his chapter title. Ibid., pp. 81–94.
[69] Ibid., p. 81.

isolated figure, suggesting rather that these interactions are fundamental to authorship.[70] Genette's term, 'paratext', is used to represent the physical entities and forms of writing that 'enables a text to become a book'.[71] Genette focuses on what he defines as the 'textual paratext', as opposed to the factual, including the name of the author, dedications and inscriptions, the preface, and the public epitext.[72] Prominent in Genette's work is the act of reading, which is key to my work on Braddon's authorship. Genette suggests that, '[m]ore than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a *threshold*'.[73] Genette argues that no reader makes an identical act of reading and that readers are not 'unvaryingly and uniformly obligated'.[74] Intimately connected are forms of paratext such as correspondence between the writer and the editor which directly reflect the presence and fictionalisation of the 'middleman', (as considered in chapter two of my thesis). Importantly, Genette's construction of the paratext, and therefore the author, acknowledges and examines historical developments. Genette uses the term 'temporality' and traces the historical and geographical development of the Preface, for example.[75] Genette's contextual construction of paratext informs my reading of texts and authors in the Victorian literary marketplace.

Rubery employs the term 'long reading' for a temporal as well as spatial approach to serialised novels; he distinguishes between the serial and volume readers.[76] In *Subjugated Knowledge* (1994) Laurel Brake echoes Genette's conception of the individual and unstable experience of the reader, but specifically in the act of reading a number from a Victorian periodical. Brake provides an important connection between theoretical concepts of the author and book history, and Victorian periodicals specifically.[77] Brake employs Foucault's

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[70] Interestingly Genette makes only a passing mention of Foucault. See Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997 [In French 1987]), p. 360.
[71] Ibid., pp. 1–2.
[72] The full list is, The publisher's peritext; The name of the author; Titles; The please-insert; Dedications and inscriptions; Epigraphs; The prefatorial situation of communication; The functions of the original preface; Other prefaces, other functions, Intertitles; Notes; The public epitext; The private epitext. See Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 7. The collection *Encounters in the Victorian Press* explores the dynamic between the diverse forms of writing in the periodical press, thus surrounding serialised fiction, including poetry, letters, and reviews. These aspects to the Victorian perodical could be read as a form of paratext. See *Encounters in the Victorian Press*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Julie F. Codell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
[73] Genette, *Paratexts*, pp. 1–2.
[74] Ibid., p 4.
[75] Genette discusses the historical developments of many facet to paratext and the subtitles include, 'Prehistory', 'Place', 'Time', and 'Senders'. Definition of 'temporal' first made. See Genette, 'Chapter 8: The prefatorial situation of communication', *Paratexts*, pp. 161–195 (p. 5).
[76] See Matthew Rubery, 'Bleak House in Real Time', *English Language Notes*, 46.1 (2008), 113–118 (p. 117).
[77] Brake's work includes Laurel Brake, *Print in Transition, 1850-1910: Studies in Media and Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) and *Nineteenth-century Media and the Construction of Identities*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000).

terms ‘Subjugated Knowledge’ and ‘the episteme’ to argue for the importance of the influence of contemporary culture on all texts, and suggests this historical context should be part of theoretical conceptions of the author.[78] Brake identifies Barthes and Foucault as part of establishing and ‘enabling’ book history, in conjunction with twentieth-century media. Brake deconstructs and challenges reducing an author to a single ‘unified subject’ arguing that,

> [it] tends to posit a seamless and coherent entity […] but also circulates notions of self-determinism, untrammelled individualism, unique genius and personal psychology. It denies the constituting and defining factors of language, history, culture. I am trying to reinsert these factors and to challenge the notion of the free, unique artist.[79]

Instead, *Subjugated Knowledge* is aligned with Foucault and postmodernism and participates in establishing book history, particularly Victorian periodical studies. Brake examines the processes of publication, collaboration, and strategic interactions at the heart of professional authorship in the nineteenth-century literary context.[80]

Brake, and book history research more widely, draws on key influential works on the networks, collaborations, and constructions of the book. Brake aligns her work with N. N. Feltes’s *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (1986) which champions looking ‘historically [at] the material conditions for the production of Victorian novels’.[81] Feltes (re)examines W. M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and E. M. Forster through the lens of modern Marxist thought to look at capitalism in the nineteenth century.[82] Subsequent research has broadened the historical era to the long-nineteenth century rather than exclusively the Victorian period. Mary Hammond, in her work *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880-1914* (2006), also explicitly draws on Feltes.[83] Following Robert Darton’s 1982 model of ‘circuit of communication’, Hammond argues that ‘there is a place for textual analysis alongside a

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[78] These terms could be linked to Genette’s term temporality. See Laurel Brake, *Subjugated Knowledge: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1994), p. 83 and Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon and trans. by Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), pp. 81–2.
[79] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledge*, p. 63.
[80] Ibid.
[81] N. N. Feltes, *Modes of Production of Victorian Novels* (London: Chicago University Press, 1986), p. xi.
[82] Feltes discusses Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers*, Thackeray’s *Henry Esmond*, Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles, and* Forster’s *Howards End*. 1836–1920. Ibid., p. xi. As part of *Subjugated Knowledges* Brake (re)amines Arnold, Pater and Wilde. See Brake, *Subjugated Knowledge*.
[83] See Mary Hammond, *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880-1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

Bourdieuan sociological methodology'.[84] One of the most pertinent early champions for exploring critically the publishing context to fiction is John Sutherland, particularly his work *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (1979).[85] From the very title Sutherland places novelists and the publisher on an equal footing explicitly deconstructing the figure of an isolated genius. In his later work, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers,* authors are now termed 'writers' foregrounding the change in literary criticism to consider the multiple forms of literature, such as journalism, constituting periodicals.[86] Shattock's *Politics and Reviews* is an influential work centred around the periodical and journalism rather than on the novelist.[87] Shattock emphatically constructs the Victorian 'book' and 'author' as fluid and unstable definitions or entities, and paved the way for the expansion of book history research, particularly newspapers, journalism, and editing.

My research on the complex dynamic between fiction and the periodical in which it is serialised, has been shaped by research such as *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*; Alexis Weedon brings together serialisation and the change from three to one volume novels to demonstrate and explore the importance of examining publishing history to understanding the literary context.[88] I wish to align my research with Weedon's argument that, 'For the historian and literary critic whose period of study is the nineteenth century, the link between the author and the economic system within which he or she operates is a vital one'.[89] Also, indicative of diversifying research, is the presence of work on the periodical press and publishing history within collections focused on a particular literary genre. A pertinent example to my own research is Graham Law's chapter, 'Sensation fiction and the publishing industry', in *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, which places the mode of publication hand-in-hand with the literary style.[90] Essays on serialisation, the financial workings, and the collaborations at the heart of the periodical press are integral to wider collections; for instance, *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (2000) develops the idea of multiple material facets to literary

[84] Hammond continues, 'It is important, I think, to consider how a book might have worked to support or subvert its symbolic positioning at the level of the text'. Ibid., p. 17.
[85] See John Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (London: Athlone Press, 1979).
[86] See John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
[87] See Joanne Shattock, *Politics and Reviews: The 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly' in the Early Victorian Age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989).
[88] See Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
[89] Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*, p. 1.
[90] Graham Law, 'Sensation Fiction and the Publishing Industry', *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Andrew Mangham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 168–181 (pp. 177–8).

production to consider the multiple incarnations each writer has through the different forms of writing.[91] *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* offers a more gendered view of the practicalities, experiences, and processes within the nineteenth-century publishing industry.[92] Among others in the collection, Valerie Sanders, 'Women, Fiction and the Marketplace', is particularly relevant for considering the dynamic between authors, publishers, and editors, which is key to my research on Braddon's shifting modes of publications and financial dealings.[93]

A seminal work in the field of book history, the *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, provides a vast number of entries for serial titles, authors including novelists, editors, contributors from a range of professions, publishers, and printers.[94] The *DNCJ* offers a view into the extent of the collaborations and networks in the Victorian periodical press within which Braddon worked and her novels were published. Perhaps most importantly, Braddon is included in the dictionary in terms of her role of editor as much as writer, demonstrating the importance of including her in my research as editor of *Belgravia*, rather than solely a sensation fiction novelist. My work also draws on work on different facets of authorship, publishing, critical theory, and digitisation in journals such as *Publishing History*, *Textual Practice*, and *Women's Writing*.[95] *Media History* is particularly pertinent to my own research including many articles on nineteenth-century authorship and editorship including, Linda H. Peterson, 'The Role of Periodicals in the (re)making of Mary Cholmondeley as New Woman Writer'.[96] *Victorian Periodical Review* is also aligned with my work and

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[91] The collection includes Robert L. Patten, 'Dickens as Serial Author: A Case of Multiple Identities', *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, ed. by Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, David Finkelstein (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 137–53.

[92] The collection explores the history of criticism, periodical press history and place of fiction and the reader within it. See *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Also see *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1830-1914*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Although not a collection, Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, focuses on journalism and the practicalities of the profession and argues for the need for reclaiming, or in bringing women writers into the critical view. See Barbara Onslow, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

[93] Valerie Sanders, 'Women, Fiction and the Marketplace', *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 142–161

[94] The extent and intentions of the collection recognises, even celebrates, how '[p]rint journalism both shaped and reflected the complexities of its time, as the internet does now'. See *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Great Britain: Academia Press and The British Library, 2009), p. v. It will be referred to as *DNCJ* from now on.

[95] For particularly relevant articles in *Publishing History* see Laurence Goldman, 'History and Biography', *Publishing History*, 89.245 (2016), 399–411 and Isabel N. DiVanna, 'Politicizing national literature: the scholarly debate around *La Chanson de Roland* in the nineteenth century', *Publishing History*, 84.223 (2011), 109–134.

[96] For instances which I found particularly relevant in *Media History* see Graham Law, 'New Women Novels in Newspapers', *Media History*, 7.1 (2001), 17–31, Laurel Brake, 'The Longevity of "Ephemera": Library editions

includes Cynthia L. Bandish, 'Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-Narrative of *Belgravia*', arguing for the relevance of *Belgravia* to explore the periodical press.[97] My work on *Belgravia* is influenced by Jennifer Phegley, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia* Magazine, women readers, and literary valuation', exploring the dynamic between editor, periodical, and reader.[98] Palmer's chapter on Braddon as writer and editor, *Dead-Sea Fruit* as a serialised novel, and her periodical *Belgravia* is indicative of the reconceptualisation of a book in nineteenth-century research.[99]

A very recent collection, *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, forms an extensive examination of the Victorian literary marketplace and brings together influential scholars:

> Taken together, the thirty-five essays collected in this volume demonstrate the expansive landscape of Victorian print media produced by and for women, which gave public shape to women's interests, issues, and identities in this period […] Only by testing the boundaries of what we think we know about Victorian print media will we begin to understand the complexities of women's diverse forms of engagement with the press.[100]

It is within this critical environment, continuing to challenge (pre)conceptions of authorship, print culture, and the dialogue with Victorian social context, that I locate my research on Braddon and the Victorian literary marketplace. By placing Braddon's novels so firmly

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of nineteenth-century periodicals and newspapers', *Media History*, 18.1 (2011), 7–10, Mark W. Turner, 'Periodical Time in the Nineteenth Century', *Media History*, 8.2 (2002), 183–196, Linda H. Peterson, 'The Role of Periodicals in the (re)making of Mary Cholmondeley as New Woman Writer', *Media History*, 7.1 (2001), 33–40, John Steel and Marcel Broersma, 'Redefining Journalism During the Period of the Mass Press 1880–1920, *Media History*, 21.3 (2015), 235–237 and Clare Horrocks, 'Nineteenth-Century Journalism Online—The Market Versus Academia?', *Media History*, 20.1 (2014), 21–33.

[97] See Cynthia L. Bandish, 'Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-Narrative of Belgravia: A Case Study for Analysing Periodicals', *Victorian Periodical Review*, 34 (2001), 239–62.

[98] See Jennifer Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule": Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia* Magazine, women readers, and literary valuation', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 26.2 (2004), pp. 149–171.

[99] See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

[100] Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers, 'Introduction', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 1–14 (p. 10). I found the following chapters especially interesting and influential on my own research. See Easley, Gill and Rodgers, 'Making Space for Women: Introduction', p. 303–305; Joanne Shattock, 'Women Journalists and Periodical Spaces', pp. 306–318; Beth Rogers, 'Alice Corkran' and the *Girl's Realm*', pp. 164–177; Fionnuala Dillane, 'Avatars and the Regulation of Affect: Performing and Occluding Gender in the *Pall Mall Gazette*', pp. 336–350; Easley, Gill and Rodgers, 'Constructing Women Readers and Writers: Introduction', pp. 395–398; Catherine Delafield, 'Elizabeth Gaskell and the Habit of Serialisation', pp. 429–441. It could be seen as carrying on from *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* in terms of a significant collection of essays. Perhaps important that the title and the focus has seen a shift from 'Literature' to 'Periodicals and Print Culture', echoing the change in focus, or at least what has been used to frame the work as much of *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* is all about the literary marketplace and the experience of the author in the periodical press.

within the context of the fiction, the publications, and society surrounding them, my thesis draws from critical work on Braddon and research on cultural, literary, and social context.

The thesis is organised thematically, examining a large number of Braddon novels containing fictional writers: *The Doctor's Wife* (1864); *The Lady's Mile* (1866); *Birds of Prey* (1867); *Dead-Sea Fruit* (1867–8); *Charlotte's Inheritance* (1868); *Hostages to Fortune* (1874-5); *Vixen* (1879); *One Thing Needful* (1886), *His Darling Sin* (1899), and, finally, *The Infidel* (1900). These authors are not direct characterisations of Braddon, but are fascinating insights into conceptions of authorship and the literary culture in which they were written and published. Reflecting the positions considered through the introduction, my research does not read the fictional authors as straight-forwardly autobiographical characterisations in isolated novels. Rather, my work considers these texts as self-conscious novels participating in the questioning of definitions of author and book that pervaded the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. In conjunction, by deliberately placing the fictions in their contexts my thesis explores how Braddon and these characters are constructed by the nineteenth-century literary and social spheres. Through its inclusion of understudied novels and their characters throughout her entire career, my research shows the significance of Braddon to Victorian research beyond the boundary of sensation fiction. Through the prism of these characters, my thesis offers an appraisal of Braddon's central roles in nineteenth-century literary production and of her key position in debates about authorship.

## Chapters

The first chapter will trace Braddon's career, from her first novel in 1860 to her last published (posthumously) in 1916, and my work will simultaneously trace the literary marketplace's progression from the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century; I also place my research within the critical work specifically on Braddon. This chronologically structured chapter establishes a trajectory across Braddon's novels and her depiction of fictional authors alongside the extensive changes in conceptions of authorship and the publishing industry across the Victorian period. The chapter will consider where these novels stand in relation to Braddon's role as editor of *Belgravia* and explores their publication at moments in the reinventions of Braddon's narrative style and genre. The chapter draws on W. B Maxwell's autobiography, *Time Gathered*, which gives a particularly valuable insight into Braddon as Mrs Maxwell; including extensive lists of connections in the literary and social spheres, the

work Braddon and Maxwell did building a home, and her charity work. Particularly importantly, chapter one stretches until the turn of the century rather than giving undue weight to the 1860s and sensation fiction.

Chapter two examines the practicalities of publishing and the distinction yet interdependence of the public and the private spheres. Braddon's portrayal of fictional authors takes place in a wider debate about the tension between the domestic and the professional that women writers faced throughout the nineteenth century. Braddon was a continuously prominent presence and influence in the Victorian literary marketplace providing a distinctive view from within the professional collaborations inherent to authorship. Like all Victorian women writers, Braddon occupied both the domestic and public spheres and the chapter considers the interactions between her personal and business relationships. Drawing together the novels, the chapter will trace the process of publishing as a professional author in the Victorian period. The chapter will consider the more private dimensions of authorship, namely the acts of writing and the writer's personal relationship with money; but, it will then move to the public sphere examining acts of publishing and collaborations. Braddon participated in, challenged, and fictionalised the practicalities and collaborations at the heart of Victorian literature; the novels form a constellation of the literary marketplace across the personal and public spheres.

Integral to Braddon's place in the literary marketplace was her role as editor, and the third chapter considers the figure of the woman editor within the political dynamics of the periodical press. The chapter uses *Dead-Sea Fruit* as a case study through which to examine Braddon as the editor of *Belgravia* and her novels in their serialised form. Braddon's novels are predominantly considered in terms of their volume editions, however, in this chapter, I will align my work more firmly with book history research on the periodical press.[101] By looking at individual instalments of *Dead-Sea Fruit*, my work considers the intimate relationship between the serialised novel and the multiple forms of writing within those issues, as well as the act of reading. The chapter considers reviews and adverts as physical manifestations of strategic actions within the periodical press. In conjunction, chapter three explores the scandals and debates pervading the literary and social context, such as the controversy about plagiarism, adultery, Babington White, and *Circe*. These facets offer an important angle from which to view Braddon and her novels, as well as the dynamics and collaborations pervading the Victorian periodical press more broadly. *Dead-Sea Fruit* and

[101] *His Darling Sin* and *The Infidel* are the exception as they were first published in one volume form.

*Belgravia* bring a detailed exploration of the serialisation and editorship which form the heart of Braddon's work and nineteenth-century literary culture.

The fourth chapter centres around a comparative case study of Sarah Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Infidel* (1900), both published at the turn of the century. The fictional authors Beth and Antonia offer a view into the gendered dimensions and politics of Grand's and Braddon's novels, as well as women writers in the 1880s and 90s more broadly. Part of New Woman fiction was a conscious voice in advocating political and social change; many authors engaged in social constructions of femininity and their place as working women in the social and literary spheres, using fictional writers as a platform. Fictional authors were closely associated with New Woman fiction and a remarkable number of New Woman writers wrote novels with fictional authors in them. I do not propose that Braddon was a definitively New Woman or feminist writer, but I suggest that the gender politics of her later novels should not be dismissed by New Woman critics or Braddon critics. Braddon participated in the literary and social discourses at the end of the nineteenth century, including those identified as belonging to New Woman writers. Both Grand and Braddon, and both *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*, dramatise and consciously enter debates on female authorship.

# Chapter One

## Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Mrs Maxwell, Mary Seyton, Lady Caroline Lascelles, and Babington White: A Life of Writing

Publishers and authors being, as *Dublin University Press* put it in 1865, so commercial as to put their names 'in huge coloured letters, on the advertising boards' were mistrusted, with profitability placed in opposition to literary merit.[1] The popularity and therefore commercial success led to many higher-priced periodicals degrading sensation fiction in emotive and exaggerated language. Anne-Marie Beller presents Braddon as a 'scapegoat' within the eruption of Victorian anxieties surrounding the commodification of fiction and questions as to 'the legitimacy of literature, which, for some, was unavoidably tainted by its proximity to more alienated forms of labour'.[2] Reflecting fear of the burgeoning publishing world, articles particularly fiercely applied the division between the entertaining or popular and the literary or artistic to female sensation fiction authors and readers.[3] Victorian society's disapproval of women entering the financial sphere was powerfully reflected by derogatory constructions of the sensation fiction author; as Beller argues, 'what might be deemed shrewd and professional business sense in a male author was far less commendable in a woman writer, who remained subject to debilitating stereotypes of respectable feminine behaviour'.[4] The speed of her rise to fame, the rapidity of her output of novels, and her financial success as a woman writer led to Braddon being synonymous with the acute fears of sensation fiction and its gender politics throughout the press; Braddon was simultaneously condemned and celebrated. Ironically, the level of scrutiny given to Braddon by those anxious about a woman at the heart of the Victorian literary sphere helped to cement her place there.

Braddon never entirely lost the identity "Queen of Sensation Fiction", but her novels did not stay purely sensational for her whole career. Many of her novels and short stories have staple sensation elements of adultery, murder, and financial scandal, but Braddon resisted continuing to be defined as the immoral, infectious female sensation fiction writer.

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[1] 'A Group of New Novels', *Dublin University Magazine*, March 1865, pp. 339–351 (p. 350).
[2] Anne-Marie Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation: Shifting Modes of Authorship in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife* (1864) and *Vixen* (1879)', *Women's Writing*, 23.2 (2016), 245–26 (p. 246 and p. 247).
[3] Jennifer Carnell describes it as 'a new aggressive style of publishing'. See Jennifer Carnell, *The Literary Lives of Mary Elizabeth Braddon: A Study of Her Life and Work* (Hastings: The Sensation Press, 2000), p. 147.
[4] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 247.

Through the 1806s, Braddon wrote to her mentor and friend Edward Bulwer-Lytton confessing in one letter how, 'I am always divided between a noble desire to attain something like excellence—and a very ignoble wish to earn plenty of money'.[5] The material motivation to achieve sales and financial success to support her and Maxwell's family must be regarded as prominent in Braddon's incentives to please her loyal readership.[6] Braddon's divided motivations are reflected in her constant redefinition of her authorial identity. As the *Speaker* comments in 1900, 'it is not merely in the number of her works that Miss Braddon is remarkable. It is more startling to note that she has not, like most popular and prolific authors, contented herself with turning out books on the same model'.[7] Her changes in 'model' is symptomatic of Braddon's desire to write both artistic novels, for example *The Doctor's Wife* and *Mohawks*, and fashionable novels, such as *An Open Verdict*.[8] Braddon's contentious relationship with her writing creates shifts in styles yet there is a continued line of the sensational in her work; Braddon had divided motivations and a divided reception which arguably secured her artistic and popular reputation.

Braddon financially supported her family writing prolifically and profitably through all the personal pain they suffered. As well as writing novels, Braddon edited for Maxwell throughout her career: as Jennifer Carnell notes, 'Braddon was invaluable to her husband and step-sons, not only as his most successful author, but as an editor and reviser of some of his cheap fiction'.[9] For ten years Braddon was editor of *Belgravia* from its inception in 1866 until 1876 before moving to the Christmas annual *Mistletoe Bough*. Sold at one shilling *Belgravia* was aimed at a genteel audience and was successful with an average readership of 12,000 with its peak in 1868 with 18,000 readers.[10] The *DNCJ* describes the beginnings of the magazine as, '[i]n its green cover with an elaborate border, it was launched in a blaze of publicity, and advertised on station hoardings'.[11] Just as Braddon's writing negotiates

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[5] See Robert Lee Wolff, '"Devoted Disciple": The Letters of Mary Elizabeth Braddon to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1862–1873', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 12 (1974), p. 3. Braddon discusses at length her writing, her place in society and the literary marketplace, and her aims with her novels with her mentor Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Their correspondence is documented and discussed in detail in Robert Lee Wolff, *Sensational Victorian: The Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (New York: Garland, 1979).

[6] On the tension between literary career and family financial responsibility see work such as Sanders, 'Women, Fiction and the Marketplace'. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.

[7] 'Fiction', *Speaker*, 10 November 1900, pp. 163–4 (p. 163).

[8] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Mohawks* (London: Maxwell, 1886). Serialised monthly in *Belgravia* (January 1886 – January 1887) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *An Open Verdict* (London: Maxwell, 1878). Syndicated by Tillotson in various newspapers including the *Bolton Weekly Journal* (5 May 1877 – 15 December 1877).

[9] Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 379. Carnell lists and gives details of all the works that Braddon edited. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, pp. 396–7.

[10] For a full account of the series of owners and editors of *Belgravia* see *DNCJ*.

[11] *DNCJ*, p. 45.

between the artistic and the sensational, so Braddon and Maxwell's magazine couples respectable reputation with a canny marketing strategy. *Belgravia* and Braddon as editor have begun to receive academic consideration, most influentially by Costantini, Palmer, and Alberto Gabriele, but work is needed to explore the increasing authority held by Braddon as the century progressed which established her firmly as a business woman as well as a novelist.[12] As editor, Braddon was intrinsic to the success of Maxwell's business, yet the role was also of paramount importance in establishing her own position in the literary marketplace. Braddon worked among pioneering women writers and was one of the first to successfully become an editor.[13] The intimate relationship between these facets of her identity establishes a need, I argue, for carefully placing her metafictional novels within Braddon's dual careers as author and editor.

Her determination to, often influentially, participate in the fashions, styles, and forms of publication as the century progressed was fundamental to Braddon retaining a prominent place in Victorian literature. Gradually, Braddon gained more and more control over her publications increasingly carrying out more of the negotiations over their place and mode of release. Braddon's novels, editing, plays, articles, and later publishing dealings meant that she occupied a prominent position within the literary marketplace throughout her long career.[14] She did not stay at quite the same heights of fame, but secured popularity through continued adaption to the transitions within Victorian literature from serialisation and the three-volume novel to one-volume fiction. Braddon was not confined to a single genre and was involved in and worked across genres including realism, historicism, detective fiction, the gothic and supernatural: as Carnell identifies, Braddon's 'use of, and contribution to, popular culture over many decades provides an excellent insight into the development of genre fiction'.[15] Braddon's place in the establishment of New Woman fiction and redefinition of female authorship at the *fin de siècle* has received little attention.

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[12] Alberto's monograph is devoted to *Belgravia*. See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, and Alberto Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print: Belgravia and Sensationalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

[13] Palmer names Ellen (Mrs Henry) Wood and Florence Marryat as key figures negotiating the opportunities and barriers within the literary marketplace. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

[14] For details on Braddon's roles and vast array of collaborations within the publishing business see Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 143, Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 2, and Jennifer Carnell and Graham Law, '"Our Author": Braddon in the Provincial Weeklies', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 127–164.

[15] Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 1.

My thesis aims to rectify these absences by considering the new light cast by Braddon's fictionalised authors on her novels, on the figure of the Victorian author, and on Braddon herself. I use these characters as windows into Braddon's negotiations, collaborations, and confrontations with writers, critics, publishers, editors, and readers. Novels featuring fictional writers, *The Doctor's Wife*, *The Lady's Mile*, *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, *Hostages to Fortune*, *Vixen*, *One Thing Needful*, *His Darling Sin*, and *The Infidel*, were published at pivotal stages in the trajectory of Braddon's life and career and are indicative of her strategic, sometimes ambivalent, and even confrontational interaction with the literary marketplace. This chapter examines the nature of these characters' jobs, relationships with writing, collaborations, and positions within social and gender politics. These figures reflect different aspects of Braddon's own place as a female writer as well as the fluctuating role of the author through the second half of the nineteenth century.

## Beyond a 'flicker of recognition': The Rise in Braddon Scholarship

When Robert Lee Wolff published his detailed biography of Braddon in 1979 she had received, as he declared, only a 'flicker of recognition' in Victorian scholarship, but his work sparked a revival of scholarly interest in Braddon's life and work.[16] His demonstration of Braddon's centrality to the fluctuating Victorian marketplace led to her being firmly placed within research on sensation fiction and Victorian authors. The rise of Braddon's place in Victorian studies includes, perhaps most prominently, Carnell's extensive biographical and bibliographical study *The Literary Lives of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* in 2000, as well as her edition of *The Black Band; Or, The Mysteries of Midnight*.[17]

Just as Braddon was synonymous with sensation fiction in the nineteenth century, she is synonymous with it in Victorian studies now. As Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie argue, 'Braddon's fiction, through which she offered a revisioning of Victorian codes of behavior and narrative, along with her unorthodox life, attracted the attention of the

[16] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 3. Robert Lee Wolff's work biographically charts Braddon's personal life and literary career as well as detailed bibliographical details and a considerable quantity of manuscript material. See Robert Lee Wolff, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction: A Bibliographical Catalogue based on the collection formed by Robert Lee Wolff*, 4 vol. (London: Garland, 1981) and Randolph Ivy, 'M. E. Braddon in the 1860s: Clarifications and Corrections', *The Library: The Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 8.1 (March 2007).

[17] See Carnell, *The Literary Lives* and Lady Caroline Lascelles, *The Black Band; Or, The Mysteries of Midnight*, ed. by Jennifer Carnell (1861; Hastings: The Sensation Press, 1998).

public and contemporary scholars alike'.[18] As a result, as Beller states, in sensation fiction 'it is undoubtedly Braddon who has received the preponderance of attention in recent years, and she is arguably one of the most successfully "recovered" female popular novelists of the Victorian period'.[19] Extensive research has been done on, what Deborah Wynne describes as, the 'emergence of literary sensationalism', its instability as a genre, and the controversy surrounding sensation fiction.[20] Andrew Maunder's influential collection *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction, 1855–1890* broadened the parameters, in terms of time period and definition; reflecting Braddon's place in the genre throughout the nineteenth century, she features prominently in the six-volume work exploring both fiction and periodical material.[21] Just as Braddon's name, rightly, pervades critical work on sensation fiction, the sensational is integral to work on Braddon, her novels, and her position in literary and social culture.[22] Intimately connected is the prominence of *Lady Audley's Secret* in both spheres of literary studies.[23] As discussed by Saverio Tomaiuolo, the prominence and influence of *Lady Audley's Secret* in Braddon's career, her fame and her association with sensation fiction, and hence scholarship on her, should not be underestimated.[24] However, as Beller's valuable

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[18] Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. xv–xxvii (p. xv).

[19] Anne-Marie Beller, '"The Fashions of the Current Season": Recent Critical Work on Victorian Sensation Fiction', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 45.2 (2017), 461–473 (p. 467).

[20] Deborah Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 1. Central to scholarship on, as Deborah Wynne describes it, the 'emergence of literary sensationalism' is its place within the periodical press and Wynne importantly discusses the pivotal combination of '"respectable" and "scandalous"' material in family magazines. Wynne extensively explores the place of sensation fiction in literary development and culture focusing on how the family magazine crossed class boundaries. See Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*. The collection *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre* lays out the uncertainty of the genre definitions made in the nineteenth century as well as in scholarship now. See *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, ed. by Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006). For comprehensive examinations of sensation fiction see Winifred Hughes, 'The Sensation Novel', *A Companion to The Victorian Novel*, ed. by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 2005), pp. 260–278 and *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Pamela K. Gilbert (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

[21] See *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction, 1855–1890*, gen ed. by Andrew Maunder (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2004).

[22] Indicative of sensation fiction's prevalence in Braddon studies and her prominence in sensation fiction research are *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Andrew Mangham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Jan Davis Schipper, *Becoming Frauds: Unconventional Heroines in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Sensation Fiction* (Lincoln: Writer's Club Press, 2002), *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers*, ed. by Anne-Marie Beller and Tara MacDonald (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), Andrew Mangham, *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), and Laurie Garrison, *Science, Sexuality, and Sensation Novels: Pleasure to all the Senses* (New York: Palgrave, 2011).

[23] A huge spectrum of work on *Lady's Audley's Secret* is at the core of studies on Braddon's fiction and the novel is often used as a well-known example of sensation fiction.

[24] See Saverio Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

article, '"The Fashions of the Current Season": Recent Critical Work on Victorian Sensation Fiction', traces, twenty-first-century scholarship has sought to reposition Braddon in Victorian studies more broadly.[25]

The edited collection *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context* 'explodes the predominating conception that Braddon's work is summed up in' *Lady Audley's Secret*.[26] The influential work explores Braddon's writing in relation to constructions of realism and its elements of the gothic, the spectral, and early detective figures.[27] Developing Carnell's focus on Braddon's early career in the theatre, recent work considers the actor characters present throughout her novels and on the theatricality of Braddon's writing.[28] Beller has broadened the focus to other streams of Braddon's writing, including her companion to Braddon's mystery fiction.[29] She also participates in the exploration of elements of detective fiction and the sleuth within Braddon's work.[30] *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Thou Art the Man*, and *His Darling Sin* feature heavily in criticism centred

[25] See Beller, '"The Fashions of the Current Season"'. As Beller identifies, 'the impetus to move beyond *Lady Audley's Secret* has been evident in Braddon studies for a long time in Braddon studies, but one of the obstacles remains the reluctance of publishers to take a risk on works that are not taught widely on university syllabi'. Ibid., p. 467.

[26] Tromp, Gilbert and Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation*, p. xxi.

[27] See *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000). Most relevant to this discussion is Pamela K. Gilbert's essay, 'Braddon and Victorian Realism: *Joshua Haggard's Daughter*', pp. 183–195. Still further, Tabitha Sparks suggests using a new genre, the "Novel of Experience", rather than placing Braddon and many other female authors as working across multiple genres'. See Tabitha Sparks, 'Fiction Becomes Her: Representations of Female Character in Mary Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife*', pp. 197–209 (p. 199). Also on genre see Tabitha Sparks, 'Sensation Intervention: M. C. Houstoun's *Recommendation to Mercy* (1862) and the Novel of Experience', *Women's Writing*, 20.2 (2013), 54–167 and Jessica Cox, 'Blurring Boundaries: The Fiction of M.E. Braddon', *New Perspectives on Mary Elizabeth Braddon*, ed. by Jessica Cox (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 1–15.

[28] For significant examples see Valerie Pedlar, 'Behind the Scenes, Before the Gaze: Mary Braddon's Theatrical World', *Popular Victorian Women Writers*, ed. by Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 186–297 and Ruth Burridge Lindemann, 'Dramatic Disappearances: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the Staging of Theatrical Character', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 25.2 (1997), 279–91. Taylor discusses the theatricality of sensation fiction more broadly. See Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home: Wilkie Collins, Sensation Fiction, and Nineteenth-Century Psychology* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

[29] See Anne-Marie Beller, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon: A Companion to The Mystery Fiction* (London: McFarland and Company, inc. Publishers, 2012).

[30] See Anne-Marie Beller, 'Detecting the Self in the Sensation Fiction of Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon', *Clues*, 26.1 (Fall, 2007), 49–61. Palmer argues that, 'Chris Willis has made a strong case for *The Trail of the Serpent*, as "probably the first British detective novel", but Dickens's Inspector Bucket, who plays a significant role in *Bleak House* (1853–54), must have served at least a partial role model for Braddon's Mr Peters'. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 52 and Chris Willis, 'Afterword', *Trail of the Serpent* (1806, 1861; New York: The Modern Library, 2003), p. xx. Also see Joseph A. Kestner, *Sherlock's Sisters: The British Female Detective, 1864-1913* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2003) [re-printed in 2016 by Routledge].

on the crime fiction facets to Braddon's novels.[31] Breaking the view of Braddon as solely a novelist, Janine Hatter considers Braddon's short stories, many of which were published in *Belgravia*.[32] As Hatter argues, '[l]ike other Victorian writers, Braddon exploited the marginalized short story as a matrix for her literary craft and a space to identify, analyse and subvert her culture's orthodoxies'.[33] As Hatter and many others of these critics suggest, the presence of these diverse genres and text stretching throughout Braddon's career are symptomatic of her resistance to constraint by generic norms and self-conscious challenge to literary conventions.

Connected with the figures of the detective and criminal, and central to research on Braddon, is the representation of the violent woman and this figure's challenge to barriers between sanity and madness, particularly in the character of Helen Talboys.[34] Central to these studies is Braddon's rebellion against the boundaries and impediments imposed on women by Victorian society; for instance, Jan Davis Schipper explores how 'Braddon exposed the Victorian hypocrisy that forced her heroines to become frauds'.[35] The extreme responses in the nineteenth-century periodical press to her constructions of unorthodox, criminal women, and questioning of the marriage market is reflected in the plethora of work on Braddon's female characters and as a woman writer in collections, as well as academic gender

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[31] Saverio Tomaiuolo, looks at Braddon's detectives including in *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Rough Justice*, and *His Darling Sin*. See Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*. On *Thou Art the Man* see Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, '"If I Read Her Right": Textual Secrets in *Thou Art the Man* (1894)', *New Perspectives on Mary Elizabeth Braddon*, ed. by Jessica Cox (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 195–210 and Heidi H. Johnson, 'Electra-fying the Female Sleuth: Detecting the Father in *Eleanor's Victory* and *Thou Art the Man*', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 225–275. On *His Darling Sin* see Kate Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial: Courtroom Drama and the Image of Respect in *His Darling Sin*', *New Perspectives on Mary Elizabeth Braddon*, ed. by Jessica Cox (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012), pp. 211–249.

[32] Janine Hatter's thesis considers Braddon's short stories across her whole career. See Janine Hatter, 'Brief Sensations: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Short Fiction' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Hull, 2014). Also on short stories see Kate Krueger, *British Women Writers and the Short Story, 1850–1903: Reclaiming Social Space* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) and Alysia Kolentsis, 'Home Invasions: Masculinity and Domestic Power in the Supernatural Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Rhoda Broughton, *Ghosts, Stories, Histories: Ghost Stories and Alternative Histories*, ed. by Sladja Blazan (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), pp. 60–80.

[33] Janine Hatter, 'Voicing the self: Narration, perspective and identity in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 'Prince Ramji Rowdedow' (1874)', *Short Fiction in Theory & Practice*, 3.1 (2013), 25–35 (p. 26). Hatter also discusses the association between Braddon's literary and theatrical careers and the interdisciplinary nature of her writing 'in order to challenge the Victorian conventions of writing and the construction of the self'. Ibid., p. 33.

[34] For instance see Tabitha Sparks, 'To the Mad-House Born: The Ethics of Exteriority in *Lady Audley's Secret*', *DQR Studies in Literature*, 50 (2012), 19–35. Mangham looks at Braddon's stance on violent women more generally. See Mangham, *Violent Women*. Barrow examines *The Black Hand* and the generic norms of penny bloods. See Robin Barrow, 'Braddon's Haunting Memories: Rape, Class and the Victorian Popular Press', *Women's Writing*, 13.3 (2006), 348–368.

[35] Schipper links Braddon's marriage to Maxwell with her representation of marriage and the destruction of the idealised domestic home in her fiction. See Schipper, *Becoming Frauds*, p. 3.

journals.[36] Several recent studies of the woman sensation writer advocate a wider approach, beyond Braddon, for example *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers* and 'Reassessing Female Sensationalists' which aim to broaden scholarship to include more sensation fiction authors and extend the attention paid to female professional writers in the Victorian period.[37] Though a canonical figure in studies of the woman writer Braddon's place in feminist criticism is contentious and her inclusion in *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel* reflects the problematic construction of gender in her novels.[38] My thesis will contribute to feminist readings of Braddon and her writing examining fictional writers from across Braddon's career in dialogue with the fluctuating place of women in Victorian society.

The status of the woman author went through remarkable change over the length of the Victorian period. Research on Braddon draws in many ways on the growing field of scholarship on serialisation, the popular press, and the increasingly prominent place of the periodical press in Victorian studies. Braddon is central to the works discussed in my introduction such as *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* which examine the complex situation professional authors faced, the uncertainty of their position, and their own conflicting beliefs about what their position should be.[39] Again, Braddon is prominent in the

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[36] The collections on sensation fiction more generally and on solely Braddon include influential research such as Tabitha Sparks, 'Fiction Becomes Her: Representation of Female Character in Mary Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife*', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 197–209 and Kate Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley: M. E. Braddon, the Actress and the Act of Writing in *Hostages to Fortune*', *Feminist Readings of Victorian Popular Texts: Divergent Femininities*, ed. by Emma Liggins and Daniel Duffy (University of Michigan: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 69–88. In addition see articles such as Natalie Schroeder, 'Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion: M. E. Braddon and Ouida', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 7.1 (Spring, 1988), 87–103 and Holly Furneaux, 'Gendered cover-ups: live burial, social death and coverture in Mary Braddon's fiction', *Philological Quarterly*, 84.4 (2005), 425–450. Influential chapters beyond these collections include, Ellen Miller Casey, '"Other people's Prudery": Mary Elizabeth Braddon', *Sexuality and Victorian Literature*, ed. by Don Richard Cox (Knoxville: University of Tenessee P, 1984), pp. 72–82, Madeline C. Seys, *Fashion and Narrative in Victorian Popular Literature: Double Threads* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2017), and Natalie Schroeder and Ronald A. Schroeder, *From Sensation to Society: Representations of Marriage in the Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, 1862-1866* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware P, 2006).

[37] See *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers* and 'Beyond Braddon: Re-assessing Female Sensationalists', ed. by Anne-Marie Beller and Tara MacDonald. Special issue of *Women's Writing*, 20.2 (May 2013), 143–152.

[38] See *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Tamara S. Wagner (Amerhurst, WY: Cambria, 2009).

[39] The collection as a whole examines a group of female authors including, Braddon, Oliphant, Ouida, E. Nesbit, Harriet Martineau and Charlotte Mary Yonge. Particularly relevant is Nicola Diane Thompson, 'Responding to the Women Question: Rereading Noncanonical Victorian Women Novelists', ed. by Nicola Diane Thompson, *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1–23. See my introduction for research identified and key to my work, but focused on Braddon or pertinent to gendered readings of profession women writers see Sanders, 'Women, Fiction and the Marketplace', Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Myths of Authorship and the Facts of the Victorian Marketplace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), *Popular Victorian Women Writers*, ed. by Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of Change*, ed. by Adrienne E. Gavin and Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900*.

critical work on the Victorian periodical press and publishing industry through the second half of the nineteenth century, such as those identified as important to my research, especially *Popular Victorian Women Writers*.[40] Carnell and Law also examine Braddon as she further establishes her identity as a writer, especially later in the century, through her presence in the provincial weeklies.[41] As Wolff identifies, Braddon's experience and literary representations provide an insight into 'the inside of the novel-writing industry […] the brutality of hostile critics, the delicious fruits of success'.[42] My research will develop this work by examining novels within *Belgravia* in relationship with the poetry, short stories, and articles surrounding them, as well as Braddon's function as the editor.

Braddon's first fictional professional writer, Sigismund Smith, is in *The Doctor's Wife* and scholars' attention to debates around morality, reading, and readers has been focused on this novel.[43] Dominant in critical work on *The Doctor's Wife* is its relationship with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Isabel Gilbert, as the figure of the young female reader with an addictive relationship with sensation fiction.[44] In particular, Ann Heilmann addresses the imagery of infection and appetite that pervaded discussions of female readers.[45] Reflecting Braddon's remarkably sustained examination, *The Doctor's Wife* and Isabel are central to Kate Flint's influential chapter on the politics of sensation fiction and subversive constructions of the female reader, including how women sensation fiction writers 'invite their own readers to join in the active construction of meaning'.[46] Catherine J. Golden examines Braddon's employment of Isabel through whom she 'delivers a critique of

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[40] See *Popular Victorian Women Writers*, Jennifer Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines and the Cultural Health of the Nation* (Columbus: The Ohio State University, 2004), and Law, 'Sensation Fiction and the Publishing Industry', pp. 177–8.

[41] See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'.

[42] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 3.

[43] Juliette Atkinson discusses both *The Doctor's Wife* and *Lady Audley's Secret* and there is mention of Sigismund, but the focus is firmly on Isabel. See Juliette Atkinson, 'To "serve God and Mammon": Braddon and Literary Transgression', *DQR Studies in Literature*, 50 (2012), 133–156. Ian Ward considers the dangers of reading regarding *Aurora Floyd*. Ward looks at *Aurora Floyd*, *Lady Audley*, the crime of protagonists, and sensation fiction more generally from the perspective of legal positions. See Ian Ward, 'Things Little Girls Have no Business to Know Anything About: The Crime of Aurora Floyd', *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 22.2 (2011), 430–78.

[44] For key works see Sparks, 'Fiction Becomes Her', Anne-Marie Beller, 'Sensational Bildung! Infantilization and Female Maturation in Braddon's 1860s Novels', *DQR Studies in Literature*, 50 (2012), 113–133, and Melissa Schaub, '"Divine Right to Happiness": The Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Woman Reader in *Madame Bovary* and *The Doctor's Wife*', *Nineteenth Century Feminisms*, 7 (2003), 23–29.

[45] See Ann Heilmann, 'Emma Bovary's Sisters: Infectious Desire and Female Reading Appetites in Mary Braddon and George Moore', *Victorian Review*, 29.1 (2003), 31–48. Imagery of addiction and infection are central to critical work on Braddon and sensation fiction more generally. On Braddon's reference to *Madame Bovary* in a letter to Bulwer-Lytton see Wolff, *Sensational Victorian* and Lyn Pykett, 'Introduction', *The Doctor's Wife*, ed. by Lyn Pykett (1864; Oxford: Oxford World's Classic, 1998).

[46] Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader 1837–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), particularly 'Sensation Fiction', pp. 274–293.

Victorian culture, posing a threat to Victorian establishment critics by disarming her opponents in the heated debate over women's novel reading'.[47] Amy Criniti Phillips offers a reading of the interaction between Isabel's reading and her relationship with Roland Lansdell as an interaction between 'textuality and sexuality'.[48] Focusing on *Temple Bar* Julia M. Chavez argues that the relationship between writer and reader in serialised fiction bestows more agency to readers through an interdisciplinary reading experience created within the magazine.[49] In this context, *The Doctor's Wife* within *Temple Bar* is seen as undermining the 'monolithic novel' and the vulnerable, passive female reader.[50] Pamela K. Gilbert's influential chapter on Braddon explores how her novels confront genre boundaries, acts of reading, and representations of the body. Gilbert argues that *The Doctor's Wife*, 'In typical Braddon fashion, […] inverts and comments upon social "reality" as well as "realism," transforming both into texts to be read from within the text-world of popular fiction'.[51] Beller's work makes important comparisons between Sigismund and Roland, including their relationships with Isabel.[52] The complex interaction between multiple fictional readers and writers forms the basis of my research on *The Doctor's Wife*.

Even less critical attention has been paid to Sigismund Smythe in *The Lady's Mile*, and only a little to the novel itself. Jennifer Conary's article briefly mentions Sigismund's reappearance in the novel, the first instalment published in *St. James's Magazine* only eight months after *The Doctor's Wife* closed in *Temple Bar*.[53] However, the most detailed consideration of *The Lady's Mile* is by Natalie Schroeder and Ronald A Schroeder in both their article 'Miserable Bondage: Marital Companionship and Neglect in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Lady's Mile*' and their book on Braddon's constructions of marriage in her

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[47] Catherine J. Golden, 'Censoring Her Sensationalism Mary Elizabeth Braddon and *The Doctor's Wife*', *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, ed. by Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), pp. 29–40 (p. 30). On Isabel, Braddon, and contemporary debates on reading see Seys, 'The Scenery and Dresses of Her Dreams'.

[48] Amy Criniti Phillips, '"I Want to Serve Two Masters": Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Revision of the Female Consumer in *The Doctor's Wife*', *Women's Writing*, 20.4 (2012), 458–478 (p. 465).

[49] Chavez briefly considers *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* alongside *The Doctor's Wife* as continuations of this thread and among 'Braddon's later novels expand[ing] the education value of novel reading to include safely education women about that dangerous world'. See Julia M. Chavez, 'Wandering Readers and the Pedagogical Potential of Temple Bar', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 40.2 (Summer 2007), 126–150 (p. 414).

[50] Chavez, 'Wandering Readers and the Pedagogical Potential of Temple Bar', p. 128.

[51] Pamela K. Gilbert, *Disease, Desire and the Body in Victorian Women's Novels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 9.

[52] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', 245–26.

[53] The two novels were published in volume form two years apart, the *Doctor's Wife* by Maxwell and *The Lady's Mile* by Ward, Lock & Tyler. Conary argues that that Braddon uses Sigismund as a defence of sensation fiction. See Jennifer Conary, 'Never Great, Only Popular: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife* and the literary marketplace', *Studies in the Novel*, 46.4 (Winter, 2014), 423–443.

fiction more generally.[54] Matthew Ingleby also examines Victorian marriage and professionalism bringing together Bulwer-Lytton's novel *What Will He Do With It?* (1857–9), *The Lady's Mile* and Bloomsbury, a 'conjugally satisfactory residential part of London'.[55] Eve M. Lynch uses Sigismund, particularly in his later appearance, to examine the significance of the ghost stories in terms of Braddon's social politics: 'The ghostly tales […] served as a fantastic arena for Braddon to cut herself loose from the "facts" as Sigismund Smith had remonstrated, so that she could write the truth of the stories that haunted her imagination'.[56] My thesis considers the significance of his presence in publications aimed at different readerships; Sigismund first appeared in a 'London magazine for Town and Country readers', followed by one which aimed to '"Promote the Interests of Home, the Refinements of Life, and the Amusement and Information of all Classes"'.[57]

Sigismund appears in publications owned by Maxwell but Braddon's next fictional authors are within a periodical owned by Maxwell as well as edited by Braddon herself. *Birds of Prey*, its sequel *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and *Hostages to Fortune* were all serialised in *Belgravia*. As well as the novels within its pages, my thesis considers *Belgravia* as periodical and Braddon as editor. There is a growing field of criticism around *Belgravia* to which my research will contribute. P. D. Edwards, I. G. Sibley, and Margaret Versteeg, provide a valuable resource with *Indexes to Fiction in Belgravia*.[58] Contributing to looking beyond Braddon's fiction to her role as an editor, Gabriele's *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print: Belgravia and Sensationalism* looks at the production and distribution of *Belgravia* and includes an appendix with the contents of every issue during ten years of Braddon as editor.[59] Although there is very little on the novels published within it, Gabriele's book looks at the cultural context surrounding *Belgravia*, in particular the relationship between writer, text, and reader.[60] Ruth Morris considers the wider political debates that

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[54] See Natalie Schroeder and Ronald A Schroeder, 'Miserable Bondage: Marital Companionship and Neglect in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Lady's Mile*', *Nineteenth-Century Feminisms*, 2 (2000), 79–102 and Schroeder and Schroeder, *From Sensation to Society*.

[55] Matthew Ingleby, 'Bulwer-Lytton, Braddon, and the Bachelorization of Legal Bloomsbury', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 8.2 (Summer 2012), [1–16], (p. 10).

[56] Eve M. Lynch, 'Spectral Politics: M. E. Braddon and the Spirits of Social Reform', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 235–254 (p. 235).

[57] See Anna Maria Hall, 'Preface', *St. James's Magazine* (April 1861), p. 4. 'London magazine for Town and Country readers' is *Temple Bar*'s subtitle.

[58] See P.D. Edwards, I.G. Sibley, Margaret Versteeg, *Indexes to Fiction in Belgravia: Victorian Fiction Research Guides*, 14 (Available at https://victorianfictionresearchguides.org). As discussed in the introduction, Bandish provides a theoretical reading of the periodical. See Bandish, 'Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-Narrative of Belgravia'.

[59] See Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*.

[60] Ibid.

*Belgravia* engaged with, focusing on the representation of Jewish characters and Jewish culture.[61] Barbara Onslow brings the interdisciplinary nature of the periodical press to bear on *Belgravia* examining Braddon's engagement with scientific discourses, in tandem with the commercialism of her magazine.[62] In the chapter '(Im)proper Reading for Women: *Belgravia Magazine* and the Defense of the Sensation Novel, 1866-1871', Phegley traces Braddon starting and establishing the periodical and how it combats her critics defending reading and writing sensation novels.[63] Here and in the article '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', Phegley's research sees the poetry, articles, and novels as deliberately political aspects of *Belgravia*.[64]

Focusing on *Birds of Prey* Palmer's article, 'Sensationalising the City in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia* Magazine', also argues for the self-consciously political dimensions of *Belgravia* and Braddon's fiction within its pages.[65] Palmer provides a gendered reading of the periodical's availability and relationship with its readers suggesting that Braddon deliberately uses both her periodical and fiction to make London more familiar and accessible to the female readership by offering a way to read, know, and navigate London, in novels, poetry, and non-fiction. Matthew Ingleby draws together Braddon depictions of the legal and medical professions situated in Bloomsbury in *The Lady's Mile* and *Birds of Prey* respectively.[66]

Exploring the interdisciplinary nature of *Belgravia*, Nicki Buscemi identifies how *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, and *Belgravia* are used by Braddon to question social conventions and authorities.[67] Concentrating on Philip Sheldon, the corrupt and dangerous dentist, and *The Lancet*, Buscemi demonstrates how Braddon unifies an examination of authority of medicine with a defence of sensationalism and her novels. As Buscemi argues,

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[61] See Ruth Morris, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon's* Belgravia, A London Magazine, *and the World of Anglo-Jewry, Jews and Judaism, 1866-1899* (Academia Press, 2011) and Ruth Morris, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon,* Belgravia: A London Magazine *and Representations of Jewish Characters and Jewish Culture, 1866-1880* (Academia Press, 2014).

[62] See Barbara Onslow, 'Sensationalising Science: Braddon's Marketing of Science in *Belgravia*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 35.2 (2002), 160–77.

[63] The whole book is important in considering the dialogue between women readers, writers, and Victorian society, but this chapter is the most relevant to my research on Braddon and *Belgravia*. See '(Im)proper reading for Women: *Belgravia Magazine* and the Defense of the Sensation Novel, 1866-1871', Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, pp. 110–152.

[64] See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"'.

[65] See Beth Palmer, 'Sensationalising the City in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia* Magazine', *Literary London: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Representation of London*, 6.1 (2008).

[66] See Matthew Ingleby, *Nineteenth Century Fiction and the Production of Bloomsbury: Novel Grounds* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[67] See Nicki Buscemi, '"The disease, which had hitherto been nameless": M. E. Braddon's challenge to medical authority in *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 38.1 (2010), 151–63 (p. 160).

*Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* defend women readers with a reversal of the gendered blame bestowed on reading and poisoning.[68] The most detailed consideration of *Hostages to Fortune*, is Kate Mattacks' gendered interpretation of the novel in terms of both writing and acting, placing it within the context of Braddon's career.[69] The novel is also mentioned in Emma Liggins, 'Her Mercenary Spirit: Women, Money and Marriage in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 1870s'.[70] Although the focus is on *Milly Darrell*, *Taken at the Flood* and *Dead Man's Shoes*, Liggins uses reviews of the novel to discuss Braddon's relationship with her readers and the ways she in which she was vilified for immorality.

Rather than more isolated considerations, Palmer's *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies* brings together *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and *Hostages to Fortune* within the pages of *Belgravia*, including multiple articles, the poetry, and the illustrations.[71] Palmer also resists being constrained by inflexible definitions of sensation and campaigns for '[e]xamining Braddon's work in the press context of her authorial editorship of *Belgravia* magazine [as it] gives us the necessary perspective to see her performances of sensation as empowering rather than as a fate to which she was passively consigned'.[72] Palmer sees *Belgravia* as consciously strategic with Braddon's status as an editor as integral to attacks but also a source of some control. Another extensive and detailed critical work on *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and *Hostages to Fortune* is Costantini's *Sensation and Professionalism in the Victorian Novel*.[73] Her research offers an extensive and valuable examination of the professions of author, editor, and reviewer in the Victorian literary world, as well as across a spectrum of nineteenth-century professions including artists, actors, doctors, detectives, and lawyers. Costantini also brings together a spectrum of authors placing Braddon alongside Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, and Ellen Wood, discussing how 'these embattled novelists were active participants in the Victorian process of redefinition of professionalism'.[74] Braddon's fictionalised writers are key to Costantini's demonstration of Braddon's deliberate interaction with the politics of the literary marketplace and Braddon's

[68] Ibid.
[69] See Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley'.
[70] See Emma Liggins, 'Her Mercenary Spirit: Women, Money and Marriage in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's 1870s', *Women's Writing*, 11 (2007), 73–88.
[71] See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, particularly the chapter 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's "Strong Measures"', pp. 49–83.
[72] Ibid., p. 8 and p. 82.
[73] See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*.
[74] Ibid., p. 16.

identity as a writer in the 1860s and 70s.[75] Similarly to Palmer, Costantini places the novels within a sociological perspective alongside a historical and book history reading of the Victorian literary marketplace and its literature.[76] My research brings together an examination of Braddon's fictional writers in the intimate context of the pages of *Belgravia,* and into dialogue with wider Victorian debates about professionalism, popularity, authorship, and gender.

The first of Braddon's novels after she finished editing *Belgravia* was *Vixen*. Connecting *Vixen* with the genre for which Braddon is most famous, Albert C. Sears considers *Vixen* in terms of the definition of sensation.[77] Joanne Knowles' article, 'The French Connection', interestingly examines the presence of France in *Charlotte's Inheritance* in unison with *Vixen*.[78] As mentioned above, 'Popularity and Proliferation', also draws a comparison across Braddon's career arguing that Braddon particularly used fictional writers to confront the ways in which her novels were continually degraded and illegitimised by being merged with lower-class trade and industry.[79] Importantly, Beller's article takes this view beyond Braddon's best-known fictional author, exploring a previously unconsidered comparison between Sigismund Smith, Roland Lansdell and the "woman of letters" Mabel Ashborne in *Vixen*. The article is important in my work for the connection made between these fictional writers and Beller's reading of them as manifestations of Braddon's self-conscious confrontation of the literary marketplace. The article also identifies the three further fictional authors, Stella, Antonia, and Coralie.[80]

Stella Boldwood is a fictional writer in Braddon's novel *One Thing Needful*. Wolff suggests that the novel is indicative of Braddon's increasingly political work.[81] *One Thing Needful* is among Braddon's novels considered in the light of disability studies.[82] Mattacks

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[75] Ibid., p. 96.
[76] Costantini lists the work of Harold Perkin, Philip Elliott, W. J. Reader, Penelope Corfield and Magali Sarfatti Larson as the scholars most relevant to considering the discordant debates and definitions surrounding professionalism in the mid-nineteenth century. Ibid., pp. 11–13.
[77] See Albert C. Sears, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the "Combination Novel": The Subversion of expectation in *Vixen*', *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, ed. by Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), pp. 41–52.
[78] See Joanne Knowles, 'The French Connection: Gender, Morals and National Culture in Braddon's Novels', *DQR Studies in Literature*, 50 (2012), 155–175.
[79] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', pp. 248–9.
[80] Ibid., p. 260. These characters are Stella Boldwood in *One Thing Needful*, Antonia Thorburn in *The Infidel*, and Coralie Urquhart in *Thou Art the Man* who is a diarist. I decided not to include Coralie as she is not a published author in the same way as the other writers in my thesis.
[81] See Wolff, *Victorian Sensation*, pp. 321–2.
[82] Stoddard Holmes and Mossmain discuss both Braddon in *Thou Art the Man* and 'Griselda' (Sarah Anne Curtis) in *One Thing Needful* who is a clairvoyant and has epilepsy. See Martha Stoddard Holmes and Mark

has written on 'Griselda', as a clairvoyant when looking at *One Thing Needful* from the perspective of feminism, or anti-feminism, especially the problematic figure of Stella.[83] Carnell and Law look at *One Thing Needful* in the context of Braddon's patterns of newspaper publishing, including the dichotomy between the novels in differing styles and readerships.[84] Their chapter focuses on Braddon taking control of her position of author later in the century placing *One Thing Needful* within significant breakdowns of Braddon's and Maxwell's negotiations with the Tillotsons.

The final novel included in my thesis, *The Infidel*, has by far the least critical work on it, which is part of a wider pattern of scholarly neglect of Braddon's later writing. To the best of my knowledge, there is no other work on *The Infidel* beyond Wolff's and Carnell's biographies and Beller's *Companion to the Mystery Fiction*.[85] Beller's entry for the novel itself gives the most extensive consideration of *The Infidel*, as well as mentions in entries for Braddon's novel *Miranda* (1913) and for 'acting'.[86] There is critical work on *His Darling Sin* (1899), most notably on the figure of the detective and the law.[87] The small body of research to date on other novels Braddon published at the turn of the century features Gabriele Malcolm, '*Sons of Fire* and *A Lost Eden*: Expectations of Narrative and Protocols of Reading in Mary Braddon's *Fin-de-Siècle* Fiction'.[88] Key to my research on New Women and the politics of the literary marketplace at the *Fin-de-Siècle* are critics including, Talia Schaffer, Gaye Tuchman, and Nina E. Fortin, and *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of*

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Mossmain, 'Disability in Victorian Sensation Fiction', *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Pamela K. Gilbert (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 493–506. Also see Allen Bauman, 'Epilepsy, Crime, and Masculinity in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Thou Art the Man*', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 4.2 (Special Issue: Critical Transformations: Disability and the Body in Nineteenth-Century Britain) (Summer 2008) and Carla T. Kungl, '"The Secret of My Mother's Madness": Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Gothic Instability', *Demons of the Body and Mind: Essays on Disability in Gothic Literature*, ed. by Ruth Bienstock Anolik (Jefferson: McFarland Publishers, 2010), pp. 170–180.

[83] See Kate Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret: An Antifeminist amongst the New Women', *Antifeminism and the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Tamara S. Wagner, (Amerhurst, WY: Cambria, 2009), pp. 217–230 and Kate Mattacks, '*Beyond These Voices*: M. E. Braddon and the Ghost of Sensationalism', *Women and the Victorian Occult*, ed. by Tatiana Kontou (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), pp. 46–58.

[84] See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'.

[85] Carnell only briefly places it within Braddon's historical novels. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 280. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian* and Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*.

[86] Beller gives a plot summary and writes that the novel 'depends on strong characterization and the conflict between the opposing ideologies of the protagonists rather than on plot, crime, or sensation'. See Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 86 and *Miranda*, p. 118, and 'Acting', pp. 27–8.

[87] See Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial' and Saverio Tomaiuolo, 'John Faunce's Normalising Investigations in *Rough Justice* and *His Darling Sin*', *In Lady Audley's Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 119–133.

[88] See Gabriele Malcolm, '*Sons of Fire* and *A Lost Eden*: Expectations of Narrative and Protocols of Reading in Mary Braddon's *Fin-de-Siècle* Fiction', *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of Change*, ed. by Adrienne E. Gavin and Carolyn W. de la L. Oulton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). pp. 28–42.

*Change*.[89] Interesting comparisons have been made between Braddon and Ouida by Natalie Schroeder and Jane Jordan and between Braddon and Julia Frankau by Ana Markovic.[90] My thesis brings together Mary Elizabeth Braddon's and Sarah Grand's fiction drawing on research offering connections across the second half of the century.[91] However, my research places *The Infidel* and *The Beth Book* in intimate proximity rather than employing them as representatives of the sensation fiction novelist and new woman writer.

Research on Braddon is slowly developing beyond her most well-known novels and sudden fame to explore her fiction, editorship, and authorial status throughout a long and impressive career. The dialogue between fictional writers in diverse novels is highly significant to understanding Braddon and her work as well as the place of the female professional author in the turbulent world of the Victorian literary marketplace. Both Wolff's and Carnell's biographies mention all of the novels placing them within the arc of Braddon's career, but many of them only briefly.[92] Beller's work on the mystery fiction within Braddon's oeuvre also includes entries for all of the novels examined in what follows, giving context to their place within the progress and fluctuations of style and genre throughout Braddon's career.[93] Beller, Costantini, and Palmer offer the most valuable and extensive explorations of the fictional writers.[94] By examining a substantial cast of Braddon's fictional characters across all decades of Braddon's career and over a diverse set of dates, styles, and publications my research participates in the expansion of the range of Braddon's novels studied as well as contributing to work on the periodical press. My thesis will consider Braddon's recurring self-reflexive writing coupled with her strategic negotiations with the literary world and her prestigious place in the Victorian literary marketplace.

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[89] See Talia Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes: Literary Culture in Late-Victorian England* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2000), Jane Jordan, 'Ouida', *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Pamela K. Gilbert (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 220–231, Gaye Tuchman with Nina E. Fortin, *Edging Women Out: Victorian Novelists, Publishers, and Social Change* (New Haven: Yate University Press, 1989), and *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of Change*.

[90] See Schroeder, 'Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion' and Ana Markovic, 'Entirely Fresh Influences in Edwardian Wildeana: Queerness in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *The Rose of Life* (1905) and Julia Frankau's *The Sphinx Lawyer* (1906)', *Women's Writing* (2019), 1–16.

[91] See Lyn Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine': The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1992) and Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*. Depledge offers relatively brief connections between these authors, and between *Thou Art the Man* and *The Heavenly Twins*. See Greta Depledge, 'Sensation fiction and the New Woman', *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Andrew Mangham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 196–109.

[92] See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian* and Carnell, *The Literary Lives*.

[93] See Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*.

[94] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', pp. 250–3, Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, and Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

## "The Queen of Sensation Fiction" and "The Queen's Favourite Novelist"[95]

*"the fact of it is, I am interested in every new book that I write, and it is as difficult to mention favourites amongst literary, as it is unwise to do amongst human, children"*[96]

### Act 1: 'Miss Braddon made her first *debut* as a powerful novelist in the pages of the *Sixpenny Magazine*'[97]

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's first desk, her present from her brother's godfather, was a little mahogany one with a red velvet slope on which she wrote a fairy tale aged eight. But Braddon began her working life as an actress, taking to the stage in 1852 under the name Mary Seyton but, as her success began to wane in 1857, she increasingly turned to writing. In an interview at the end of her life, Braddon said, 'What does surprise me is that every girl who is well educated and endowed with imagination does not long to express herself with her pen'.[98] She first published poetry remaining Mary Seyton but in 1860 fully embarked upon her literary career with the publication of her first novel, *Three Times Dead*, using the signature M. E. Braddon.[99] Braddon's domination of sensation fiction was established in the publication of novels such as *Aurora Floyd* (1863) and *Eleanor's Victory* (1863) after her bestseller *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862).[100] The *Sixpenny Magazine*, owned by John Maxwell, claimed Braddon and her fame as the initial publisher of *Lady Audley's Secret*: 'It is with no small satisfaction that we again chronicle the fact that Miss Braddon made her first *debut* as a powerful novelist in the pages of the *Sixpenny Magazine*'.[101] Her divided intentions are

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[95] 'Miss Braddon at Home', *Yorkshire Herald*, p. 3.
[96] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, p. 157.
[97] 'Henry Dunbar', *Sixpenny Magazine*, June 1864, pp. 82–84 (p. 84).
[98] 'Miss Braddon at Home', *Daily Telegraph*, 4 October 1913, p. 9.
[99] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Three Times Dead* (London: W. & M. Clark, 1860) in weekly parts from February 1860 and a paper back in red wrapper, then re-printed by Maxwell as Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent* (London: Maxwell, 1861). The novel was later serialised as Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Trail of the Serpent*, *Halfpenny Journal*, 1 August 1864 – 6 February 1865 (28 weekly parts). Mary Beth Tegan discusses the comparisons between George Eliot and Braddon and in reviews, especially George Eliot's letter to John Blackwood about sold copies of *Romola* and *Trail of the Serpent*. See Mary Beth Tegan, 'Strange Sympathies: George Eliot and the Literary Science of Sensation', *Women's Writing*, 20:2 (March, 2013), 168–185.
[100] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Aurora Floyd*, *Temple Bar*, January 1862 – January 1863, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Eleanor's Victory*, *Once a Week*, 7 March – 3 October 1863. On these novels see Laurie Garrison, 'The Seduction of Seeing in M. E. Braddon's *Eleanor's Victory*: Visual Technology, Sexuality, and the Evocative Publishing Context of *Once a Week*', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36 (2008), 111–130, and Ward, 'The Crime of Aurora Floyd'. For more on *Eleanor's Victory* see Johnson, 'Electra-fying the Female Sleuth'.
[101] 'Henry Dunbar', *Sixpenny Magazine*, p. 84.

perhaps most obviously depicted in Braddon's simultaneous publication of novels across a spectrum of genres in various forms of magazines, often under different names and targeting individual parts of the literary market and readerships: *Temple Bar*, the *London Journal*, and *St. James's Magazine*, as well as allied with penny dreadfuls often under pseudonyms, for example Lady Caroline Lascelles in *Halfpenny Journal*.[102] As the *Bookman* wrote in 1912, with each of her published novels, 'the authoress had pleasure of knowing that her hold upon her immense public was being strengthened as well as maintained'.[103] Despite rapid rise to fame and being type cast as the Queen of Sensation Fiction, Braddon both capitalised upon the commercial literary marketplace and undermined many of the boundaries between genres and publications in both her novels and the publications in which they appeared.

By the mid-1860s, Braddon had risen to an almost celebrity status in the literary world.[104] As Beller declares, 'her name was a byword for all that was lauded and loathed about the female "sensation novelist"'.[105] The perpetual association with sensation fiction made Braddon a public figure and, as the *North British Review*'s infamous article wrote, '[t]hree years ago her name was unknown to the reading public. Now it is nearly as familiar as that of Bulwer Lytton or Charles Dickens'.[106] As examined in the introduction, the questions 'What is an Author?' and 'What is a Book?' are interdependent and Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi unites Braddon's success and Victorian celebrity with the regularity of serialisation.[107] Indicative of

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[102] *Lady Audley's Secret* was re-released in the *Sixpenny Magazine* and *The Outcasts* was serialised in *London Journal*. Both *Only a Clod* (released in volume form as *Henry Dunbar*) and *The Lady's Mile* were published in *St. James's Magazine* under the name 'Author of "Only a Clod"', to keep the readers in that magazine engaged with her novels; Lady Caroline Lascelles, *The Black Band*, under the name, Lady Caroline Lascelles and *The Banker's Secret*, (re-published as *Rupert Godwin*) were serialised in the *Halfpenny Journal*. The *Halfpenny Journal* is one of five lower-class journals founded by Maxwell as part of his attempt to bring fiction to a great range of society. As Winifred Hughes identifies, '[t]he work of M. E. Braddon provides a direct link between the two classes of sensationalism; she got her start in the penny press and continued to turn out anonymous thrillers well after the stunning mainstream success'. See Hughes, 'The Sensation Novel', p. 268.

[103] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, p. 152.

[104] Kylie Mirmohamadi and Susan K. Martin use Braddon and Rowling to consider the concept of authorial celebrity. See Kylie Mirmohamadi and Susan K. Martin, 'Harry Potter's Secret: The Rise of Publishing Sensations from Mary Braddon to J. K. Rowling', *English Studies*, 95.2 (2014), 131–148 and Kylie Mirmohamadi and Susan. K. Martin, *Sensational Melbourne: Reading, Sensation Fiction and* Lady Audley's Secret *in the Victorian Metropolis* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2011).

[105] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 245. Although, several famous authors, including the 'King of Sensation Fiction' Wilke Collins, were in adulterous/unmarried relationships, the charges of immorality were particularly violently imposed on Braddon.

[106] 'Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon', *North British Review*, September 1865, pp. 180–204 (p. 180 and p. 204).

[107] Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi, 'Negotiating Fame: Mid-Victorian Women Writers and the Romantic Myth of the Gentlemanly Reviewer', *Crafting the Woman Professional in the Long Nineteenth Century: Artistry and Industry in Britain*, ed. by Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Patricia Zakreski (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 187–206. Hadjiafxendi argues that 'The nature of Braddon's success was shaped by the growing dominance of literary celebrity. One of the mechanisms that made this possible was serial publication in that its sustained regularity made writers and their work part of their readers' everyday, affective lives'. Ibid., p. 197.

celebrity, Braddon was painted by William Powell Frith in 1865 standing beside her desk with her pen poised above it and in the same year photographed by the United Association of Photography Limited.[108] Contributing to Braddon's familiarity in the 1850s and 60s the London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company published photographs of a number of famous literary figures including Dickens, Eliot, Cruikshank, Trollope, and Sala, as well as famous Victorian figures including Brunel, Napoléon III, and Queen Victoria.[109] However, as Beller and Tara MacDonald identify, Braddon also became 'a key target of the critical backlash against sensation, and periodical essays and reviews of the period are filled with reference to the "Miss Braddon school"'.[110] Braddon's powerful ability to keep readers hooked and amused is at the forefront of reviews in which she was variously praised and condemned; intrinsic to these opinions is the stance voiced by the *Fortnightly Review* that, 'books are public property and their effect is a public question'.[111] Inherent in reviews' division between the popular and the literary is the fixation on the relationship between authors and readers, and Braddon's relationship with hers was almost obsessively examined in reviews.

Tied to the backlash directed towards Braddon are accusations of entirely unrealistic characters, lack of literary value, and contagious immorality, exemplified by the infamous *North British Review*'s vicious attack on Braddon: her novels 'glitter on the surface, but [are] one of the abominations of the age'.[112] Reviews of sensation fiction such as this placed popularity and prolific output as irrefutable evidence of poor quality. Despite these

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[108] William Powell Frith, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon*, 1865, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, London and United Association of Photography Limited, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon*, 1865, National Portrait Gallery, London. The same photograph was re-published in a different form by the London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon*, 1865, National Portrait Gallery, London.

[109] See London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company, *Collection*, National Portrait Gallery, London. For work on the portrait, photographs, and Braddon's public and private lives see Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England: My Lady Scandalous Reconsidered* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

[110] Anne-Marie Beller and Tara MacDonald, 'Introduction', *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers*, ed. by Anne-Marie Beller and Tara MacDonald (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 1–9 (p. 3).

[111] [Robert Buchanan], 'Immorality in Authorship', *Fortnightly Review*, 15 September 1866, pp. 289–300 (p. 289). For an example of critical work on the issues of immorality, infection, and children, particularly young women, see Ward, 'The Crime of Aurora Floyd'.

[112] 'Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon', *North British Review*, p. 203. Carnell and Law suggest that 'Sensation Novelists' is typical of a general pattern in early treatment of Braddon: 'her early critics, while generally denigrating her work, usually conceded that she was a writer with technical flaw and natural ability who was wasting her potential on novels of incident rather than character'. See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'. Richard Nemesvari also suggests that the review 'demonstrates the attitudes that had developed and become more entrenched as that debates advanced' and that Braddon was used to 'embody all the weaknesses of the genre'. See Richard Nemesvari, '"Judged by a purely literary standard": Sensation Fiction, Horizons of expectation, and the generic Construction of Victorian Realism', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 15–28 (p. 21).

accusations, Mudie's, as Carnell points out, 'was a business' and filled their shelves with Braddon's novels.[113] Beller ties together the 'extension of opportunities for women in fiction and journalism' and 'an increasingly democratized reading public' as the driving forces behind the separation of the popular and the literary.[114] Braddon in the literary marketplace is inextricably tied to the conflicting opinions surrounding popularity and the commercialisation of fiction, as well as gendered conceptions of authorship as a profession.[115] Symptomatic of the powerful influence of gender upon the construction of writers in the nineteenth century, Braddon's personal life was continually examined by the press. As Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie describe, 'in 1867, at the height of an astounding popularity that would last almost forty years, Mary Elizabeth Braddon found herself the target of a series of stinging reviews that condemned both her "sensation" novels and her life'.[116] Braddon lived with Maxwell and cared for his children out of wedlock whilst giving the impression that they were married. The illegality of her marriage to Maxwell was much publicised and, as Wolff describes, Braddon 'now encountered the sneering disapproval and cruel snubs of the self-righteous Victorian social world'.[117] Braddon's and Maxwell's claimed marriage and their illegitimate children were condemned in articles and reviews of her novels, perpetually blurring the line between her personal and public identities.[118]

Braddon's and Maxwell's professional lives were as intertwined as their personal. As her first novels were published in his magazines, their names were customarily read alongside each other's in both their personal and professional identities. For instance, in 1867 Maxwell was named a 'watchful director' by the *Athenaeum* and in the *Mask*'s cartoon 'Miss Braddon in Her Daring Flight' (June 1868) the couple are depicted in a circus with Maxwell as ring master making Braddon jump through hoops.[119] As will be discussed in chapter two, their business interaction and collaborations were complex and shifted through their careers; as Carnell points out, John Maxwell may have been useful to Braddon at first 'as a means of

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[113] Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 169.
[114] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 246.
[115] Elements of the 'women question' in reference to many female authors are considered in *Popular Victorian Women Writers*.
[116] Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation*, p. xxi.
[117] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 108.
[118] The blurring was not entirely confined to Braddon or sensation fiction authors; Hadjiafxendi makes a comparative study of the periodical press' treatments of both Braddon's and Eliot's personal lives. See Hadjiafxendi, 'Negotiating Fame'.
[119] See 'Miss Braddon in Her Daring Flight', *Mask*, June 1868, p. 139. The term 'watchful director' relating to the scandal surrounding *The Black Band* was used in 'The Manufacture of Novels', *Athenaeum*, 16 March 1867, p. 354. Mattacks looks at the cartoon in the *Mask* well as other cartoons with similar portrayals of Braddon and Maxwell. See Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley', p. 71.

getting her work published in his magazines [However,] with her prolific rate of writing Braddon, was soon indispensable to Maxwell, and his newest magazine'.[120] A large percentage of her novels were published through Maxwell's publishing company and various periodicals, including *St. James's Magazine*, *Halfpenny Journal*, and *Temple Bar*.[121] Although it may be seen as an opportunity for Braddon to publish her novels, in 1862 Maxwell was declared bankrupt and it was Braddon to whom he turned.[122] In the first years of their literary careers Braddon was crucial to his companies' success and therefore the financial security of their family.

Braddon Beyond the Novel: Poetry, Short stories, Non-fiction, Theatrical Adaptions

In addition to Braddon persistently breaking the boundaries between genres in her fiction, she also moved between different forms of writing; although to a lesser extent than novels, Braddon also wrote poetry, short stories, theatrical adaptations, and non-fiction.[123] Although she may have 'longed for success', arguably by far the least popular and least profitable aspect of Braddon's work was her playwriting.[124] Despite her career beginning in the theatre, Braddon repeatedly failed to achieve long-running productions. Indeed, the *Porcupine* wrote that on the opening of *Genevieve; or, The Missing Witness* 'Miss Braddon's enthusiastic reception, on Monday evening, was a tribute paid rather to her popularity as a novel-writer than her success as a dramatist'.[125] Braddon's novels were regularly adapted for the stage, often in unauthorised versions, and these performances were hugely popular, like the novels themselves. Interestingly, Braddon's own plays were not seen to be in keeping with current fashions in theatre, unlike her novels, short stories, and non-fiction.[126] Perhaps, her more emotional connection to the theatre impeded Braddon's play-writing ability.[127] As Valerie Pedlar discusses however, Braddon employed her theatrical experience and effects in 'flamboyant setting and characters' which contributed 'to the popularity (in the sense of appeal to mass market) of her novels, since the intensity of the visual experience makes for

[120] Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 143.
[121] On *St. James's Magazine* and *Temple Bar* see *DNCJ*, p. 551 and p. 619 and Law, 'Sensation Fiction and the Publishing Industry', pp. 177–8.
[122] See *DNCJ*, p. 403 and Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 148.
[123] Judith Johnston and Hilary Fraser argue that, 'the very diversity of their literary output was a crucial factor in women's struggle to the recognized as professional writers'. See Johnston and Fraser, 'The Professionalization of women's writing', p. 246.
[124] Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 398.
[125] 'Miss Braddon in Liverpool', *Porcupine*, 11 April 1874, p. 26.
[126] For examples of reviews see Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 398.
[127] For more more on the dialogue between Braddon theatrical career and playwriting see Lindemann, 'Dramatic Disappearances'.

easy assimilation'.[128] Even more practically, actors, performances, and scenes set in the theatre are found in nearly all of Braddon's novels.[129] On her death, Braddon's son found seven unpublished plays in her desk, indicative of her continued pursuit of success as a dramatist. *A Life Interest* (1892) was written for her friend, the actress Madge Kendall, one is titled *The Breadwinner* (1895) which Braddon described in a letter as a '"sketch & experiment in Robertsonian comedy"'.[130] The final script that W. B. Maxwell found, dated 1904, is intriguingly entitled *Sigismund*. None of these plays were published, produced, or found, but the title 'Sigismund' may be a reincarnation of her adaptable, initially sensation writing character; the name of Braddon's very first fictional author is seemingly still in her imagination.

Braddon's short fiction was considerably more successful than her dramatic work, and she published short stories prolifically. Hatter's thesis offers a detailed examination of Braddon's short stories throughout her career and though Braddon wrote over a hundred short stories they 'have been sidelined in critical appraisals of her work'.[131] Many of these were included in at least eight collections published through Braddon's entire career, such as *Ralph the Bailiff and Other Stories* (1862), *Weavers and Weft, and Other Stories* (1877), and *All Along the River and Other Tales* (1893).[132] The vast majority of her short stories were published in *Belgravia* and *Mistletoe Bough*, extending the power and diversity of Braddon's voice through her periodical. Several of the stories in *Belgravia* are published under the pseudonym Babington White, 'At Daggers Drawn', 'A Great Bull and a Great Bear', and 'The Mudie Classics', the nom de plume giving her an alternative voice.[133] However, many of Braddon's short stories were published in Maxwell's other periodical *Temple Bar*. As Kate Krueger discusses, Braddon and fellow writer Broughton used their short stories as both marketing tools and forums for their social critique, arguably most persuasively in the ghost

[128] Pedlar, 'Behind the Scenes, Before the Gaze', pp. 190–1.
[129] Beller's *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction* in entries for these facets of Braddon's work, including 'Acting'. See Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, pp. 27–8.
[130] See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 400. Carnell discusses Braddon's plays, both produced and unproduced. The seven unpublished, never produced, and location unknown: *Nero* (1890), *A Life Interest* (1892), *Worldlings* (1893), *Free Lances* (1893), *The Garreteers* (1894), *The Breadwinner* (1895), and *Sigismund* (1904). *A Life Interest*'s plot was reused in *The White House* (1906). Ibid., pp. 398–400.
[131] Hatter, 'Voicing the self', p. 26. Hatter's thesis examines the broad scope of Braddon's short stories. See Hatter, 'Brief Sensations'.
[132] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Ralph the Bailiff and Other Stories* (London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1862), Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Weavers and Weft, and Other Stories* (London: Maxwell, 1877) (Part 1; Part 2 and Part 3), and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *All Along the River and Other Tales* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1893).
[133] 'At Daggers Drawn' (January 1867), 'A Great Bull and a Great Bear' (January 1868), and 'The Mudie Classics' (March–April 1868) were later re-published in the collection *Under the Red Flag and Other Tales* (1886); 'The True Story of Don Juan' appears in *Belgravia Annual* (January 1868). The novel *Circe* (April – September 1867) was also published under the name Babington White.

stories confronting facets of Victorian society, including the idealisation of the domestic.[134] Just as with her novels, Braddon published many individual stories through a diverse range of periodicals, from 'Captain Thomas', *Welcome Guest* (1860); *Harper's Bazaar*; *Pall Mall Magazine*; *Illustrated London News*; *Strand Magazine*; to the last, 'The Cock of Bowkers', *London Magazine* (1906).[135] Particularly in the 1870s and 80s Braddon's ghost stories expressed her political voice, her social criticism.[136] Alongside her novels, many of which challenged social conventions such as the marriage market, throughout her career, Braddon also, as Hatter argues, 'exploited the marginalized short story as a matrix for her literary craft and a space to identify, analyse and subvert her culture's orthodoxies'.[137] Braddon was not confined to novels.

Braddon was by far the most prolific in her poetry at the beginning of her career when she was seeking a path into a literary career, supporting Kathryn Ledbetter's argument for the importance of recognising the large presence of poetry in periodicals for often providing women a voice through what she describes as a 'staple ingredient'.[138] Braddon's first poems appeared in *Beverley Recorder and General Advisor* in 1857, followed by a large number in *Brighton Herald*.[139] Many of the poems initially published in magazines or newspapers were then re-printed alongside new ones in her collection *Garibaldi and Other Poems* in 1861.[140] Similarly identifying poetry's influence as commonplace, Palmer suggests that 'Braddon puts to use her understanding of poetry and its cultural prestige when she co-opts the *Belgravia* poems into her defence of "strong measures"'.[141] Primarily her novels appeared under her name, or under the recurrent identifier 'author of *Lady Audley's Secret* etc'. Her poetry was often under the initials, 'M. E. B.', 'MM', 'B', or 'Babington White'. Similarly, due to

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[134] See Krueger on looking at Rhoda Broughton's 'The Trust, The Whole Truth, and Nothing But The Truth', *Temple Bar*, February 1868. See Krueger, *British Women Writers and the Short Story, 1850–1903*. Alysia Kolentsis brings together Braddon's and Broughton's ghost stories, with Gaskell's. See Alysia Kolentsis, 'Home Invasions'.

[135] 'Captain Thomas', *Welcome Guest,* 1st September 1860; 'The Clown's Quest', *Harper's Bazaar,* 29 December 1877–5 January 1878; 'A Modern Confessor', *Pall Mall Magazine,* June 1893; 'His Good Fairy', *The Illustrated London News,* Summer Number, 28 May 1894; 'The Good Lady Ducayne', *Strand Magazine,* February 1896; and the last 'The Cock of Bowkers', *London Magazine,* April–May 1906.

[136] For an extended discussion on the social politics and Braddon's short stories see Lynch, 'Spectral Politics', p. 252.

[137] Hatter, 'Voicing the self', p. 26.

[138] Kathryn Ledbetter, *British Victorian Women's Periodicals. Beauty, Civilization and Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2009), p. 3. Linda K. Hughes has also argued, that the 'critical blindness to the periodical setting of Victorian poetry is in need of re-thinking'. See Linda K. Hughes, 'What the Wellesley Index Left Out: Why Poetry Matters to Periodical Studies', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 40 (2007), 91–125 (p. 17).

[139] For example see 'Our Heroes', *Brighton Herald,* 12 December 1857 and 'Waking', *Brighton Herald*, 2 February 1861.

[140] Carnell provides a catalogue of Braddon's poetry. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, pp. 401–420.

[141] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies,* p. 18.

anonymity, Braddon's non-fiction is potentially the hardest to trace but is most directly aimed at both readers and writers, including letters replying to reviews in the correspondence sections of periodicals. Of that identified, the majority of Braddon's non-fiction was published in *Belgravia* and Edmund Yates's *World*.[142] In this genre Braddon's polite but acerbic tone is indicative of a confidence in her voice within the literary community.

Particularly with her poetry and non-fiction, Braddon and Maxwell employed pseudonyms and anonymity as a practical measure to write prolifically and profitably, but both could provide the opportunity to construct more controversial portrayals of Victorian society alongside more commercial, or conventional ones, echoing the subversive tone in Braddon's short stories. Nevertheless, Braddon's ability to transcend many of the boundaries and barriers in the literary marketplace again testifies to her extensive knowledge and perceptive understanding of the business in which she works, in which she was a professional. From the very start of her career, Braddon directly engaged in literary debates and fiercely resisted being characterised as a passive woman writer.

## *The Doctor's Wife*: Treating the Literary Marketplace

Braddon's first metafictional confrontations of the literary marketplace and the first novels that my thesis considers were published early in her career: *The Doctor's Wife* was serialised in *Temple Bar* in 1864, not long after *Lady Audley's Secret* appeared in the press. *The Lady's Mile* appeared in *St. James's Magazine* in 1866 ending only months before *Belgravia* was established. Sigismund Smith first, and most prominently, appeared in *The Doctor's Wife* and then reemerged as Sigismund Smythe in *The Lady's Mile*. Launched by Maxwell in December 1860 and April 1861 respectively, both periodicals aimed to imitate or rival *Cornhill*, yet each has a different tone. Appearing in *Temple Bar* and *St. James's Magazine*, Sigismund draws attention to the multiple strands of Braddon's publications, readerships, and genres.[143] As its editor George Augustus Sala promised, *Temple Bar* offered its readers no politics but 'a domestic romance', a 'fair review' of a popular book, biographical, philosophical, and travel essays, as well as discussions of current social issues at the heart.[144]

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[142] Several of these are unrecorded by Wolff, for various reasons including a lack of access to Edmund Yates's weekly newspaper the *World* to which Braddon made many contributions through the whole length of her career. Carnell's biography has a valuable catalogue of Braddon's non-fiction alongside that of the poems, novels, and poetry. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, pp. 421–27.

[143] During the months that *The Doctor's Wife* is serialised in *Temple Bar* the periodical passed from Maxwell as owner to Richard Bentley & Sons.

[144] *DNCJ*, pp. 618–9.

Significantly *Temple Bar* did not include illustrations distancing it from the light literature with which they are associated.[145] One of the photographs of Braddon sold by the London Stereoscopic Company is of her holding a copy of *Temple Bar* in 1863.

The periodical was not only an entrance hall for Braddon, but also many other women writers, including Rhoda Broughton.[146] As Kreuger argues, through the nineteenth century, 'Broughton and Braddon were joined in the author lists by Mrs Henry Wood, Marie Corelli, Charlotte Riddell, Frances Power Cobbe, and Eliza Lynn Linton, creating a veritable who's who of popular and contentious women writers of the mid-to-late Victorian period' in *Temple Bar*'s pages.[147] *St. James's Magazine* also participated in increasing the number of female editors in the Victorian periodical press; the first editor Anna Maria Hall, a successful editor, writer, and playwright was joined and then succeeded by Charlotte Riddell.[148] As the 'Conductor' of *St. James's Magazine*, Anna Maria Hall told readers that the periodical will '"Promote the Interests of Home, the Refinements of Life, and the Amusement and Information of all Classes"'; its pages contained novels and poems alongside articles addressing astronomy, literature, foreign politics, social issues, travel, science, and leisured women's interests.[149] *Temple Bar* gave Braddon the opportunity to secure and broaden her readerships and status in the literary sphere. Alongside, *St. James's Magazine* provided a valuable experience of working for a woman editor and clear role models before becoming editor of *Belgravia*.

While both containing Sigismund Smith/Smythe, *The Doctor's Wife* and *The Lady's Mile* reinforced each periodical's individuality, with Braddon's most realist novel published in *Temple Bar* followed by her novel of manners in *St. James's Magazine*. In contrast to the sensation novels for which Braddon was already famous, *The Doctor's Wife* was acknowledged as realist, whereas *The Lady's Mile* was, as Wolff identifies, 'her first purely social novel […w]ithout even a single corpse'.[150] In both of these novels Braddon created a hard-working, professional author. Sigismund appears in *The Doctor's Wife* as a 'pale-faced young man, with a smudge of ink upon the end of his nose, and very dirty wrist-bands' (*DW*,

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[145] Ibid., p. 698.
[146] For instance, Rhoda Broughton's 'The Truth and Nothing But the Truth' was published in *Temple Bar*, February 1868.
[147] See Krueger, *British Women Writers and the Short Story, 1850–1903*.
[148] Peterson discusses Charlotte Riddell as a professional author and her fictional writer Glenarva Westray in *A Struggle for Fame* (1883), including briefly on Riddell as editor for *St. James's Magazine* and that for a time Braddon and Riddell shared the Tinseley Brothers as publisher, which will be considered in chapter four. See Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, pp. 160–5.
[149] Hall, 'Preface', *St. James's Magazine*, p. 4.
[150] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 169.

p. 10).[151] Sigismund writes for the penny press and is as prolific in his output as Braddon; similarly, his novels are unashamedly a commodity, as 'garnished' products to be produced, bought, and consumed, as her own were reduced to 'marketable goods' by the *Athenaeum*.[152] *The Doctor's Wife* is, however, full of readers and writers, and depicts the complex relationships between them and their positions in society. Roland Lansdell, the romantic poet, Mr Raymond, the addicted male reader, Sigismund Smith the sensation fiction writer, George Gilbert, the doctor, and his wife Isabel, the young female sensation fiction reader all live in close proximity.[153] Braddon established the figure of a Byronic poet in the form of Roland Lansdell in opposition to the author of 'half a dozen highly-spiced fictions' within an overly realist novel (*DW*, p.11). Associations between popularity and immorality are challenged as it is the sensation writer who gives the wisest advice and the aristocratic poet who tries, and ultimately fails, to seduce and persuade the addicted reader to commit adultery. In the end, it is Isabel's father, the illegal forger Jack the Scribe, who defeats Roland, and Isabel is left innocent and is elevated to high society.

In reviews *The Doctor's Wife* was regarded as Braddon's most realist novel, a rewriting of Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1856), and as introducing Braddon to 'her true friends and admirers'.[154] Interestingly, the contemporary reviews almost ignore Sigismund's presence in the novel. Indicative of the repeated discussions in reviews of her ability, her potential and her wasted talent, the *Saturday Review* implicitly degraded Braddon by asserting that only now, with a realist novel, are her true talents revealed.[155] As Ellen Miller Casey argues, gender ideology is inherent to these grudging praises for realism: 'When women avoided sensationalism, they often received extravagant applause'.[156] Despite being

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[151] Beller also discusses the imagery of Sigismund writing as work and a skilled trade. See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 251.

[152] 'The Manufacture of Novels', *Athenaeum*, p. 354. The association between reading and consumption is embodied in the *London Review* depicting sensation fiction as forming the 'staple of [reader's] consumption' instead of 'mental food of invigorating quality'. See 'The Doctor's Wife', *London Review*, 22 October 1864, pp. 463–464 (p. 464). Pykett describes Sigismund's writing as 'alienated literary production'. See Lyn Pykett, 'Introduction', *The Doctor's Wife*, p. x.

[153] Golden examines how, 'In presenting a heroine who prospers despite her addiction to sensation fiction, Braddon ultimately delivers a critique of Victorian culture, posing a threat to Victorian establishment critics by disarming her opponents in the heated debate over women's novel reading'. See Golden, 'Censoring Her Sensationalism', p. 30.

[154] 'The Doctor's Wife', *Saturday Review*, 5 November 1864, pp. 571–572 (p. 572). Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* 2 vol. (France: Michel Lévy Frères, 1857). First serialised in *La Revue de Paris*, 1 October 1856 – 15 December 1856.

[155] 'The Doctor's Wife', *Saturday Review*, p. 572.

[156] Ellen Miller Casey draws attention to the extent to which 'Gender ideology formed the basis for criticising immorality and also established the grounds for praising decency'. See Ellen Miller Casey, '"Highly flavoured Dishes" and "Highly Seasonal Garbage": Sensation in *The Athenaeum*', *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a*

declared as realist however, *The Doctor's Wife* has many elements of the sensational and the sentimental: indeed Tabitha Sparks discusses how, '[i]n the interest of pleasing her public, Braddon attempted to meet the requirements of three incompatible fictional genres'.[157] The setting for Braddon's realist novel is both the home of the aristocratic poet and the setting for Sigismund's bloodthirsty renditions of murders. Having explored it with a lantern, Sigismund sees Roland's The Priory as suitable for the penny press with 'accommodation for a perfect regiment of bodies' (*DM*, p. 198). But for a three volume novel, he proposes '"deepening the gloom, you know […] introducing rats behind the paneling, and a general rottenness and perhaps a ghostly footstep in the corridor, or a periodical rustling behind the tapestry?"' (*DM*, p. 198). Sigismund and his readers claim the aristocratic poet's home as the setting for his own writing. Implicitly, the potential for sensationalism lies in even the most lofty estates.

Writing his novel, *The Smuggler's Bride*, Sigismund is portrayed surrounded by his job in the midst of writing, 'dipping his pen in the ink, and hurrying wildly along the paper' before shouting down the stairwell to a messenger boy for the artist Mr Manders (*DW*, p. 12). *The Smuggler's Bride* is a unsubtle formulation that recalls *The Doctor's Wife* and Braddon places the connection between Sigismund's and her own act of writing at the forefront of the reader's mind as the novel opens.[158] Presumably obvious to loyal contemporary readers, the titles of Sigismund's novels echo Braddon's novels in other periodicals: his novels *The Mystery of Mowbray Manor* and *The Black Hand* point to Braddon's own novel *The Black Band; or, Mysteries of Midnight* published in 1861 under the pseudonym Lady Caroline Lascelles in *Halfpenny Journal: A Magazine for All Who Can Read*.[159] The echo in *The*

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*Scandalous Genre*, ed. by Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), pp. 3–14 (pp. 8–9).

[157] Sparks, 'Fiction Becomes Her', p. 207 and p. 198. Sparks places *The Doctor's Wife* as crossing and challenging three genres: she argues that it is 'one of [Braddon's] most conspicuous realist techniques' in the focus on 'interior psychology'; that sensation conventions are present in the 'gothic conspiracies of murder, criminality and illicit love'; and finally, that it is partly a sentimental novel following the convention of an idealised female character. Sparks argues that particularly the representation of Isabel, 'attests to [Braddon's] canny insights into the limiting and insufficient representations of women in all types of Victorian fiction'. Ibid., pp. 197–8.

[158] On *Temple Bar* and young women readers see Chavez, 'Wandering Readers and the Pedagogical Potential of *Temple Bar*'.

[159] *The Black Hand* is mentioned in the serialised edition of *The Doctor's wife*, but not the volume form, perhaps a change due to the different readership. There was a contentious debate in 1867 on whether Braddon wrote *The Black Band*, including articles such as the one in *The Athenaeum* setting out many suspicions and continual quotations of Maxwell expressing 'Miss Braddon's denial' evidence of a wide understanding of her authorship of *The Black Band* and 'the unfairness of a method which mis-states the history of marketable goods'. As discussed earlier, *The Athenaeum* uses the scandal as 'an instructive peep into a factory of novels for the halfpenny press' with writers as 'the operatives of the workshop' with Maxwell as its 'watchful director'. See 'The Manufacture of Novels', *Athenaeum*, p. 354. The *Black Hand* and the complexity of the situation surrounding it is discussed in depth in Jennifer Carnell, 'Introduction', Lady Caroline Lascelles, *The Black Band; Or, The Mysteries of Midnight* (Hastings: The Sensation Press, 1998), pp. VII–XXVIII.

*Doctor's Wife* of Braddon's fiction written for a working-class readership and published under a pseudonym in the form of Sigismund's *The Black Hand* stands as a pertinent reminder of Braddon's dual presence in the press in the opening chapters of her realist novel. *The Doctor's Wife* is viewed as Braddon's most socially accurate novel, yet has a gentle, moral, and respectable sensation fiction author and ghosts of her earlier sensation novels at its heart. Braddon's first realist novel undermines the genre definitions imposed on fiction, as well as the definition of the sensation fiction author imposed on her.

## *The Lady's Mile*: Sigismund in Sequel

A writer's path to money and rise in society is manifest in Sigismund Smith's re-appearance as Sigismund Smythe in *The Lady's Mile*: he is 'the novelist who had sublimated the vulgar Smith into the aristocratic Smythe [and] abandoned the penny public to court the favour of circulating library subscribers' (*LM*, 1: p. 141). Identifying repeating pairings of Braddon's fictional writers and 'stock-market speculators', Tamara Wagner argues for the power of Sigismund:

> Providing a sequel to Sigismund's career in its subplot, *The Lady's Mile* underscores this unification of talent and financial rewarding professionalism even more emphatically by posing it firmly against stock-market speculation.[160]

Sigismund is barely in the novel in comparison to his prominent role in *The Doctor's Wife*, but his presence in *The Lady's Mile* places the writer within a novel seen as the first in a new genre or style in Braddon's fiction, and brings a fictional writer into the pages of another of Maxwell's periodicals, *St James's Magazine*. Sigismund Smythe has gained famed and a high class of readerships but, as he tell us, still '"ought to be dark and swarthy, like Dumas; or tall, and thin, and wiry, and hook-nosed, and Satanic"' (*LM*, 4: p. 17). In *The Lady's Mile* readers are given an intimate view into Sigismund Smythe's home where 'better things were said than ever found their way to the compositor. Here the mighty chief of the "Bond Street Blagueur" laid aside the murderous pen of the critic, and expanded in genial friendship' (*LM*, 6: p. 387). Braddon uses Sigismund to defend herself and sensation fiction writers from the equation between an author and their writing.

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[160] Tamara Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions: Making, Selling, and Living the Fictious in the Self-Portraiting of the Victorian Popular Novelist', *Auto-Poetica: Representations of the Creative Process in Nineteenth-Century British and American Fiction*, ed. by Darby Lewes (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), pp. 15–38 (p. 18 and p. 24). Conary's article briefly covers *The Lady's Mile* as a development of Sigismund's career. See Conary, 'Never great, only popular'.

The novel opens with Sigismund standing with his friend Philip Foley, the landscape artist, on the edge of the eponymous drive along the Serpentine in Hyde Park, The Lady's Mile. Echoing *The Doctor's Wife*, it is 'the practical Sigismund', yet also 'the romancer', that offers his friend the best advice in negotiating social codes and his burning love for Miss Florence Crawford (*LM*, 6: p. 288). The two men stand watching 'the mighty tide of fashion's wonderful sea, surging westward' (*LM*, 1: p. 139).[161] Braddon's setting succeeds Sala's use of it in *Twice Round the Clock* (1859) and him introducing his heroine on the Ladies' Mile in Hyde Park in his metafictional novel *Quite Alone* (1864).[162] Using this drive, a location for fashion and courtship, as its backdrop, *The Lady's Mile* participates in the established sensation fiction trope, the examination of the 'matrimonial market' (*LM*, 1: p. 154).[163] Lynch sees *The Lady's Mile* as exposing 'the tight circumference around women's restricted lives'.[164] The two heroines at the heart of *The Lady's Mile* are Lady Cecil Chudleigh who becomes Mrs O'Boyneville and Miss Florence Crawford (the daughter of William Crawford, the painter who struggles through the politics of the Victorian art world) who becomes Mrs Loyber. They choose their marriages as a perceived means of escape and gaining agency, but ultimately both are trapped by the restrictions of Victorian society.

While Braddon may have been seen to write a work of realism in *The Doctor's Wife*, her continued rapid output meant that she was still used as an exemplar of the inappropriately popularity-motivated author.[165] Indeed, in the same month as *The Lady's Mile* begins, Braddon was used as proof that popular fiction is evil profligacy in the *Saturday Review*'s

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[161] The Lady's Mile is described as a carriage-drive on the northern-bank of the Serpentine in *Cruchley's London in 1865*. Cruchley argues, 'During the season, Hyde Park attracts within its precincts all the wealth, fashion, and beauty of London, and in no other civilized country can be seen such a spectacle as is then presented by "The Lady's Mile" and "Rotton Row"'. See *Cruchley's London in 1865: a Handbook for Strangers* (1865). Quotations in Lee Jackson, *Victorian London* website, http://www.victorianlondon.org/entertainment/hydepark.htm [accessed 10 March 2018]. Braddon's engagement with Victorian literary fashions and social politics through the drive and the setting in Bloomsbury will be discussed in more depth in chapter two.

[162] Sala's own writing, including his fictional writers, will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

[163] Speaking more broadly on the genre, Harrison and Fatina state that, 'Time after time, sensation novels take as their subject the domestic sphere, almost gleefully hammering at the Victorian façade of the harmonious home. The institution of marriage in these novels is often seen as a weapon to be wielded for financial gain'. See Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina, 'Introduction', *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*, ed. by Kimberly Harrison and Richard Fantina (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2006), p. xv. Natalie and Ronald A Schroeder's research on Braddon includes *The Lady's Mile* but it focuses on the representations of marriage and women. See Schroeder and Schroeder, 'Miserable Bondage' and Schroeder and Schroeder, *From Sensation to Society*.

[164] Lynch, 'Spectral Politics', p. 236.

[165] Extensive research has been done on the instability of sensation fiction as a genre. In particular, Jonathon Loesberg suggests that sensation fiction is '"as much a creation of the literary journals who grouped the novels together as it was of the novels themselves"'. See Harrison and Fantina, 'Introduction', *Victorian Sensations*, p. xii.

bluntly entitled article, 'The Sin of Light Reading'.[166] In most of the contemporary reviews, Braddon is declared to have left sensation fiction for the novel of manners in *The Lady's Mile*, as she left it for realism with *The Doctor's Wife*, but again it has a sensation fiction author in its pages; Sigismund Smythe with the 'caustic witticisms of the "Bond Street" chief' (*LM*, 6: p, 287). Also, the production and performance of a play is central to the plot lending an air of theatricality to these characters' apparently conventional lives: importantly it is Sigismund's sharply perceptive gaze that sees '"man is an imitative animal"' (*LM*, 1: p. 142).[167] The *Saturday Review* is delighted and in the *Athenaeum* Geraldine Jewsbury announces that, 'in 'The Lady's Mile' [Braddon] resigns her sceptre over the sensational novel which she inaugurated, and aspires to wield the rod and to become a preceptor in the didactic school of manners and morals'.[168] Just as with her realism, Braddon's society fiction is cast in comparison with sensation fiction; how this shapes the reception is not necessarily a surprise or problem in itself, but the persistent juxtaposition compromises the judgement of her achievement in genres beyond sensation fiction. Ultimately, Jewsbury sees Braddon's representation of society as a failure: 'she cannot paint the society of real life, - she is dull without being real'.[169] *The Lady's Mile* is repeatedly declared to be a novel of manners and its technical qualities praised, yet Braddon's fictional construction of society is never considered to be accurate or valued as a literary achievement. The *London Review* declared that 'it is to be feared she has given up all ambition (if she ever cherished it) of rising to serener and more permanent heights in the literature of fiction'.[170] Braddon's motivations behind her fiction were condemned whether entertaining or didactic; arguably this treatment of Braddon's realism and her novel of manners is indicative of a reluctance to accept a woman writer's construction of society. In *The Doctor's Wife* Sigismund counteracts the construction of the sensation fiction writer as immoral; in *The Lady's Mile* Sigismund's presence and perceptive gaze counteracts the rejection of Braddon's accuracy of representation and the truth of her understanding of Victorian society.

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[166] 'The Sin of Light Reading', *Saturday Review*, 2 September 1865, pp. 291–292.
[167] Pedlar discusses that in many novels, Braddon is 'able to highlight the degree to which role-playing is part of everyday life, and to draw attention to the theatricality of ordinary domestic existence'. See Pedlar, 'Behind the Scenes, Before the Gaze', pp. 190–1.
[168] 'The Lady's Mile', *Saturday Review*, 12 May 1866, pp. 565–566 (p. 565) and [Geraldine Jewsbury], 'The Lady's Mile', *Athenaeum*, 2 June 1866, p. 733. Jewsbury continues, Braddon has progressed from 'complex and melodramatic stories'. Ibid. Casey discusses these reviews as well as others on *John Marchmont* and Collins' *Armadale*. See Ellen Miller Casey, '"Highly flavoured Dishes" and "Highly Seasonal Garbage"', p. 5.
[169] [Geraldine Jewsbury], 'The Lady's Mile', *Athenaeum*, p. 733.
[170] 'English Literature', *London Review*, December 1865, pp. 712–717 (p. 716).

**Act 2: Miss Braddon Assumes the Role of Conductor**

As both author and editor of *Belgravia* alongside the owner and publisher, and her lover and husband, Maxwell, for a decade, Braddon was at the heart of the collaborative networks behind Victorian literature. For instance, George Augustus Sala was editor of *Temple Bar* for Maxwell while her novels were published and then became one of Braddon's most loyal journalists in her editorship of *Belgravia*. In *Time Gathered* their son offers a slightly comedic illustration of Maxwell in his office and a glimpse into these writers' everyday lives:

> At thirty-five he really was a force in Fleet Street. He had a dingy little office in Shoes Lane, the same small narrow premises with which he started. […] and Edmund Yates told me laughingly that he and Augustus Sala, Percy Fitzgerald, and few more, were like cabs on a rank outside. […] the one at the top of the rank took the job—to edit a paper, do a series of articles, write a guide-book, or whatever it was—while the others moved up on the rank to be hailed and employed in turn.[171]

Braddon's role as a professional author was artistic, yet utterly intertwined with the business-like; it was public and practical rather than solitary and personal. Wagner argues that using her novels, Braddon's 'coinage of the hard-working Bohemian successfully sets up the author, or artist, as counting equally on the value of literary labor and on an investment in its talent'.[172] Significantly, the majority of Braddon's fictional writers were conceived during her period as editor, arguably the most intense period of establishing her authorial identity and the most self-reflexive and defensive time in her career.[173]

The fictional writers in *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and *Hostages to Fortune* are fictional writers in Braddon's novels, published in Braddon's edited periodical, owned by Braddon's husband, and sold to a commercial literary marketplace. Chapter three forms a case study examining the serialisation of *Dead-Sea Fruit* in *Belgravia* drawing out the intimate dialogue within individual numbers and their social context. As well as a voice for the challenges Braddon faced, these figures offer a view into the diverse experiences and discourses of authorship stretching from 1866 to 1876, through substantial shifts in perceptions of professionalism, literature, and the female author in Victorian society.

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[171] W. B. Maxwell, *Time Gathered* (London: Hutchinson, 1937), p. 162.
[172] Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions', p. 28. Wagner goes on to argues that 'Art and literature compare favorably with other professions as a double investment in literary speculation'. See Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions', p. 28.
[173] Palmer emphasises the performative nature of Braddon (and Wood and Marryat) aiming to gain authority and establish her position as editor, particularly the introduction placing Butler as central to the theoretical position on performativity, genre and gender. See Palmer, 'Introduction', *Sensational Strategies*, pp. 1–17 and Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre History*, 40 (1988), 519–38.

As Costantini argues, 'the most influential literary form of the age, the novel gave fictional shape to questions that were largely debated by experts and the general public'.[174] Her editorship of *Belgravia* spanned a pivotal part of Braddon's career and was crucial in her ability to build a literary identity beyond that of the female sensation fiction author.

*Belgravia*: Miss Braddon's New Illustrated Magazine

Braddon's editorship of *Belgravia* gave her a more powerful and complex status in the literary sphere; she was both an author herself and an editor with a degree of authority over other authors. Braddon's novels were at the forefront of each number, usually two in overlapping succession, one of which would be illustrated, and read alongside her poetry, short stories, and non-fiction; many of *Belgravia*'s short stories and the novel *Circe* were published under her pseudonym Babington White.[175] Braddon employed *Belgravia* for more than simply a sales platform for her own novels; *Belgravia* gave Braddon a more secure opportunity to defend sensationalism and commercial authorship through various incarnations.[176] *Belgravia* gave Braddon the ability to speak through her writing, which was constantly published in its pages, as well as through her choices of material discussing professional authorship. Braddon's novels were read in tandem with illustrations, more controversial short stories, and literary articles commissioned from writers such as Sala as well as a broader interdisciplinary setting including the scientific, political, and geographic.[177] As Onslow identifies, *Belgravia*'s portrayal of the scientific contributed to the defence of sensation fiction and professional women writers.[178] Indicative of her apprenticeship under Hall at *St. James's Magazine* and understanding of the broader literary sphere, Braddon adopted the identity of 'Conductor'. Dickens had also assumed the role of 'Conductor' and, as Palmer examines, he stood as inspiration and a forerunner for authors

[174] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 14.
[175] The volume editions had a green cover and an 'elaborate border'. See *DNCJ*, p. 45. For the costs, circulating figures, contents, and contributors see Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000) and Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*.
[176] Phegley traces Braddon starting and establishing the periodical and how it combats her critics; she argues that 'My examination of this important but infrequently studied periodical record reveals the ways in which Braddon legitimized both her literary production and women's enjoyment of sensation novels'. See Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 111.
[177] For research on the diversity of material within *Belgravia* see work such as Morris, *Mary Elizabeth Braddon's* Belgravia, A London Magazine, *and the World of Anglo-Jewry, Jews and Judaism, 1866-1899*, Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', and Palmer, 'Sensationalising the City'. These facets to *Belgravia*, their relationship with Braddon's novels, and the wider social discourses will be discussed in chapter three.
[178] See Onslow, 'Sensationalising Science'.

such as Braddon, Ellen Wood and Florence Marryat.[179] Dickens's model of professionalism and speaking more directly to readers, manifest in *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, acted as forerunners for periodicals including *Belgravia*. Braddon strategically utilised Dickens's binding of journalism and fiction to combine her fiction with a journalistic defence of sensation fiction and commercial authorship. As discussed in the introduction, the literary framework, social context, and serialisation are integral to Braddon's authorship, editorship, and novels.[180] *Belgravia* stood as a champion for female sensation fiction writers as prominent and influential figures in the Victorian literary marketplace. And as editor, Braddon contributed to the increasing presence of female writers in the professional literary sphere.

*Birds of Prey*: *Belgravia*'s First Centrepiece

Only two months after *The Lady's Mile* concluded, the first instalment of *Birds of Prey* was published, the principal novel of the very first issue of *Belgravia*. The novel had a pivotal role in establishing the identity of the periodical itself and Braddon as both editor and author, making it clear that Braddon intended her novels to be the centrepiece of *Belgravia*. Significantly, although *Birds of Prey* is primarily a detective story with a dramatic plot, an inheritance investigation, arguably the main voice in the novel is given to a writer. At first, Valentine Hawkehurst, or Robert Macaire, is only known to write theatrical reviews, immediately establishing a connection with the periodical press. He is also assistant to Captain Paget, a gambler, swindler, and fraudster, and was thus tainted with immorality. As the novel progresses and the plot thickens, the mystery surrounding a fortune, Valentine assumes the roles of detective and of diarist; consequently, the narrative is predominantly heard from Valentine's perspective. There is a double voice in his more objective, detective role opposed to his personal, subjective narrative but as the mystery is solved Valentine chooses the role of author as his future career. Echoing *The Doctor's Wife*, in *Birds of Prey*

[179] See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 20. Bandish reads *Belgravia* as a magazine marketed to the aspiring middle class, but created by the mid-Victorian Bohemians. Bandish brings together Bahkhtin's Dialogism and *Belgravia* to provide 'a model for a complex interpretative paradigm through which to understand the interaction of the competing messages of periodical literature'. See Bandish, 'Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-Narrative of Belgravia', p. 239.

[180] As Seys argues, Victorian fiction undermines concepts of isolated fiction and the 'death of the author'; the active engagement also refutes Waugh's claim that Victorian novels cannot be metafictional. See Seys, 'The Scenery and Dresses of Her Dreams', p. 184.

authorship as a profession is not tied to leading a woman astray.[181] Valentine's writing is explicitly linked to more a conventional way of life, seen in his engagement to Charlotte Halliday and, just as Sigismund is placed in opposition to Roland, Valentine Hawkehurst is placed against the backdrop of other male characters in the novel who are untrustworthy and immoral. The villains in *Birds of Prey*, Philip Sheldon and Captain Paget, place their daughters in vulnerable social positions as well as threatening social authority and social trust.

*Charlotte's Inheritance*: 'the completion of that history'

Although *Dead-Sea Fruit* was serialised in *Belgravia* immediately after *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance* is a sequel to the tale of Valentine Hawkehurst's literary career, what Costantini identifies as a 'metaliterary subplot'.[182] Fired by his love for Charlotte, Valentine rises in the literary world becoming a successful magazine writer through hard work and determination, rather than solely stemming from an idealised, artistic vision of authorship. Embracing the commercialism of the literary marketplace, Valentine writes to enter a profession in which he can provide for his wife, Charlotte, and their family. With echoes of Sigismund Smythe, Valentine buys and furnishes the 'Cottage in Wimbledon' on the profits from his first novel, beginning his second to maintain their security. However, the eccentric items Valentine chooses for their home, including a writing desk claimed to have been Voltaire's, embody the dual elements of his personality. As Costantini writes,

> [w]hat Valentine comes to embody, at the end of the sequel, is thus the contradiction of a *philistine artist* who combines bourgeois lifestyle with bohemian tastes, hack writing with professionalism. These non-disjunctive traits of his personality make him a plausible alter ego of Braddon who, at the time of the two novels' composition, was experiencing fierce critical attacks.[183]

Reinforcing the affiliation between Braddon's career and fictional writers, and her defence of sensationalism, as Braddon develops her detective fiction, the criminal, sensational plot lines of *Birds of Prey* continue alongside Valentine's rise through the literary profession in

[181] Dowling argues that in their metafictional novels Dickens, Thackeray, and Gissing 'illustrate the importance of the male "other," those sources of difference that are constantly produced and then crushed from *within* the gender divide. The process of manufacturing deviancy in order to maintain normalcy is a process this book calls "hegmonic deviance"'. Dowling suggests that these novelists 'positioned [the male novelist] in close proximity to the "stiff upper lip" ideal of English manhood [defining them] against a demonsided male "other"'. See Andrew Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature* (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), p. 3 and p. 1.
[182] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 118.
[183] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 117.

*Charlotte's Inheritance*. Philip Sheldon attempts to slowly poison Charlotte, and she is rescued by Valentine with George Sheldon, the old nurse, and a young doctor. Also, Diana Paget is forced to be skillfully deceptive to escape Captain Paget's determination to control her marriage, but is granted a happy ending. Through both novels Philip Sheldon and Captain Paget are, what Buscemi describes as, 'an instrument of reform' and readers are called to question social conventions and authorities.[184] The associations between writing, conventional marriage, and inheritance may be seen as conservative, but in the light of Braddon and Maxwell establishing *Belgravia* and being cast in the roles of immoral authors, in both their private lives and in their commercialised writing, Valentine is more subversive than he first appears.

Not relenting on the association between Braddon's personal life and fictional depictions, the *Saturday Review*'s lengthy comparisons between Valentine and Braddon, and by implication between his 'hodge-podge of untrustworthy and slipshod trash' and her novels, establish him as Braddon's alter ego. The *London Review* similarly assumes Braddon's motives,

> Miss Braddon, too, goes out of her way to have a fling at her critics; and, like everyone else who resents plain speech, she labours hard to convince her reader that she has a lofty contempt for it, and that she considers those critics who do not call her a George Sand or George Eliot to be a worthless and inhuman race.[185]

Symptomatic of Braddon's association with sensation fiction, reviews for *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* are pervaded by the language of consumption and addiction.[186] For the *Examiner* the readers go from 'stifling atmosphere of a gin-palace' in *Charlotte's Inheritance* to 'the pure air of an English meadow' in Miss Parr's novel, *Basil Godfrey's Caprice*.[187] Exemplifying the division in reception, only a few pages later advertisements declare Braddon's novels garner 'positive exhilaration'.[188] The reoccurring attacking tone is

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[184] Buscemi, '"The disease, which had hitherto been nameless"', p. 160.

[185] 'Charlotte's Inheritance', *London Review*, 29 February 1868, pp. 212–3 (p. 213). Tegan discusses the relationship between George Eliot and Braddon, and comparisons in reviews, especially Eliot's letter to John Blackwood about the difference in sold copies between *Romola* and *Trail of the Serpent*. See Tegan, 'Strange Sympathies. For comparative studies of Braddon and Eliot see Sara Moore Putzell, 'Attracting the Majority: M. E. Braddon and George Eliot', *The George Eliot Fellowship Review*, 11 (1980), 14–9 and Linda K. Hughes, 'Constructing Fictions of Authorship in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 38.2 (2005), 158–179.

[186] The novels are said to leave an 'ignorant and repellent' impression and Braddon's writing called 'literary hash' within which her references to history and religion are 'indigestible lumps'. See 'Charlotte's Inheritance: a Novel', *Athenaeum*, 21 March 1868, p. 418 and 'Charlotte's Inheritance', *Examiner*, 14 March 1868, p. 166. Phegley discusses Braddon's sustained defence of women readers in tandem with that of sensation fiction. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"'.

[187] 'Charlotte's Inheritance', *Examiner*, p. 166 and 'Advertisement', *Examiner*, 7 March 1868, p. 160.

[188] Ibid. The juxtaposition between reviews and advertisements will be explored in greater detail in chapter three.

palpable in many reviews, but it must be considered that Braddon was author and editor, and therefore in direct competition with her critics over readers and sales. In the first few years of *Belgravia* Braddon dramatised a young man embarking on a literary career and attacked by critics, directly imitating the harshest reviews of *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*.

## *Dead-Sea Fruit*: The Largest Cast of Literary Figures

*Dead-Sea Fruit*'s plot predominantly follows the life and literary career of Eustace Thorburn, influenced and advised by a variety of fictional writers of various styles and successes: Daniel Mayfield, Laurence Desmond, Harold Jerningham, and Theodore de Bergerac, and the actresses Lucy Alford and Madame Carlitz. In *Dead-Sea Fruit*, Braddon persuasively characterises the complexity and breadth of relationships and exchanges within the literary sphere. They inhabit roles including editor of a popular periodical, frustrated poet, and overly ambitious writer of the interminable tome.[189] The myriad of facets, debates, and conflicts within the reconceptualisation of the professional author are dramatised to the deepest extent thus far in Braddon's series of metafiction. *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s plot is unashamedly sensational and, as Palmer describes, 'bristles with self-justifying awareness'.[190] Harold and de Bergerac are failed writers unable to achieve their desired heights of ambition and fame. Harold Jerningham writes poetry as well as the autobiographical novels that lead to the discovery that Eustace is his son. De Bergerac occupies the role of the overly ambitious writer tackling a mighty task never to be completed, almost engulfing Eustace. As editors and journalists, Daniel and Laurence participate within the commercial and industrial sphere of the literary world, although retain a sense of frustration and lack of fulfilment of their true ability. Lucy Alford and Emily Jerningham are Braddon's voice against the social conventions hampering their independence and happiness, most prominently the marriage and divorce laws.[191] Eustace emerges as a writer amid a conflicting dialogue regarding the literary profession, reflecting the contradictory discourses and conceptions of literature and authorship pervading

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[189] *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s metafictional literary marketplace contains the characters closest to writers such as 'Dickens's Young Men'; indeed, Edwards reads Daniel Mayfield as a fictionalised Sala, including his red nose. See P.D. Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men": George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates and the World of Victorian Journalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997), p. 77. These facets will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three. De Bergerac can be read as foreshadowing Miss Skipwith in *Vixen* (1878–9), but also Edward Casaubon in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–2).

[190] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 15.

[191] On the various incarnations across her career of what Lynch describes as Braddon's 'radical social criticism' see Lynch, 'Spectral Politics', pp. 326–7. Braddon's constructions of romance, marriage, and the home will be discussed in chapter two, divorce in *Dead-Sea Fruit* in chapter three, and adultery and celibacy in chapter four.

the Victorian press and surrounding Braddon herself. Most pertinently, the concepts of gentlemanliness and morality are questioned through *Dead-Sea Fruit*, as well as the necessity for the security of wealth to enter the marital conventions of Victorian society.[192] The metafictional literary marketplace dramatises the spectrum of writers Braddon worked among, as well as her own conflicting motivations and emotions regarding her career.

Indicative of her transition in the public eye from humble sensation fiction writer to established in the periodical press Daniel succeeds Sigismund as Braddon's alter ego in many reviews; these include the *Examiner*, which deems that, in *Dead-Sea Fruit* 'Miss Braddon speaks for herself by the lips of Daniel Mayfield, a literary bohemian [with a] very plain way of expressing its opinion'.[193] Many periodicals establish a hierarchy of professional authors and the *Athenaeum* vocally distances its definition of professionalism from the "Braddonian" school: 'we must remark that [*Dead-Sea Fruit*'s] delineations of literary society do not accord with our own experience'.[194] These publications firmly associate Braddon with disrepute and aim to prevent her from accessing 'their profession' or 'higher section'. However, the harsh criticism and often patronising tone must be read in association with advertisements.[195] For instance, two days before the *Athenaeum* contained such a diatribe on *Dead-Sea Fruit*, the *Saturday Review* enclosed an extensive advertisement containing twenty quotations pervaded by superlatives and extolling Braddon's talents and *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s prowess.[196] In advertisements Braddon can be seen to strategically counteract a periodical's own review by allowing other publications to celebrate of her 'peculiar talent', 'pre-eminence', celebrity, and profligacy, and see the novels as dedicated to a public who 'love and long' for her next.[197] As chapter three will examine, the extreme range of tone typifies the division between Braddon's critical reception and her place in the public's affection, demonstrating the light shed on Victorian fiction by the paratextual. Braddon and Maxwell

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[192] On constructions of masculinity in nineteenth-century literature, the periodical press, and society see *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*. Law examines Braddon's and Collins's interactions within the periodical press comparatively, arguing that their 'engagement in modes of fictional production […] challenge[d] the conventions of the dominant mode of "gentlemanly" publishing of the mid-Victorian period'. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, p. 153.

[193] 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Examiner*, 1 August 1868, pp. 485–6 (p. 485).

[194] 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Athenaeum*, 13 July 1868, pp. 837–8 (p. 837).

[195] As discussed in the introduction my work draws on research surrounding the material composition of periodicals and the act of reading. For example see Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*.

[196] See 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Athenaeum*, p. 837 and 'Notice – Miss Braddon's Latest Novel: Dead-Sea Fruit', *Saturday Review*, 11 July 1868, p. 75. For example, *Dead-Sea Fruit* was declared as Braddon's best novel to-date; it 'surpasses' *The Doctor's Wife* and is 'eclipsing' both *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*". See '*Sunday Times*, June 14', '*Morning Star*, June 16', and '*Court Circular*, June 30' in 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Saturday Review*, p. 75.

[197] 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 12 October 1867.

capitalized on the commercial side to authorship to undermine Braddon's critics and exert a degree of control over her public identity.

*Hostages to Fortune*: Miss Braddon Manages Not to Murder Anyone in Three Volumes

Braddon's personal life remained under scrutiny and with the death of Maxwell's first wife, Mary Ann Crowley, what Wolff describes as, 'a storm of scandalous publicity' returned to their lives.[198] Their battle with Richard Brinsley Knowles, Maxwell's brother in law, was reignited by Knowles publishing notices in London magazines of his sister's death. These were deliberately phrased to draw attention to Braddon living with Maxwell not as his wife and Maxwell's panicked telegrams falsely denying knowledge and trying to cover up the funeral. In vengeance Knowles printed, signed, and circulated a counter-notice on 28 September, including these telegrams and redeclared Maxwell's and Braddon's illegitimate relationship. Chapter three will explore in greater detail the interrelation between scandal, *Belgravia*, and Braddon's metafictions.[199] As a result, all but one of Braddon's and Maxwell's staff left and the gossip forced them to move.[200] Weathering the storm, Braddon and Maxwell became legally married on 2 October 1874; all of their children, from Gerald in 1862 to Edward (Ted) in 1870, were born before their marriage.[201] Despite the period of malicious gossip, their marriage marked the eventual close of many years of pain and a new chapter in Braddon's life and career. Their personal life was not ignored but the viciousness abated in the tone of reviews.

A year later in 1875, the final fictional author in *Belgravia*, Herman Westray, appeared in *Hostages to Fortune*, followed immediately by *Joshua Haggard's Daughter*, Braddon's final novel for *Belgravia*. Significantly, there are many similarities between Herman and Sigismund in *The Doctor's Wife*; Herman is not as explicitly a sensation fiction writer, rather writing a diverse range of journalism, novels, and plays, but there are parallels between the two authors' relationship to writing as work to earn money. Indicative of Braddon's wealth of experience in the literary sphere, Herman begins as a journalist writing for a popular newspaper before achieving fame with his novels and his plays. As he moves

[198] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 248.
[199] Mirmohamadi and Martin discuss Braddon's reception in Australia including the marriage scandal and a newspaper article in 1875 describing Braddon as 'The gory authoress of Aurora Floyd' with a 'ghoulish disposition. See Mirmohamadi and Martin, *Sensational Melbourne*, p. 134.
[200] See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 251.
[201] Gerald Melbourne (1862–1933), Francis Earnest (1863–1866), Fanny Margaret (1862–1955), William Babington (1866–1937), Winifred Rosalie (1868–1899), and Edward Henry Harrington (1870–1833).

between styles and genres, Herman rises and falls in the eyes of the readers and critics. With echoes of *Dead-Sea Fruit*, Herman Westray is caught between Editha Morcombe, who takes on a domestic role as his loyal wife, and Myra Brandreth, who takes on a professional role as a popular actress and theatre manager who stages his plays. Costantini argues that, unlike Dickens in *David Copperfield*, referred to directly by Herman and Editha, Braddon challenges the direct dynamic between hard-work, respectability, and success, arguably indicative of the different social and literary contexts of these novels.[202] Despite a relatively conventional ending to the novel with Herman's and Editha's marriage and Myra's failure, *Hostages to Fortune* portrays the potential for female professionalism and values the successful collaborative relationship between a writer and actress. They act as Braddon's mouthpieces for both sensationalism and harsh reality for professional women in Victorian society. *Hostages to Fortune* establishes a scenario in which these voices and perceptions can be heard in conjunction with social stability and morality, rather than being entirely alienated and dismissed for disjunction and immorality

Comparisons with earlier novels are slightly less prevalent in reviews but Braddon's determined move from sensation fiction, a 'moral revolution' as the *Examiner* described it, is still present in reviews of *Hostages to Fortune*.[203] The *Saturday Review* adopts a comedic, condescending, critical, and complimentary tone epitomised by telling the reader that, 'Miss Braddon really does manage to get through these three volumes without murdering anyone'.[204] The review patronisingly writes that Braddon does not express enough gratitude for the reviewers' contributions to her new writing style, if 'her novelist hero, in his repeated attacks on the reviews his books receive, at all expresses her sentiments'.[205] The *Saturday Review* is not the only periodical to regard Herman Westray's voice against other members of the literary profession and the *York Herald* goes as far as to see the novel, particularly the title, as 'a shaft against many of the literary class, who idle away their papilionaceous flutterings'.[206] Parallels can be drawn between the overtly professional authors Sigismund and Herman working to live by their pens and the derogative language aimed at Braddon's commercial motivations in sales, in financial success; gendered and condemnatory language

[202] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 122.
[203] 'Miss Braddon's Last Novel', *Examiner*, 18 September 1875, pp. 1056–7 (p. 1056). The *Examiner* also, interestingly, acknowledges Braddon's strategic self-construction through reminding her readers of her past novels to, 'accentuate the exalted beauties and graces of the present'. Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] 'Miss Braddon's New Novel', *York Herald*, 14 September 1875, p. 7. For a collection of reviews see 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 9 October 1875, p. 488.

speaking of 'morality in the naming of books, and the disregard which some of our modern authoresses show for it is in part and parcel of their whole method'.[207] However, although slightly fewer superlatives are employed to describe *Hostages to Fortune*, Braddon's established and powerful standing in the literary sphere pervades reviews.

The review which I argue is the most pre-emptive of future reviews of Braddon's work is that by the *Hereford Journal* praising Braddon's lack of complacency: '"Indeed few popular novelists have shown so little desire to trade on an achieved reputation as Miss Braddon"'.[208] In the last months of her editorship, Braddon's standing and the 'Miss Braddon School' were firmly established, but so was her determination to continue participating in literary fashions. Importantly, *Hostages to Fortune* was serialised in the same year in which Braddon and Maxwell married, yet public scandal was renewed; hence the complex interaction between professional authorship, social barriers, and social stability can be perceived as aimed directly at Braddon's critics as well as her loyal readership. However, Braddon and Maxwell often directly replied to reviewers' barbed comments in letters rather than solely through her fiction and articles. Whilst *Belgravia*'s editor Braddon employed her metafictional depictions of the literary marketplace, her power as 'Conductor', and correspondence to defend sensation fiction, her readers, and herself as a professional author.

**Act 3: Signed "Yours affectionally M. E. Braddon Mary E. Maxwell"**

We turn now to the third act in Braddon's literary career stretching until her last novels were published during the first world war. Between publishing *Lady Audley's Secret* and concluding her editorship of *Belgravia*, Braddon and Maxwell rose in society, fame, and respectability, as well as money and class. Her relationship with scandal and immorality began to diminish in potency. Braddon's place in the literary landscape went through a significant change with her gaining status and sharing the stage with many authors who we now see as celebrities: Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie write that, '[b]etween 1875 and 1885 Braddon became the *grand dame* of her social circle and Lichfield House became a social centre for many writers and intellectuals, including Robert Browning, Oscar Wilde, Whistler, the du Mauriers, Henry Irving, and Bram Stoker'.[209] As discussed in Act 1, portraiture is

[207] 'Hostages to Fortune', *Athenaeum*, 11 September 1875, pp. 331–2 (p. 331).
[208] '*Hereford Journal*, Sept, 4' in 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 9 October 1875, p. 488.
[209] Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation*, p. xxiii.

important in Victorian celebrity and she was painted by Frith again in his painting of a Royal Academy exhibition, 'A Private View at the Royal Academy in 1881' and a signed photograph from c. 1890.[210] However, the *Chicago Tribune* writes that 'Mrs. Maxwell particularly objects to seeing "Miss Braddon's" picture in the papers, and rejoices that the only one ever printed was from a photograph made so long ago that no one recognizes the original of it today when she goes travelling, a diversion of which she is particularly fond'.[211] Braddon fiercely resisted paintings and photographs throughout her career.

As W. M. Maxwell narrates in *Time Gathered*, while Lichfield House remained their London home, in the 1880s Braddon and Maxwell built their country home Annesley House in Bank near Lyndhurst.[212] The Maxwells commissioned construction in the early 1880s, building began in 1883, and they moved in during 1884. The Maxwells devoted a lot of their time, money, and care to building this home and estate. They were well-known and active in the area, with their annual arrival, often in the summer, announced in the local newspaper, the *Hampshire Advertiser*.[213] Fascinatingly, into the twentieth century there were postcards and photographs with the house as a celebrity's home, and drivers of charabancs used to point it out.[214] First in *World*, Edmund Yates wrote a series of articles featuring Braddon, entitled *Celebrities At Home* (1877–79), as part of the, as Richard Salmon argues, 'shifting and convoluted' form of interviewing at the end of the nineteenth century.[215] W. B. Maxwell writes, 'Near the end of her life a critic of weight said, "Miss Braddon is a part of England.

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[210] William Powell Frith, *A Private View at the Royal Academy in 1881*, 1883, Royal Academy of Arts, London. Braddon stands on the very left edge of the painting behind Trollope and near John Tenniel and George Du Maurier. https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/private-view-royal-academy-1881. *Mary Elizbeth Braddon*, c. 1890, Robert Lee Wolff Collection of Victorian Fiction, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas, Austin, signed 'Yours affectionately M. E. Braddon Mary E. Maxwell'. Denney identifies it as part of Braddon establishing 'a reputable depiction which she tried to uphold' and part of a 'system of disguise'. See Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England*, p. 43.

[211] Curtis Brown, 'Riches from her Pen', *Chicago Tribune*, 3 September 1899, p. 14. Denney's work brings together Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Lady Dilke, Millicent Garrett Fawcett, and Sarah Grand. 'Each of these women moved from the private sphere of female influence to the masculinized public stage'. See Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England*, p. 3.

[212] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*.

[213] There are websites including the house and Braddon placing her in the role of a celebrity, or important part of the local history eg. http://www.newforestexplorersguide.co.uk/heritage/lyndhurst/bank-introduction.html.

[214] https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/Hampshire-NEW-FOREST-Miss-Braddons-HOME-AT-BANK-c1904-by-F-G-O-Stuart-799-/172019925371?_trksid=p2067104.m45210.l46742.

[215] Richard Salmon, 'Signs of Intimacy: The Literary Celebrity in the "Age of Interviewing"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 25.1 (1997), 159–177 (p. 175). See Edmund Yates, *Celebrities At Home*, 3 vol. (London: Office of The World, 1877–79), 1: p. 320. [First published as series in Yates's weekly newspaper *World*]. Ouida was the only other woman in the series; Jordan argues that 'there is much to be gained by realigning Ouida's work with Braddon's. Braddon and Ouida began their careers at the same time, and in fact Lord Lytton was mentor to both', but was 'regarded by Mary E. Braddon as one of her chief rivals'. See Jane Jordan, 'Ouida', *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Pamela K. Gilbert (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 220–231 (pp. 223–4 and p. 221).

She is in the encyclopaedias and dictionaries. Our English-speaking world not have been the same without her".[216] Although her contemporaries agree that she resisted talking shop or being interviewed, Braddon hovered on the edge of literary celebrity and participated in the advent of a new aspect of the literary profession.

The extent of Braddon's firm position as a well-known, famous author is palpable in the phrasing of comments on her new novels in the final decades of the nineteenth century. As the *Manchester Courier* declared, 'There is no disguising the practised hand of Miss Braddon'.[217] Braddon was not felt to have abandoned her sensationalism entirely: Carnell reminds us, 'as a writer she had not lost the ability to shock and offend reviewers'.[218] Perhaps the most overt combination of a recognisable voice while adopting new literary trends is from the *Athenaeum*'s advert for *The Venetians*, which, it declares, has 'nearly all the good features of a Braddonian story [and lost] none of her power of assimilating the fashions'.[219] Braddon achieved relative freedom but never lost the sense of the battle through which she went to achieve this position. Indeed, Wolff argues that, in the apparently sentimental Christmas story *Flower and Weed* (1882), 'the victim in her young womanhood of social cruelty, [Braddon], in her own rich and powerful middle age, when she could write to please herself, was striking back at her early enemies and the harsh principles they represented, and so subtly that they could not catch her at it'.[220] From Sigismund Smith in *The Doctor's Wife* to Eustace Thorburn in *Hostages to Fortune*, the fictional writers in Braddon's novels were predominantly male. However, these men were followed by Mabel in *Vixen*, Stella in *One Thing Needful*, and Antonia in *The Infidel*, accompanied only by Arthur Haldene in *His Darling Sin* (1899). I argue that the presence of female fictional writers in her novels exemplifies the subtle self-reflexivity of these novels, a move from the overtly defensive stance of her male writers in the earlier ones.

[216] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, pp. 284–5.
[217] 'Miss Braddon's Latest Novel', *Athenaeum*, 4 February 1893, p. 166.
[218] Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 178.
[219] The advertisement also includes the quotation that, 'she has lost none of her talent for ingenious construction [...] of the hour' – *The Times*; 'her bright and clever pen is for ever seeking fresh woods and pastures new' – *Court Journal*. 'Miss Braddon's Latest Novel', *Athenaeum*, p. 166.
[220] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 288.

*Vixen*: Braddon had a 'truly magnificent grey mare called Vixen'[221]

*Vixen* stood on the cusp of the 1870s and 80s in the midst of Braddon's repositioning in the literary marketplace. With the controversy surrounding sensation fiction having died down, having edited her own periodical, *Belgravia*, for a decade and being legally married to Maxwell, Braddon could be more experimental and create a female poet in the pages of her novel; Lynch argues that, at this point in her career '[Braddon] no longer feared recrimination could spoil her success'.[222] In 1878–9, a few years after Braddon's last novel was serialised in *Belgravia*, *Vixen* was serialised in *All the Year Round*. *All the Year Round* was by that point edited by Charles Dickens the younger, though Dickens ("the original")'s name, reputation, and definitions of the professional writer were still synonymous with the periodical. Even after her editorship of *Belgravia* ceased, Braddon continued to consciously align herself with the images of Dickens 'conducting' his magazines, and associating herself with the image of the professional author writing for their public and for commercial success.[223] Braddon's name may not appear on the front page of *All the Year Round*, but her presence is keenly felt. Their names were commonly used in the same sentence in the press and here Braddon deliberately places her fiction, both physical and metaphorically, within the parameters of Dickens's legacy or reputation in the literary marketplace.

With *Vixen*'s characters taking on the role of readers, writers, and reviewers, Braddon dramatises the collaborations which were fundamental to nineteenth-century authorship. Focusing on Sigismund and Mabel, Beller sees the fictional authors in these important novels as embodiments of Braddon's conscious interactions with critics and the fluctuating literary marketplace.[224] Unlike Braddon's other fictional authors, however, Mabel Ashbourne makes a deliberate choice not to be popular. Echoing the oppositions between the artistic and the popular, between the moral and the entertaining, pervading the periodical press Mabel declares that, '"I don't want my book to be popular, I should have worked on a lower level. I should have stooped to write a novel"' (*V*, III: p. 67). Mabel and her poetry stand against a literary landscape. Roderick Vawdrey is Mabel's fiancé, vicious reviewer, and advertiser who

[221] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 134. W. B. Maxwell tells us that while living in Annesley House, New Forest she also had a 'stockier, less interesting down mare called Peggy […] If her mount was Vixen she too showed no sign of fatigue. That grey mare was the one perfect horse that, as it proverbially alleged, comes to each of us in a lifetime'. Ibid.
[222] Lynch, 'Spectral Politics', p. 253.
[223] Beller's article argues that Braddon mocks the failings and dangers of the amateur literary world: 'Not only is Braddon implicitly questioning high-culture critical opinions that depreciate the work of popular writers such as Dickens, but she also expands here a philosophy of writing that places the reader's pleasure at the centre of the process'. See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 255.
[224] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.

announces to Violet – the eponymous Vixen – that Mabel writes poetry among her orchids; he ends the novel married to Violet. Lord Mallow is Mabel's publisher, editor, and future husband who 'criticised without mercy', although his servant Mr Allan actually does the editing (*V*, III: p. 76). Late in the novel Violet lives on Jersey with the fanatical Miss Skipwith who turned her back on society and strives to write a book offering a universal religion, having '"no doubt that it will make a sensation"' (*V*, III: p. 38). There is no doubt that Mabel's poetry is laughed at but the domestic sphere of 'orchids' and the aristocratic literary sphere are also pulled apart. Beller argues that through these writers Braddon defends her position as a prolific female author and 'advocates steady workmanship over the supposed Romantic model of instinctive, spontaneous, inspiration-led creativity'.[225] Underneath the ridicule is a threatening image of Mabel being forced into her occupations by controlling and dismissive men and Victorian social conventions. Braddon's fictional woman writer did not lose connection with her previous novels and examining the juxtaposition in seemingly opposing forms in Braddon's novels Beller argues that *The Doctor's Wife* and *Vixen* are united by their defence of popular writers.[226] By undermining Mabel Ashborne's romanticised, frivolous hobby, in *Vixen* Braddon implicitly aligned narrative sympathy with the image of the popular, commercial writer and their literary marketplace.

Reviews saw *Vixen* as more on the side of a novel of manners and further from the sensational. The *Examiner* deems *Vixen* a novel in which Braddon's 'descriptive powers are of the strongest, but, unfortunately, her pen frequently runs away with her'.[227] However, the tone of the *Saturday Review* can be seen as patronising: 'we shall yet have the pleasure of seeing her books given away as prizes in a school for young ladies'.[228] Interestingly, *Vixen*'s publication in *All the Year Round* is rarely mentioned, however *Judy* carried an entertaining review: '"On the Tramp" is capital in All the Year Round, and so is the instalment of Miss Braddon's "Vixen," but she shouldn't have thrown a lamp at her father-in-law. We are sorry the "All or Nothing" is finished'.[229] Despite the appearance of a largely conventional novel

[225] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', pp. 250–253. Kathryn Ledbetter discusses poetry in women's periodicals in terms of constructions of popularity, aestheticism, and modernism: 'Some periodicals of the 1880s, such as Oscar Wilde's *Women's World*, demonstrate a women's version of aestheticism and decadence, but even these periodicals were mass-market productions marketed to women, a group that garnered little regard from men such as Arnold and modernist theorists'. See Ledbetter, *British Victorian Women's Periodicals*, p. 6.
[226] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.
[227] 'Vixen', *Examiner*, 15 February 1879, pp. 216–7.
[228] 'Vixen', *Saturday Review*, 1 March 1879, pp. 280–2 (p. 281).
[229] Thumbmarks', *Judy*, 23 April 1879, p. 192. Also in the same piece is a fleeting mention of *Belgravia*, now owned by Chatto and Windus: '*Belgravia* is always good, but our sweet "Queen of the Meadow" is a little trying just now'. Ibid.

and 'respectable course', *Vixen* is, as Sears describes it, a novel 'very much about fashions, old or new, whether they are for fiction, home decorating, or dress'.[230] In *Vixen* Braddon both undermines and adheres to generic expectation, is both conventional and disruptive. This novel also continues Braddon's challenge to the Victorian conventions of the marriage market.[231] At the heart of both *Vixen* and *One Thing Needful* are binaries established between two women.[232] In *Vixen*, Mabel is portrayed confined to the conservatory and her poetry but Violet (and Miss Skipwith) evades social conventions and fashions.[233] An autobiographical twist is found in Braddon and Violet's shared love and recklessness of riding, and the name of Braddon's favourite horse, Vixen; as her son writes, 'My mother was a very brave, but not a very safe rider'.[234] Beller discusses in depth the differences in Mabel's and Violet's reading, which contributes to Braddon's implicit defence of popular authors and exposure of Victorian gender conventions.[235] Braddon later employs doubling in *One Thing Needful*, in this instance between Stella and Clarice, to criticise the Victorian marriage market in the 1870s and 80s. Neither novel relinquishes Braddon's undercurrents of social criticism begun in novels such as *The Lady's Mile*.

As well as appearing more politicly charged when read in conjunction with Braddon's novels more generally, *Vixen* reads as more strategic in the context of the contents of *All the Year Round*.[236] Alongside Braddon's novel ran *All or Nothing*, *My Land of Beulah*, and *Sebastian Strome*.[237] The last few instalments were accompanied by an advert for the volume form of the novel as well as the Summer Number of *All the Year Round* in which one of

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[230] Sears, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the "Combination Novel"', p. 50. Sears proposes a 'dialogic reading practice'. See Sears, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the "Combination Novel"', p. 51.
[231] Knowles examines the two marriages in *Vixen*, Roderick and Violet and Lord Mallow and Mabel, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter two. See Knowles, 'The French Connection'.
[232] Graham Law argues that 'An economical way to pursue the ideological orientation of Braddon's work in the newspaper novels is to survey the treatment of the contrasting pairs of heroines often featured [and] Three of the more complex of the sensation novels written for Tillotsons can illustrate the main variations: the heroic failure of transgression, the timid triumph of submission, or radical ambivalence'. Law looks at *Taken At the Flood* (1874), *Phantom Fortune* (1883), and *An Open Verdict* (1877). See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, p. 205.
[233] Seys examines Braddon bringing together literary and fashion trends. See Seys, *Fashion and Narrative in Victorian Popular Literature*.
[234] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 134.
[235] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'. The representations of Mabel and Vixen's reading can be linked to Braddon's defence of young women readers in Isabel in *The Doctor's Wife*, discussed earlier in the chapter.
[236] As discussed in the introduction and will be explored in more detail in chapter three the relationship between the serialised novel and the periodical is integral to Victorian literature and I draw on work such as Patten, 'When Is a Book Not a Book?' and Patten, 'Dickens as Serial Author'.
[237] See Frances Cashel Hoey, *All, or Nothing*, *All the Year Round*, 13 July 1878 – 8 March 1879 (weekly), Bertha Jane Adams, 'My Land of Beulah', *My Land of Beulah, and Other Stories*, *All the Year Round*, 5 April 1879 to 5 July 1879 (weekly), and Julian Hawthorne, *Sebastian Strome*, *All the Year Round*, 3 May 1879 to 1 November 1879 (weekly).

Braddon's ghost stories, 'The Shadow in the Corner', was published, just one month after *Vixen* ended.[238] In both of these announcements, Braddon's name is explicitly used, presumably to employ recognition to strengthen the advertisement. Just as Braddon capitalises on *All the Year Round*'s status, so does *All the Year Round* employ Braddon as an advert attracting readers. One of the advertisements for the summer number below, 'The Completion of "Vixen" Now ready in all Libraries, in three Volumes', reads,

> For Railway, Seaside, And General Reading. On July 1st Will be Published, Price 6d., The Summer Number of All the Year Round for 1879, Conducted by Charles Dickens, Containing complete stories by Miss Braddon and other Popular Authors. To be obtained at all Railway Bookstalls, and at all Booksellers.[239]

Significantly the advert is not specific about it being Charles Dickens the younger. Also Miss Braddon is in huge capital letters; the biggest words in the whole advert are granted to Braddon as the leading name among 'Popular Authors'.

Interestingly, a few years later the *Saturday Review* brought up *Vixen* again in an article, 'Improvement on Scott', discussing it in relation to Braddon's editing of the *Waverley Novels*.[240] The article charts Braddon's exchange with a writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* who accused her of making easy money with *Vixen*. The *Saturday Review* reprints her reply:

> "I have devoted just six months of my life to the preparation of these thirteen stories – exactly the time it took me to write my novel *Vixen*; and if my critic had any familiarity with the book trade he would understand the loss involved in this fact".[241]

Standing in support of Braddon, the article celebrates her dignity and rightful anger against this 'ignorant and supercilious critic'.[242] Braddon's association between *Vixen* and The *Waverley Novels* placed the novel firmly within Braddon's professional, business-like identity as an author. Just as Braddon herself aligns *Vixen* with her other work, it important to read these novels with a reminder of her other writing at this time; *The Waverley Novels, An Open Verdict* (1878), and the children's stories *Aladdin and Other Stories* (1888). Just as her

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[238] Examples of the adverts include 'Completion of "Vixen." Now ready, in all Libraries, in three Volumes, VIXEN: THE NEW NOVEL. By M. E. Braddon, Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," &c. London: John & Robert Maxwell, Milton House, Shoe Lane, E. C.' Below, 'Early in July will be published the SUMMER NUMBER of ALL THE YEAR ROUND containing stories by Miss Braddon and Other Popular Writers'. See 'Advertisement', *All the Year Round*, 14 June 1879, p. 620 and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, 'The Shadow in the Corner', *All the Year Round*, Summer 1879, 1–11. For more on 'The Shadow in the Corner' see Lynch, 'Spectral Politics', pp. 244–5.

[239] 'Advertisement', *All the Year Round*, 7 June 1879, p. 6. In the number published on 31 May 1879, the advertisement for *Vixen* in volume form is next to the advert for 'The twenty-first volume of the new series of All the Year Round to be had of all Booksellers'. See 'Advertisement', *All the Year Round*, 31 May 1879, p. 576.

[240] 'Improvements on Scott', *Saturday Review*, 24 September 1881, pp. 387–388 (p. 387).

[241] Ibid.

[242] Ibid.

novels should be read in the context of editing *Belgravia*, Braddon's later novels should also be read in light of the periodical in which they were each serialised and all the other facets of Braddon's authorship. *Vixen* participated in the successful business world inhabited by Braddon and *All the Year Round*.

## *One Thing Needful*: Satirical, Sensational, and Sentimental

The *Saturday Review* seemed almost sad that in *Vixen* Braddon had not 'given her readers the enjoyment of a single criminal, or even of a single crime', but reviews of *One Thing Needful* reflect the more delicate balance between sensational elements and a novel of social commentary.[243] Wolff suggests that through this period Braddon 'reverted to her own specialties, sensation more or less laced with social satire, which – in *One Thing Needful* (1886) – embraced also a more explicitly personal political viewpoint than she had yet revealed'.[244] *One Thing Needful* was at the heart of business negotiations between Maxwell, the Tillotsons, A. P. Watt, and C. D. Leng. The fascinating details of the negotiations are set out by Carnell and Law, including the bargaining on prices: Maxwell 'forced a clearly reluctant Tillotson to accept the novelette *One Thing Needful* to fill [a] gap by threatening to defect to A. P. Watt for more money', and more frequent publications.[245] The Tillotsons accepted, although, rather than their own journals, *One Thing Needful* was taken on their behalf by R. E. Leader, the owner of *Sheffield Independent* and rival to C. D. Leng. The novel was serialised in newspapers, including the *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, starting just one day after her novel *Like and Unlike* began in *Bolton Weekly Journal*.[246] Finally, while *One Thing Needful* was published, at great cost to the Tillotsons, Braddon and Maxwell left for C. D. Leng.[247] Mattacks argues that publishing beyond the Tillotson newspapers was a strategic and financially-motivated ploy; perhaps most interesting is how Maxwell simultaneously employed publishing the novel in volume form in a variety of

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[243] 'Vixen', *Saturday Review*, pp. 280–2.
[244] Wolff, *Victorian Sensation*, pp. 321–2.
[245] Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 144. Carnell and Law also identify that, 'Maxwell habitually forwarded to Tillotson not only requests for individual journals wishing to serialize Braddon's work but also details of offers from rival syndicators, with ambiguous motives'. See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 143.
[246] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Like and Unlike*, *Bolton Weekly Journal* (26 March – 24 September 1887), and the (London: Spencer Blackett, 1887). Earlier the *Hampshire Telegraph* ran an article on Braddon's home. See 'Miss Braddon at Home', *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle*, 17 February 1877, p. 7.
[247] The Tillotsons then and through future generations were hit hard financially; Wilkie Collins died in 1889, the same year as William Tillotson, and they subsequently also had less loyal writers, including Besant and H. Rider Haggard. See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', pp. 144–5.

bindings to cater to a variety of readers.[248] Maxwell and Braddon may have established increasingly secure positions socially and financially yet they did not lose the business-minded approach evident in how the early novels, including *The Doctor's Wife* and *Lady Audley's Secret*, simultaneously occupied diverse periodicals.

Similarly to how the novel was packaged for multiple audiences, Carnell and Law identify *One Thing Needful* as providing a prominent example of Braddon's remarkable ability to adapt her writing to the changes in publishing: 'By the late 1880s she was laying more emphasis on the psychological integrity of characters, but maintained the same casual ease of plotting'.[249] The central character, Stella Boldwood, is the daughter of a Liberal campaigner and adopted by a Conservative, if Liberal, lord. As Mattacks argues, 'The narrative sympathy between Boldwood's radicalism and Lashmar's liberal conservatism is carefully balanced in order to appeal to the wider demographics of Braddon's readership'.[250] When Stella moves to Lashmar Castle she is educated by Lord Lashmar, her adoptive father, and Gabriel Verner, her tutor, receiving an overtly masculine education tied to moving from a working-class sphere in Brumm into the world of the aristocracy in Lashmar Castle. Stella is relegated to the servant sphere on the death of Lord Lashmar but writes as respite dreaming of a future as an author. Stella Boldwood ends *One Thing Needful* married to Victorian Lashmar (Lord Lashmar's step-brother) and as a Lady herself as well as a published novelist. Her marriage echoes Mabel's to Lord Mallow in *Vixen* as an apparently conservative plot conclusion but with undertones of rebellion. The marriages in both novels will be considered in more detail in chapter two from a gendered perspective. Stella occupies a liminal social space between servant and nobility, Liberal and Conservative, poverty and wealth. In *One Thing Needful* writing is not a way of surviving financially, but a way to preserve Stella's dignity and identity in a precarious social position. The self-reflexive period in Braddon's career is evident in the overt political and social spheres being dramatised, with a young woman desiring a life with writing at its heart, writing in which she finds her comfort and sense of security.

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[248] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret'.
[249] Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 147. Braddon also had an intense interest in Zola and French literature which was embodied in the novels in the 1880s, including *The Golden Calf* (1883), *Phantom Fortune* (1883), and *Ishmael* (1884). This period is examined in detail by Wolff in the chapters 'MEB as a Student of Zola (1879-1883)' and 'Epilogue: MEB on Zola, 1885'. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, pp. 289–320. Braddon, Yates, and Sala exchanged letters sharing their fascination in French literature, particularly Balzac, which will be discussed in chapter three. P. D. Edwards covers this in detail. See Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*.
[250] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 225. Wolff also discusses the political alignment of Boldwood and Lashmar. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 338.

As with all Braddon's novels, the metafictional writers in *One Thing Needful* are not constructed as isolated figures. Drawing on the constructions of Victorian authors as intimately connected with the processes of publication explored in the introduction, the juxtapositions between the multiple literary characters are influential in reading Stella's political role in the novel.[251] Most directly echoing the practicalities in *Vixen*, Lord Mallow and Victorian Lashmar assume the roles of editor and publisher, the 'middlemen' in *One Thing Needful*, as will examined in greater detail in chapter two.[252] Similarly to Theodore de Bergerac in *Dead-Sea Fruit* and Miss Skipwith, 'a self-deluded solitary soul' (*V*, III: p. 39), in *Vixen*, *One Thing Needful* has the recurring figure of a deluded writer with an unfinished project, in the form of Gabriel Verner '[a] bent old figure, with bare head and long grey hair and dim, pale eyes, aged by pouring over dry-as-dust books' (*OTN*, I: p. 207). In the high-class social sphere in *One Thing Needful*, Lady Sophia and Captain Vavsour are used as connected yet conflicting facets of the literary marketplace. Lady Sophia, or 'Spur-Box' of the 'Sunday Swash-Buckler', writes as a means to express her love for horse-racing and hunting, yet does not rely on financial gain.[253] Captain Vavasour, who writes romantic fiction under his wife's name comedically deems his novels superior to those of the most established authors of the day: '"Dickens's people and Thackeray's people are the broadest caricatures: Pecksniff – Becky Sharpe – the brothers Cheeryble – Colonel Newcome – daubs my dear lady"' (*OTN*, II: p. 76). It may be Braddon's way of laughing at Dickens and Thackeray, but also, and more likely, she is using her caricature to ridicule reviews severely criticising them, as well as herself. Narrative sympathy lies with the comic, popular newspaper columnist in her 'corduroy shooting-gown' rather than the 'fashionable novelist' who hates plot and sees the drowning in *Daniel Deronda* as the 'one blot upon a great work' (*OTN*, II: p. 76–7). Captain Vavasour, the high-class male writer, is treated with the least respect in the novel. Echoing *Vixen*, Braddon is criticising the figure of a writer desiring aesthetic, or artistic success, implicitly lending greater respect to popularity and professionalism.

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[251] The influence of the contemporary social structures, an author's readerships, and multiplicity of modes of publication is central to texts in the nineteenth century; as Brake argues, 'The nature of "authorship" in the period almost inevitably included periodical publication as one source of readers and income, and a determining format'. See Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p. xii.

[252] The term 'middleman' is used by Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"' and Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*.

[253] Wolff reads Lady Sophia as Braddon's voice in answer to some of her critics and currently literary fashions: 'Certain modish trends she now satirized and deplored [yet she] may have been feeling beset by the new fashions but she was always up with them'. Wolff argues that Braddon's voice is heard in the 'pleasant horsey girl' who stands for Braddon as when she says I don't '"care a straw for any novel without murder, arson, or bigamy"'. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 341.

Although *One Thing Needful* was published in local newspapers rather than established periodicals, the novel was regarded as a relatively realistic representation of high class society. However, the sense of Braddon's established and loyal readers is powerful in reviews and advertisements of her fiction at this time. When reviewing *One Thing Needful*, the *Academy* depicts two sets of Braddon's 'admirers':

> one, the larger, prefers her when she is most thrilling […] the other regards with interest her endeavours to separate herself from the traditional reputation, and to write stories that will prove attractive while to a great extent independent of robbery, arson, murder and the like.[254]

*One Thing Needful* is primarily seen as social commentary, but with sensational elements, such as the burning building in the opening pages and the fortune-tellers who bring Stella's husband to her. The doubling between the conservative and liberal, the political and the sensational, and Braddon's readerships, can be found in Stella herself. *One Thing Needful* ends with a conservative marriage yet, Stella is the author of 'the book of the season, a book which a great many people read and everyone talked about' (*OTN*, II: pp. 279–80).[255] Just as Eustace Thorburn in *Dead-Sea Fruit*, Stella Boldwood begins with far-fetched ideas of novels or poetry filled with characters such as Helen of Troy.[256] Yet Braddon contradicts expectations as Stella's finally published fictions are revealed to be gothic, sensational, even supernatural, and, most importantly, popular.

The political aspects to *One Thing Needful* and the setting within a country estate can arguably be connected to the family's geographical relocation to Annesley House in the New Forest alongside Braddon's literary relocation to newspapers. W. B. Maxwell suggests that they got on better with the 'rural residents' than the gentry, although, as Carnell discusses, a letter from Braddon to Bram Stoker implies that there was some unwanted 'improvement'.[257] As part of their reconstruction the Maxwells moved families to cottages built in for them, but in another village. Central to their position in the estate was the Maxwell's intimate

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[254] 'New Novels', *Academy*, 25 September 1886, pp. 201–2. Like the majority of reviews of the novels containing Braddon's fictional writers, there is no mention of Stella's writing.

[255] As will be discussed in chapter two from a gendered perspective on writing, identity, and Stella's marriage, Mattacks does not see Stella's novels as sensational and questions Braddon using 'woman' rather than 'us'. See Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', pp. 229–230.

[256] Mabel continues: '"I shall never show my poor verses to anyone, but they consoled me while I was writing them. But I have written two or three stories, which I do not think can be much worse than the worst of the novels Mudie sends her ladyship" (II: p. 36). There are also similarities between Stella's writing and Eustace's poetry written while in Paris researching for Theodore de Bergerac. Peterson in *Becoming Women Writers* discusses the image of the garret, ambition, and terms of success and failure. See Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*. The garret as a place for writing will be discussed in more detail in chapter two and particularly in relation to the New Woman writer in chapter four.

[257] Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 277.

involvement in charity work whilst at Annesley House. From the beginning, when the family first moved to Lyndhurst in 1884, they made readings rooms and then a school in the village, before finally converting these buildings into one great house .[258] Also, the family offered support and money to many of those in the surrounding area and their estate and in *Time Gathered* W. B. Maxwell narrates various tales of how, 'Together they kept the wolf from many doors'.[259] Continuing its ties with charity Annesley House became a Barnardo's Children's Home in 1943 before being converted into flats in 1971.

The Maxwells' charity work extended far beyond their own estate however. Braddon appears to have been at the forefront which was predominantly centred around campaigning for and financing children's schooling, free school meals, and visits to the countryside. W. B. Maxwell declared that,

> Far before her time in many of her views, she was strongly of the opinion that with State education should go care of the adequate nourishments of the young pupils […] the piled stacks of bread […] she was the pioneer of the movement to give London children summer holidays in the country. Still farther ahead of the prevailing thought, she felt that it was wicked to give the old the hazard of pain and want, and declared that their care should be another obligation of the State.[260]

*Time Gathered* tells us that in one of presumably many instances Braddon capitalised on her publicity as an author to begin charitable work as Mrs Maxwell. According to her son, Braddon used the 'wide publicity afforded by' Henry Du Pré Labouchère's periodical established in 1876, *Truth*, to begin her first and very successful charity known as "Mrs. Maxwell's Holiday Fund".[261] Her involvement in charities ran through the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth.[262] Importantly, the charity work seems mainly to be carried out under her name Mrs Maxwell rather than Miss Braddon suggesting that, although clearly using her literary fame to some extent, Braddon wished to predominantly distinguish between

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[258] Braddon and Maxwell initially made one reading room in Emery Down and two extra cottages in Bank; these cottages were then turned into their second Reading Room and followed by a school, although in 1898 they were converted turned into one big home.
[259] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, pp. 282–3.
[260] Ibid. John Maxwell's name not included in the praise of the charity work may be symptomatic of his very critical view of his father. The family dynamics will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.
[261] Ibid., p. 138. According to Maxwell, who calls him 'Labby', Labouchère and his family were regular visitors to Annesley House, often staying for a fortnight. Henry Du Pré Labouchère started *Truth* in January 1876. The social paragraphs in *Truth* and Yates's *World* are regularly used by the two men to 'chaff each other'. Ibid., pp. 138–9. As mentioned earlier, *World* also included an interview of Braddon. The fund gave city children holidays in the country; it continued to grow and later the management was given to Lady St. Helier.
[262] Hatter explores Braddon's views of childhood and charity work, including "Mrs. Maxwell's Holiday Fund", describing her as 'an avid fund raiser for children's charities and an author of children's literature'. See Janine Hatter, 'Childhood Disrupted: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Unfinished Autobiography 'Before the Knowledge of Evil', *Peer English*, 10 (2015), 11–25 (pp. 21–2). Braddon, childhood, and charity will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

these aspects of her life. Arguably Braddon wanted to keep these actions, conventionally associated with the maternal, divorced from her public persona, and/or prevent her charity work appearing as selfishly-motivated to gain more celebrity.

*His Darling Sin*: 'eye-glasses and opera-glasses glittered across the fog' (*HDS*, p. 88)

In her early career Braddon worked among the 'who's who' in *Temple Bar* and 'Lichfield House became a social centre for many writers and intellectuals'.[263] From the mid-1880s Annesley House also welcomed their colleagues and friends. Many of their most intimate friends were, as W. B. Maxwell calls them, 'residents', including Herbert Trench and Rhoda Broughton.[264] Reading *Time Gathered* we see a wealth of guests including authors, publishers, and editors; but, the Maxwells also hosted a range of professions and characters including lawyers, academics, doctors, dentists, wine traders, the aristocracy, politicians, theatre owners, actors, and their neighbours.[265] Braddon's politics may have been increasingly conservative but she was not restricted in her knowledge of her social and literary surroundings. Through the last decades of the nineteenth century Braddon's writing progressed from three-volume to one-volume novels, through changes in publisher deals, and participated in literary trends. For example, Braddon gained a stronger presence in detective fiction; Heidi H. Johnson argues for greater consideration of the presence of the figure of the detective, which is often focused on *Lady Audley's Secret*, as well as the father/daughter bond running through her career as evidence of Braddon's participation in literary trends for the duration of her writing.[266] It was in 1896, after the death of her husband, that Braddon finally, if only briefly, slowed her pace of publication and Robert and Jack Maxwell took over their father's publishing firm. Wolff suggests that this period was characterised by a decline in quality of her writing, but also the presence of 'picturesque and pungent social commentary'.[267] W. B. Maxwell tells of a time in the late 1890s when he, Gerald, and their

[263] Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation*, p. xxiii.
[264] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*. Braddon and Broughton's relationship will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.
[265] Ibid.
[266] Johnson argues that 'fuller attention' to [*Eleanor's Victory* (1863) and *Thou Art the Man* (1894)] written near the poles of Braddon's career, provides testimony to the centrality of the father/daughter bond in her work as a whole. Moreover the two texts signal Braddon's participation in a broader trend within popular fiction of her era, thereby hinting at a Victorian preoccupation with this bond that has similarly intrigued current theorists of a feminist psychoanalysis'. See Johnson, 'Electra-fying the Female Sleuth', pp. 255–6. On two of Braddon's late-nineteenth century detective fictions, *Rough Justice* and *His Darling Sin*, see Saverio Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*, pp. 119–133.
[267] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 322.

mother all publish books and are invited to a dinner to celebrate. However their mother refuses, symptomatic of her shying away from publicity and gatherings such as that, despite being happy to host in her home. Braddon's reluctance to court particular publicity points to the complex tensions between the public and the private, and authorial identity, especially for women, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter two.[268] W. B. Maxwell's tone implies a sense of frustration at his mother's resistance, denying them that publicity opportunity for their novels.[269] However, W. B. Maxwell also reports with respect and a sense of idolisation that his mother took greater control over the publication of her writing.

Central to Braddon's changes in publishing practice was the shift to one-volume novels and *His Darling Sin* (1899) was her first foray into that mode of writing. Wolff is slightly dismissive describing *His Darling Sin* as a padded-out novelette, however he also describes it as 'a sophisticated story of hard boiled society people'.[270] The novel offers a rare example of explicitly revisiting a character from her existing work. Sigismund reappeared in *The Lady's Mile* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* was one of Braddon's rare sequels; *His Darling Sin* sees the return of chief inspector of the London Bow Street, John Faunce, from *Rough Justice* only a year before.[271] The detective plot centres around scandal stemming from false accusations that the novel's heroine, Lady Grace Perivale, spent winter abroad in disguise as 'Mrs Randall' with Colonel Richard Rannock. Now a private detective, Faunce defends Lady Perivale and discovers that the actress Kate Dalmaine is the real 'Mrs Randall'.[272] Faunce secretively publishes a piece of libel in the *Bon Ton* in order to sue the newspaper, and publicly declare Lady Perivale's innocence by revealing her and Kate's likeness in court. In the second strand of mystery, Faunce investigates Rannock's murder by Kate's abusive husband, James Bolisco. At the end of *His Darling Sin* the newly married Grace Haldane writes to her loyal friend Susan Rodney telling her that by August a new life will be bringing

[268] Maxwell writes how, 'In the autumn season one year Lichfield House issued for publication three novels—one by my mother, one by my brother, and one by myself. The book trade seemed to be struck by this circumstance, this triple productiveness of a single family. There was considerable comment in the journals that show interest with regard to such matters; and the Authors' Club wanted to give a dinner in our honour. But this would have been the kind of public attention that my mother had always shrunk from, and Gerald and I were quite of her mind. Naturally, however, we were pleased by the compliment and grateful for the kind thought of us that had prompted the invitation'. See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 181. He does not give the exact date but it is definitely after the Maxwell's death.

[269] For more on the more on bias in son's biographies see Jennifer Phegley, 'Motherhood, Authorship, and Rivalry: Sons' Memoirs of the Lives of Ellen Price Wood and Mary Elizabeth Braddon', *Women Writers and the Artefacts of Celebrity in the long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Ann R. Hawkins and Maura Ives (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 189–204.

[270] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, pp. 386–7. Indeed, the libel debates 'whether the freedom of *fin-de-siècle* manners would not permit any lady travelling with any gentleman without causing scandal' (*HDS*, p. 87).

[271] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Rough Justice*, *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph*, 19 January – 22 May 1897.

[272] Kate also appears under the pseudonyms Kitty Prodgers, Mrs Bolisco, Lady Withernsea, and Mrs Randall.

joy to their home and my husband's 'new novel will be in the Press' (*HDS*, p. 128). Arthur Haldane, Lady Perivale's lover then husband, is a writer whose very successful first novel, *Mary Deane*, had 'stirred the hearts of novel-readers' and a conscientious reviewer for a 'certain Quarterly'; Haldane is, 'if he loved the book, the most sympathetic [of reviewers]; if he hated it, the most unmerciful' (*HDS*, p. 33). Haldane, with echoes of Mabel, is introduced as ignoring the market and is not reliant on the income. Haldane does however take a place among contemporary authors, especially with his second novel, 'a bitter book', declaring that, '"This is the day of cruel books. Most of us have turned their pens to scalpels"' (*HDS*, p. 85). Lady Perivale's love for Haldane exposes the cruelty of the upper-class;

> that *êlite*, over-civilised and decadent world – dazzling and alluring in the phosphorescent radiance of decay – seemed so remote from all that makes happiness, that it could not be worth thinking about […] Her world began and ended in a poet, critic, and romancer. (*HDS*, p. 81)

Although Haldane is overtly a writer, Braddon's attention to the literary marketplace is, as is typical in her work, much more widely distributed. The detective, Faunce, uses the power of the periodical press to his advantage, Mrs Faunce makes scrapbooks for police cases, and, at a dinner party hosted by Lady Perivale, the author of 'many countries', Mr Williams, puts in an appearance to caution Haldane from revealing the secrets of their profession.

Although with many sensational elements, including doubling, secrets, and a melodramatic courtroom scene, *His Darling Sin* gives centre stage to a successful, professional detective, as did a plethora of contemporary novels. As the *Spectator* wrote, Faunce was the 'inevitable detective' in Braddon's fictions.[273] Tomaiuolo sees *His Darling Sin* as the natural evolution from Braddon's sensation fiction rather than a 'dismissal of the Lady Audley paradigm' with both exposing 'unexpected fractures in the solid familial edifices of Victorian society'.[274] Photographs of Lady Grace Perivale, Kate Dalmaine, and Colonel Rannock are the crux of Faunce's investigations proving the women's likeness and identifying a corpse as Rannock's. The concept of a mugshot was not new but the use of photographs from a criminology perspective was important in late-nineteenth century policing, as well as in literature.[275] *His Darling Sin* chimes with Conan Doyle's 'A Scandal in

[273] 'His Darling Sin', *Spectator*, 4 November 1899, p. 662.
[274] Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*, pp. 130–1. Tomaiuolo also lists *Henry Dunbar*, *Eleanor's Victory*, *the Trail of the Serpents*, and *Rough Justice*. Ibid., p. 130.
[275] Tomaiuolo explores how Faunce's cataloguing and analysing of photographs is poised between the idea of a Lombrosian 'born criminal' and Bertillon's aim to individualise the facial features of criminals. Tomaiuolo sets out how Bertillon's archival system, therefore Faunce's portraits, was influenced by photographic identification, Lombroso's theories of facial measurements, Francis Galton's 'composite portrait', anthropometrical measurements, and eugenics. Ibid., pp. 128–9.

Bohemia' both in high-class London and centred around a series of photographs.[276] As a high-class widow and an actress, Lady Perivale's and Kate's likeness exposes the assumption that social position and wealth can be determined by appearance. Society's enthusiasm for fashion and high society makes it vulnerable to this kind of manipulation.[277] The crux of the novel is both women taking to the stage in a courtroom and Mattacks argues that the sensation narrative trope provides Braddon with the 'opportunity to put the image of her own public reputation on trial'.[278] Watched by an audience in their 'opera-glasses', Lady Perivale's and Kate's clothes, mannerisms, and speeches foster the designed impression and 'society was deeply humiliated at discovering how cruelly it had misjudged a charming member of its own privileged body' (*HDS*, p. 92). In *His Darling Sin*, Braddon turns the gaze on late-nineteenth century society, crime fiction, and her own position in the public imagination.

*The Infidel*: Poised at the Turn of the Century

While Braddon was adept at writing detective fiction, in her final novels she also contributed to a continuing vogue for historical fiction with which she aspired, and was deemed to achieve, to produce some of her most 'artistic' works.[279] In Holland's interview in 1911 *The Infidel* is featured in a list of Braddon's own favourites which also include *Lady Audley's Secret*, *Vixen*, and *Asphodel*.[280] Amongst her publications, these novels formed the focus of Braddon's writing at the turn of the century. Set in the reign of George II, *The Infidel* is viewed as an historical novel in the eyes of its reviewers and the *Athenaeum* lists it under the category 'Historical Romances'.[281] The plot tells the story of Antonia Thornton from "Grub Street Scribbler" to Lady Kilrush. Brought up as an atheist with a fiercely philosophical education in an unconventional domestic setting, she has a true love for reading and writing with determined independence of thought. *The Infidel* opens with Antonia and her father as

[276] Ibid., p. 127. Focusing on Dickens and Conan Doyle Ronald R. Thomas sees the fictional detective as analogous to the camera. See Ronald R. Thomas, 'Making Darkness Visible: Capturing the Criminal and Observing the Law in Victorian Photography and Detective Fiction', *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*, ed. by Carol Y. Christ and John O. Jordan (California: California University Press, 1995), pp. 134–156.
[277] Mattacks suggests that '*His Darling Sin* represents a response to its author's transition from the spectacular to the familiar, as Braddon explores the nature of a reputation based upon a series of images'. Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', p. 217.
[278] Ibid., p. 224.
[279] For a discussion of a letter Braddon wrote to Bulwer-Lytton on her historicist novels, see Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 280.
[280] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*.
[281] 'The Infidel', *Athenaeum*, 5 October 1900, pp. 507–8.

fictional literary hacks producing plays, articles, and reviews. As Beller identifies, Antonia Thornton is the manager and main breadwinner, yet she never loses a love for books and desire to write.[282] Through her job as a hack and love of literature Antonia meets her husband Lord Kilrush; however, she enters society as a wealthy widow. Antonia immediately gains a celebrity status but her enjoyment and hatred of wealthy and fashionable society constantly shifts. Her cousin George Stobart, who goes on evangelical missions with the founder of Methodism, John Wesley introduces her to his Methodist charity venture in which Antonia invests her time and money. Antonia's charity work, based on a sense of moral and social duty and empathy, rather than religion, stands at the heart of Braddon's exploration of the relationships between wealth and charity, religion and morality, and society and identity. Eventually leaving society, Antonia discovers her Italian family and in the last pages of the novel gains faith in God, although it is not explicitly clear. She stops writing after becoming Lady Kilrush but Antonia's love of literature, education, and independence are unwavering throughout *The Infidel*. Despite Antonia's relatively brief time as an author, she is one of Braddon's most autonomous female characters and is employed by Braddon to examine the social politics of charity, religion, and wealth.

*The Infidel* is placed by contemporary reviews at the pinnacle of Braddon's career, in comparison with her multitude of novels, and, generally, ranked at the very top. The *Saturday Review* most openly evaluates *The Infidel's* ranking in her career: 'The character of her heroine is one of the most satisfactory that Miss Braddon has conceived in a long series of works which have shown an increasing tendency to substitute more or less of psychology for the incidental sensation of her earliest successes'.[283] *The Infidel* is explicitly presented to the reader as a realist depiction of eighteenth-century society and most obvious is the character of John Wesley at the head of the Methodist campaign. Braddon's historicism, is highly praised, respected, most effusively is the nuanced understanding of society and religion, rather than creating stereotypical or comic representations: *London Quarterly Review* writes, 'Miss Braddon has never done anything better than this story of the Evangelical Revival [and] she describes the work and the influence of Methodism with insight and sympathy'.[284] Integral to these praises is, I argue, the acknowledgement and respect of the reviewers for Braddon's recurring shifts through genres throughout her career. Braddon did not maintain her 1860s

[282] See Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 86.
[283] 'The Infidel', *Athenaeum*.
[284] 'The Infidel', *London Quarterly Review*, January 1901, pp. 195–7. For another review on Braddon's portrayal of Methodism see 'Methodism in Recent Fiction', *London Quarterly Review*, July 1904, pp. 57–75.

level of popularity yet appreciation and praise of her versatility and attention to the 'interests of the public' are prevalent in reviews through the latter parts of Braddon's career.

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Throughout her astonishingly long career, Braddon never lost her desire to write, stating '"I am interested in every new book that I write"'.[285] It was only in 1907 with her first stroke that the pace of her social life slowed down, but Braddon continued writing and publishing until a second stroke and her death in 1915, and *Mary* was published posthumously.[286] Braddon's fiction did not remain in the original form of sensation fiction, but, as discussed through the chapter, moved between forms and genres as they came in and out of fashion.[287] Braddon's fame or notoriety took many different forms as did the nature of celebrity in the Victorian period. Kylie Mirmohamadi and Susan K. Martin draw a trajectory from Mary Elizabeth Braddon to J. K. Rowling drawing interesting connections between Braddon's serial readers and Rowling's readers of the whole *Harry Potter* series.[288] Mirmohamadi and Martin argue, 'Where Rowling fandom expresses itself through fanzines, and a multiplicity of internet formats, Braddonomania was exhibited in various breakout features—the use of textual names for products, for dances, the phenomenon of endless racehorses and yachts named Lady Audley and Aurora Leigh'.[289] Despite being in the midst of the first world war, many obituaries were written of Braddon's life and people gathered to watch her funeral procession. W. B. Maxwell claims that her home assumed a deferred status of celebrity; 'Authors seemed naturally to visit Lichfield House, wanting to pay their respects to my mother and to see her in the home that for long had been something of a focal point or place of assembly for the brotherhood and sisterhood of the pen'.[290] Carnell applauds Braddon embarking on her career: 'It is also partly her early life, her courage to become an actress

[285] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, p. 157. Braddon's first novel in the twentieth century was Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *During Her Majesty's Pleasure*, *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph*, 12 January 1901 – 23 March 1901. The first to be published in volume form was Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Conflict* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1903). Although, it was also serialised weekly in *The People* (7 September 1902 – 22 March 1903).
[286] As Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie write, '[t]his grande dame of the Victorian era became a citizen of the twentieth-century: she bought an automobile, saw an aeroplane, and even saw a film version of *Aurora Floyd* in 1913'. See Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation*, p. xxiv.
[287] For work concentrating on Braddon and genre at the *fin de Siècle* see Malcolm, '*Sons of Fire* and *A Lost Eden*', Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', and Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*.
[288] See Mirmohamadi and Martin, 'Harry Potter's Secret', p. 139. As my work does, Martin and Mirmohamadi employ Rubery's term 'long reading'. See Rubery, 'Bleak House in Real Time'.
[289] Mirmohamadi and Martin, *Sensational Melbourne*, p. 139.
[290] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, pp. 182–3.

when few women took such a step, her determination to become a writer, and her brave relationship with John Maxwell, which commands our respect and admiration today'.[291] Braddon's bravery and determination took her travelling, setting up charities, endlessly welcoming friends and family, managing estates, and buying a car. Mary Elizabeth Braddon "The Queen of Sensation Fiction" became an Edwardian. Braddon's extensive understanding of the literary sphere and changing representations of writing characters helped her to profitably navigate the literary marketplace, resist charges of immorality, and consolidate her position as a professional author in the publishing world and Victorian society.

[291] Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 284.

# Chapter Two

## ‘Daily Bread’: The Practicalities of Publishing in Braddon’s Novels

For William Thornton and his daughter Antonia in *The Infidel* every word contributed to a slice of ‘bread - and - cheese’ (*I*, I: p. 7). Braddon repeatedly uses the metaphor of bread in her narratives of professional authorship consistently creating the figure of a breadwinner.[1] At the end of her career Braddon’s fictional authors in *The Infidel* may love literature but do not live a romanticised life; ‘For them literature was indeed trade’ (*I*, I: p. 7). In *The Infidel* professional authorship is explicitly monetised. In stark contrast, a year earlier in *His Darling Sin*, Arthur Haldane, liberated by ‘having an income that allowed him not to work for daily bread, […] had taken to literature, which had been always his natural bent’ (*HDS*, pp. 88–9). Stella Boldwood, in *One Thing Needful*, uses the currency of bread to distinguish between servitude in the ‘act of eat[ing] the bread of charity’ and the independence of ‘bread-and-water in a garret’ as a writer (*OTN*, II: p. 145). The absence of associations between Mabel’s writing and bread in *Vixen* is indicative of her not being strictly professional, and not relying on writing as her income. However, bread is still employed in conjunction with money as a symbol for supporting estate staff, of charity in the illustration ‘mountains of bread and butter’ for school children, and as ‘a wafer-like slice’ for the control and restraint exerted by social conventions (*V*, p. 112, p. 334). As her editorship of *Belgravia* ended Braddon narrated Herman Westray’s rise in the literary profession in *Hostages to Fortune*; he tells his future wife ‘of his youth, touching lightly upon his struggles, but owning without reserve that he has laboured for his bread’ (*HF*, 2: p. 160). In the first years of *Belgravia* Braddon utilised the image of bread and cheese to illustrate the daily life of the Victorian author within professional networks as practical, collective, and commercial in both *Dead-Sea Fruit* and *Birds of Prey*. Braddon’s fictional author Daniel Mayfield offers advice to his nephew and protégé Eustace Thorburn embarking upon the profession: ‘“Of course you will not depend upon verse-making for your daily bread [and] be on your guard, and take care of your cheese”’ (*D-SF*, 7: p. 406). Before becoming a professional writer Valentine Hawkehurst speaks of his disregard for an extravagant diet requiring wealth; bread and cheese are

[1] The *OED* entry for ‘Breadwinner’ presents the first usage as 1842 which is also used in most other mentions of the word but little information on exactly why or what the source is. See ‘Breadwinner’, *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press online).

positioned as desirable for an author: '"I can dine one day upon truffled turkey and champagne, another day on bread and cheese and small beer"' (*BoP*, 3: p. 265). By the end of the sequel *Charlotte's Inheritance* Philip Sheldon has failed at every 'trade that mortal man ever tried to earn his bread by' and is forced to beg his brother for 'a loaf of bread' (*CI*, 11: p. 577). The first of Braddon's fictional authors to liken his words to bread is Sigismund Smith in *The Doctor's Wife*; however, rather than partaking of cheese this sensation fiction writer is 'a gentleman who lives chiefly on bread-and-marmalade and weak tea"' (*DW*, p. 404). In *The Lady's Mile* Sigismund Smythe's friend (and protégé) Philip Foley 'began to paint for his daily bread' (*LM*, 1: p. 148). Sigismund's writing is commercial with pounds and pages intimately related.[2] After her death, W. B. Maxwell also uses the image in *Time Gathered* describing Braddon herself providing schools in Great Ormond Street with the mid-weekly dinners including 'piles of bread'.[3]

The practicalities of professional authorship pervade Braddon's fiction offering valuable and pertinent insights into the individual experience of publishing within the Victorian literary marketplace. Braddon's fictional writers visualise their words as their bread. The line 'Give us this day our Daily Bread' at the centre of The Lord's Prayer endows these lines in Braddon's novels with a powerful Biblical resonance. Followed by the line 'Forgive us our trespasses' the image of bread creates a moral facet to professional authorship conjoined with a practical economic one. By allying words and writing with the language of daily bread Braddon imbued desire for money with a moral conscience.

Accounts from the Royal Literary Fund (1790–) indicate that Braddon was not alone in experiencing financial pressures and employing this language of authorship.[4] Archival material includes applications from women using the image of daily bread to symbolise their writing as work, often to support their families. Focusing on the period from 1840–1880, S. D. Mumm exposes how the Royal Literary Fund received letters demonstrating that many women experienced debilitating costs from financial instability and unrelenting literary labour.[5] Remarkably, the Royal Literary Fund archive reveals that in that 40 year period

[2] As mentioned, two of Braddon's unpublished or performed plays are entitled *The Breadwinner* (1895) and *Sigismund* (1904).
[3] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, pp. 282–3.
[4] Michael J. Flynn addresses the class implications of the competition between Thackeray and Dickens and their involvement with the Royal Literary Fund. See Michael J. Flynn, '*Pendennis*, *Copperfield*, and the Debate on the "Dignity of Literature"', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 14 (2010), 151–189. Also, interestingly Dickens and Thackeray had a vocal disagreement over the The Guild of Literature and Art at a Royal Literary Fund dinner. See Peter Ackroyd, *Dickens* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1990), p. 629.
[5] See S. D. Mumm, 'Writing For Their Lives: Women Applicants to The Royal Literary Fund', *Publishing History*, 27 (1990), 27–49 (p. 16).

seventy-two per cent of married women who applied were, as Mumm describes, 'the sole breadwinner for their families, their husbands incapacitated by illness or out of employment'.[6] As Mumm writes 'In 1861 Julia Tilt (No. 1691) wrote to the Committee of the mental toll exacerbated by a lifetime of only marginally successful work': it reads,

> I could tell you gentlemen of years of suffering in writing for daily bread in the support of my mother and family – I have fought and toiled – toiled and fought – and now I have neither health nor spirit.[7]

As Julia Tilt's letter suggests, the dependence of her family exerted the principal strain on her professional authorship.[8] Kay Boardman discusses how Eliza Metayard, who made five applications to the Royal Literary Fund, demonstrated in her fiction her 'confident self-mythologising [in] accounts of experience of being a professional writer and detail[ed] both her success and tribulations' in the 1850s and 60s.[9] Most pertinently, in 'The Thorn and Then the Rose', 'Anne, the author in the story tells her friend "I am a writer, and so get my bread by my pen. It is hard-won bread – scanty bread, but I have peace of mind and independence"'.[10] The Royal Literary Fund applications through the whole century are indicative of women writers employing the image of bread-winner to express their economic responsibility.

The image also pervaded the Victorian periodical press and fiction. As early as 1859, Frances Power Cobbe, journalist and women's rights activist, championed women being educated and working and the article 'It Must Have Been Felt by All' in *The Times* challenged women's position as dependent by offering 'the simple fact that women are constantly thrown upon the world to get their daily bread by their own exertions'.[11] In 1862 Bessie Rayner Parkes writes in the *English Women's Journal* of how she '"never wished or

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[6] Ibid., p. 14. For example, Emma Marshall applied as a result of the failure of her husband's bank leading to heavy debt: 'For the next twenty years she was the family breadwinner turning out nearly 200 volumes in the evenings, after the day's labour of caring for nine children was over. Through the profits of her pen, her five sons were educated and sent into professions'. Ibid., p. 6.

[7] Ibid., p. 14.

[8] Similarly Beth Rogers suggests that Alice Corkran's applications are expressions of how she 'was at times motivated by extreme economic need [and] these difficulties are one of the key reasons why Corkran stands as a revealing case study of the woman editor at the end of the century'. See Beth Rogers, 'Alice Corkran and the *Girl's Realm*, and the Woman Editor', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 164–201 (pp. 166–7).

[9] Kay Boardman, 'Struggling for fame: Eliza Meteyard's principled career', *Popular Victorian Women Writers*, ed. by Kay Boardman and Shirley Jones (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 46–65. Meteyard's fictional writers appeared in novels and short stories including *Lilian's Golden Hours* (London: G. Routledge & co., 1857), 'A Woman's Pen', *The Englishwomen's Journal*, 1858, 246–59, and *The Doctor's Little Daughter* (London: Arthur & co.,1850). See Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame'. These metafictional narratives also include *Struggles for Fame* which will be discussed in chapter four.

[10] Boardman, 'Struggling for Fame', p. 59.

[11] Frances Power Cobbe, 'It Must Have Been Felt by All', *The Times*, 8 November 1859, p. 6.

contemplated the mass of women becoming breadwinner"'.[12] Alongside the periodical press, a variety of writers employed the metaphor in their fiction through the century.[13] As *Popular Victorian Women Writers* explores, these works range from Wood's *Park Water*, serialised in *New Monthly* (1857), to Yonge's Bible quotations in her moral and religious writing most powerfully found in *Pillars of the House* (1873).[14] At the very end of the century in Geraldine Mitton's *A Bachelor Girl in London* (1893), Judith '"the working woman, the bachelor girl of the period who owed her bread to no one […] walked fearlessly and straight on her path"'.[15] As will be discussed in chapter four, Sarah Grand uses the symbol of bread in her metafictional novel, *The Beth Book.* In the applications to The Royal Literary Fund, Braddon's novels and personal circumstances, and many other women writer's accounts and fictions, the family and the profession are intimately related both economically and practically. The image of 'Daily Bread' speaks to the economic, practical, and moral facets of Victorian professional authorship.

## The Practicalities of Publishing: The Desk, The House, The Public

Through her life Braddon went by multiple pen names, pseudonyms, and stage names. But, as solidified by the two most important, Miss Braddon and Mrs Maxwell, she fostered a

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[12] Bessie Rayner Parkes, 'The Balance of Public Opinion in Regard to Woman's Work', *English Woman's Journal*, July 1862, pp. 340–4 (p. 342). For more on Rayner Parkes and other periodical articles see Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, pp. 20–1.

[13] As Salmon argues, Thackeray's use aimed to 'debunk "the doctrine which some poetical sympathizers are inclined to put forward, viz., that men of letters, and what is called genius, are to be exempt from the prose duties of this ail, bread-wanting, tax-paying life, and are not to be made to work and pay like their neighbours" (*Pendennis*: 450)'. See Richard Salmon, 'Farewell poetry and aerial flights: The Function of the Author and Victorian Fiction', *A Concise Companion to The Victorian Novel*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 134–155 (p. 143).

[14] See *Popular Victorian Women Writers*. Yonge's fiction, including and her metafictional novel *The Clever Woman of the Family*, will be considered in more detail in chapter four. On Yonge see Valerie Sanders, '"All-sufficient to one another"? Charlotte Yonge and the family chronicle', pp. 90–111. Riley discusses how, 'One of [Wood's] most notable domestic-orientated serials for *New Monthly* during this period was *Park Water* [1847], a cautionary tale of inappropriate social aspiration and reading for leisure'; the mother criticises how, '"you were in the thick of the 'Blighted Rose,' and you wouldn't stir from it; and [father] had to get out the bread and cheese himself, and fetch the beer"'. See Marie Riley, 'Writing for the million: The enterprising fiction of Ellen Wood', pp. 165–185 (p. 169). Interestingly, as Lister examines, in Juliana Horatia Ewing's *Jackanapes* (1879) the moral facets to 'bread' are employed when a solider is described as a '"bloodthirsty, unsettled sort of a rascal; that the peaceable, home-loving, bread-winning citizen can never conscientiously look on as a brother"'. See Jennifer H. Lister, '"One wing Clipped": the imaginative flights of Juliana Horatia Ewing', pp. 135–164.

[15] The novel follows the career of the young typewriter Judith Danville who has '"secret literary aspirations" […] but being intelligent and practical, she learns shorthand and typewriting as a means to earn her living'; as Young argues, the 'narrative certainly sets out all the challenges and discouraging and discouragements that a young women seeking employment in 1890s London might face'. See Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, pp. 63–4 and p. 167.

divide between her public and private identities. In 1897, Mary Angela Dickens wrote about the disparity between the impression of Braddon created in the public eye as the popular writer of so many books and her practical private life:

> [Someone] might almost expect to find a woman chained to her desk, with wild and dreamy eyes fixed ever upon the plots continuously surging through her brain […] But anyone who constructed for himself an image of Miss Braddon would be singularly wide of the mark. Miss Braddon has never allowed her special work as a novelist to crowd out of her life her everyday work as a woman. She has responded, as the simplest matter of course, to all the demands made upon a wife and a mother.[16]

As Mary Angela Dickens's interview and the accompanying photographs showed, the tension between public and private was integral to perceptions of professionalism and one to which Braddon was particularly sensitive.[17] In 1888 Joseph Hatton, who had worked for Braddon in *Belgravia* in the early days, wrote an interview with her and spoke of her public engagement in the literary community but privacy of her own work:

> Miss Braddon is even still more reticent about her work than Dickens was. She will talk shop with a fellow author, or criticism with a literary guest; but it will take both of them all their time to get her into conversation about her own books, her methods of work, or her opinions concerning the results of her labours.[18]

The public and the private are unstable in Braddon's novels and I argue that animated illustrations of authors in the midst of writing and publication provide a valuable insight into her private relationship with her writing in the midst of the public literary marketplace. Mattacks argues that 'Braddon's writing was marked by a creative friction between her public persona as a marketplace version of disruptive feminist politics and a reticent, fiercely private individual whose conservatism valued domesticity over publicity'.[19] Braddon's fictional writers arguably epitomise that friction and represent a spectrum of writers, readers, publishers, reviewers, and editors that filled the literary marketplace offering contradictory views, perspectives, and experiences.

Braddon's characters reflect not just her experience as a writer but her understanding of the whole industry and love of literature, alongside a savvy business-minded career. As Carnell and Law phrase it, Braddon has a 'strikingly modern mode of double consciousness', which can be seen at the heart of the novels my thesis examines.[20] Beller argues that,

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[16] Mary Angela Dickens, 'Miss Braddon At Home', *Windsor Magazine*, June 1897, pp. 415–419 (pp. 415–6).
[17] Ibid.
[18] Joseph Hatton, 'Miss Braddon at Home: A Sketch and an Interview', *London Society*, January 1888, pp. 22–29, (pp. 22–23).
[19] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 220. Van Remoortel describes the division in Braddon's identity as 'almost schizophrenic'. See Marianne Van Remoortel, *Women, Work and the Victorian Periodical: Living By the Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), p. 134.
[20] Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 129.

'Braddon's interventions reveal her conflict about the altered values and practices of the literary marketplace and her place within it, but also a sense of pragmatism'.[21] The pragmatism is the element which this chapter will focus on. Rather than the extremes themselves, the dialogue between the myths and the practicalities offers, as Peterson recognises, the most compelling angle.[22] My research examines the practicalities of publishing and recognises the distinction yet interdependence of the public and the private expressed through Braddon's career and her representations of fictional writers and literary culture. Beller identifies the powerful contrasts between characters in *The Doctor's Wife* and *Vixen* and, as I suggest in what follows, the process can be extended much further to all Braddon's metafictional novels; the contrasts and links between the novels form a constellation of the literary marketplace across the personal and public spheres.[23] Braddon is remarkable in her depictions of the practicalities and often physicality of authorship, including unflinching illustrations of the marriages, finances, and homes that provided the context for professional writing.

Authorship was a communal rather than a solitary profession, a routine-driven occupation rather than an individual's erratic, purely inspirational undertaking. Chapter two will follow the process of publishing as a professional author in the Victorian period from 'The Desk', to 'The House', and finally 'The Public'. I argue that Braddon's fictional professional authors provide an exploration of the writer within the literary network and the practical context of writing as labour and economic product. The chapter will consider the more private dimensions of authorship, namely the act of writing and the writer's household; but it will also move to the public sphere of professional authorship and writers' collaborations. Structured thematically rather than chronologically, the chapter will draw connections between the novels and their fictional authors stretching over the full length of Braddon's life and career, disrupting the divisions between genres and time periods often present in Braddon studies.

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[21] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 257.
[22] Peterson states that, 'whatever the historically based conceptions of women's authorship might be, it is the interactions of the myths (the articulated desires about what it means to be an author) and the material conditions (the complexities of the marketplace in which authors must labor) that interests me and gives focus to this book'. See Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, p. 11.
[23] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.

**The Desk: 'the Pen and Paper stage'[24]**

Braddon's son declares that,

> One of the amazing things about her was that she got through her immense amount of work as if by magic […] She had no stated hours, no part of the day to be held secure from disturbances and intrusions. She was never inaccessible. Everybody went uninvited to her library, we the children, the servants, importunate visitors. I don't remember that she even refused to come away from the quiet dignified room if we asked her. And she never failed to be available to my father when he wanted her, and no matter for how long.[25]

Braddon's work takes place in a seemingly contradictory environment, both intruded upon and dignified. In the nineteenth century a writer's desk, a symbol of their professional life, was predominantly located inside the house; the professional object was located within the personal sphere.[26] The list of library, children, servants, and visitors illustrates the multiple dimensions of Braddon's job and identity as author, household manager, mother, and host, facets shared by many women writers; Elizabeth Langland identifies that 'Elizabeth Gaskell and Margaret Oliphant, who both spoke eloquently about the multiple challenges facing them, were […] typical of women writing within the domestic sphere while faced with myriad responsibilities for husbands, children and complex households'.[27] This depiction of the household is viewed through the tinted gaze of W. B. Maxwell, but the image of Maxwell

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[24] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, p. 153.

[25] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 281. W. B. Maxwell, very interestingly, also describes Yates's library; 'One could praise it without stint; for Yates with his fine collection of books, many of them most beautifully bound, his handsome furniture, some of which possess special interest, such as Charles Dickens's desk, had made it a very attractive place. He delighted me by telling some appreciative stories about my mother and father. He has put on record his regard for both of them'. The library seems to take on a site a of celebrity, and the desk an object of honour. Ibid., pp. 70–1. Denney draws connections between this passage of *Time Gathered* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. See Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England*.

[26] As touched on in the introduction, the act of writing in the home was central to conceptualising the Victorian literary profession's place within society, particularly in terms of the fraught relationship between the professional author and capitalism. The image of the desk is therefore integral to metafictional representations of writing. Poovey's work, *Uneven Developments* is influential in research on professional writing taking place within the domestic sphere within nineteenth-century constructions of class, professionalism, marriage, and gender: 'My implicit argument here is that one effect of the "literary" in this period was the textual construction of an individualist psychology; my explicit argument is that this process was part of the legitimation and depolitization of capitalist market and class relations, that the definitions (and defense) of the English writer's social role was intimately involved in both, and that stabilizing and mobilizing a particular image of woman, the domestic sphere, and woman's work were critical to all three'. See Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, p. 101. Further work on the dynamic between professionalism and the domestic across the nineteenth century includes, John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), *The Victorian Novel and Masculinity*, and Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*.

[27] Langland, 'Women's Writing and the Domestic Sphere', p. 120. For Oliphant's career and personal life see Elizabeth Jay's Biography. See Elisabeth Jay, *Mrs. Oliphant: A Fiction to Herself* (New York: Oxford UP, 1995).

exerting demands over Braddon is arguably indicative of the uneven gender balance within the domestic sphere in Victorian society.[28] Yet, even if Braddon was challenged with incessant interruptions and a myriad of responsibilities, W. B. Maxwell's vision of the library as quiet and dignified when read alongside her enormous success as an author implies a control over her work and household. Braddon's simultaneous occupation of both the domestic and the professional is central to the possibility of her writing.

Echoing her work as admirably interruptible is Braddon's description in an interview of 1912 of her own writing as '"portable mental luggage. Then comes the pen and paper stage – note-making, and so on – and then it is time seriously to tackle the task and write the book itself"'.[29] Just as the image of bread and cheese reappears throughout her novels, so does the image of luggage. Braddon's writers carry their writing both physically and metaphorically throughout her novels. Braddon did not inhabit an immoveable location or rigid routine for her writing; however, her fictional characters are illustrated in the act of writing at a desk, suggesting its importance in Braddon's experience of authorship and its prominence in Victorian discourses on professionalism.[30] The physicality of the desk, the pen, and the luggage in her novels construct the corporeal demands and the emotional costs of the profession, arguably making the act of writing more powerful in the imaginations of Braddon's readers. In 1888 Hatton, also an author with the Tillotsons, described Braddon's act of writing at home as combining 'workman-like methods' and an 'artistic temperament'; he saw this as evidence of her simultaneously accepting the pressure for production 'without making herself a slave to it', and resisting its constrictions.[31] Braddon's novels powerfully dramatise the private act integral to the profession and which is vital to understanding Victorian authorship.

This section will examine the writing methods of fictional authors Herman Westray, Sigismund Smith or Smythe, Stella Boldwood, and Antonia Thornton. As discussed in the introduction, professional Victorian writers counter the concept of the 'Death of the Author',

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[28] On W. B. Maxwell's biased characterisation of his mother see Phegley, 'Motherhood, Authorship, and Rivalry'.
[29] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, p. 153.
[30] The image of the desk is therefore integral to metafictional representations of writing. Central to Poovey's work is the well-known depiction of David Copperfield writing with his wife holding the pens; Dickens's representation of how 'effortless housekeeping and effort writing—are interdependent at every level'. See Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, p. 101. Also on Dickens and fictional writers see Mary L. Shannon, *Dickens, Reynolds, and Mayhew on Wellington Street: The Print Culture of a Victorian Street* (London: Routledge, 2015). Titolo argues that 'For Dickens, public and private are not mutually exclusive but rather mutually implicated'. See Matthew Titolo, 'The Clerk's Tale: Liberalism, Accountability, and Mimesis in *David Copperfield*', *English Literary History*, 70 (Spring 2003), 171–95 (pp. 174–5).
[31] Hatton, 'Miss Braddon at Home', *London Society*, p. 22.

or a text entirely detached from the writing process.[32] Marianne Van Remoortel exposes the impact personal circumstances can incur for all writers, but women as particularly vulnerable:

> Equally important as the larger economic, technological and political mechanisms underlying the growth of the press in Victorian Britain are the ambitions of individuals and the whims of fate and coincidence that send lives into unexpected directions […] deeply personal circumstances and convictions were often at the heart of women's careers for the press, dictating the rhythm of labour behind the scenes and fuelling their efforts to create powerful public personae on stage.[33]

Central to nineteenth-century literary studies, is how a writer's place within a collaborative publishing press is fundamental to concepts of Victorian authorship.[34] But the impact of domestic writing conditions on the published product is also key. Echoed a few years later in *Hostages to Fortune*, Braddon's first fictional writer, Sigismund Smith in *The Doctor's Wife* offers an important insight to Braddon's personal relationship with writing. As Conary identifies, much Victorian reviewing 'conflates Braddon with Sigismund Smith', an approach continued in contemporary criticism.[35] Beller identifies that Roland Lansdell the Byronic poet's act of writing is necessary to understand the more political dimension to the representation of Sigismund Smith's writing which subverts the romantic myth of authorship.[36] The remarkable shift in Sigismund's writing in *The Lady's Mile* to the three volume novel dramatises Braddon's professional development. By the 1870s, Stella Boldwood in *One Thing Needful* provides a less straightforwardly defensive expression of the initial stage of authorship, the writing. Similarly to the contrast between Sigismund and Roland, whilst Stella is the heroine of *One Thing Needful*, the novel contains a multiplicity of writers each presenting a different mode of writing and a different personal experience of authorship. In *The Infidel* (1900) the images of the pen, the desk, and the streets of London echo *The Doctor's Wife*; however, Antonia's emotional conflict between a love for literature and discomfort at its professional demands is arguably indicative of Braddon's increasingly introspective gaze in the latter parts of her career. The novel is, I suggest, indicative of

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[32] As outlined in the introduction critics including Sagner Buurma argue directly against Barthes and Foucault. See Buurma, 'Anonymity, Corporate Authority, and the Archive'.
[33] Van Remoortel, *Living By the Press*, p. 137. Van Remoortel's research is broader than Victorian novelists and looks at women writers working across the nineteenth-century magazine industry, including editing, illustration, poetry, needlework instruction and typesetting. See Van Remoortel, *Living By the Press*.
[34] The intimate relationship between a written text and the context in which it was produced is integral to nineteenth-century critical work, and to my own research. For key critical works considering the facets such as financial pressures see *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900*, Sanders, 'Women, Fiction and the Marketplace', and *Popular Victorian Women Writers*.
[35] Conary, 'Never Great, Only Popular', p. 423. Sigismund is 'Braddon's fictional alter ego', as described by Lyn Pykett, or even more consciously, as argued by Wolff, 'her own mouthpiece'. See Pykett, 'Introduction', *The Doctor's Wife*, p. ix and Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 126.
[36] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.

Braddon looking back over her authorial career and personal life. Each produced at turning points in Braddon's career *The Doctor's Wife*, *The Lady's Mile*, *Hostages to Fortune*, *One Thing Needful*, and *The Infidel* provide powerful renditions of the 'pen and paper stage'.[37]

Throughout her period as editor, Braddon and Maxwell continued to capitalise on the authority in the periodical press, financial stability, and social standing her position as 'Conductor' brought them.[38] Although often associated with Braddon in the 1860s and sensation fiction, *Hostages to Fortune* engages with recurring tensions between literary achievement and the industrial into the 1870s, and to the turn of the century in various incarnations.[39] There is a sense of love and enjoyment in tandem with labour, and the use of industrial language surrounding writing is perhaps at its most overt in Sigismund, Herman, and then Antonia in *The Infidel*. Echoing earlier accusations of Braddon and Maxwell as working within a factory, Herman declares that, '"I am like one of those monster ironworks one reads of in the North, where it takes a week to get the fires lighted"' (*HF*: II, p. 5). Here, the image is not imposed on Herman but employed by himself, appropriating and forecasting the criticism that reviews went on to bestow.[40] Herman has a career which zig zags between fiction, journalism, and playwriting, from the *Connoisseur*, radical journal, to war correspondent in France for the *Daily Star*, and between success and failure. Palmer examines the progression through *Belgravia*'s metafictional novels arguing that in *Hostages to Fortune* Braddon confronts the literary fashion, the 'Fleshly School', juxtaposing and defending aestheticism and sensationalism in the figure of Herman.[41] In *Hostages to Fortune* Braddon fictionalises a practical reality to professional writing, with Herman's excessive spending, hard-work, romance, professional collaborations, mechanical writing, and literary success often contradicting each other, rather than neatly correlating them; however, *Hostages to Fortune* emphatically rejects any ideal of purely artistically-motivated writing.

The sound of his authorial voice and the presence of ink on his body, on 'the end of his nose', establishes the physicality of Sigismund's writing (*DW*, p. 10). The frantic act of

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[37] Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*, p. 153.
[38] Palmer discusses how 'By the 1870s, Braddon was firmly established as an editor and writer, and the cultural authority she wielded in these capacities was much more difficult to assail than it was when she first took up her editorial post'. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 26.
[39] Leading scholars including Weedon discuss the trajectory of advertising, economics, popularity, and constructions of authorship through the nineteenth century. Weedon argues that, 'the link between the author and the economic system within which she or she operates is a vital one. For it is in this period that commercial book publishing became a mass market business; structuring the market through variously priced editions to appeal to a range income'. See Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*, pp. 1–2.
[40] On Braddon's appropriation of her critics' language see Atkinson, 'Braddon and Literary Transgression', p. 134.
[41] See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

Sigismund's work, his 'rapid pen', is fuelled by the 'exigencies of the penny press' in the 1860s (*DW*, p. 44). Foregrounding novels including *Hostages to Fortune*, Sigismund's writing undoubtedly has, as Beller states, an exaggeratedly 'mechanistic quality', reflecting the hyperbolic language used in reviews.[42] Throughout the nineteenth century, as Gilbert characterises, nineteenth-century reviews would 'pit the hack or prostituted author who writes to order (and therefore seldom well) against a romanticised image of the bardic artist who writes only when he […] has something he must communicate'.[43] Braddon employed an explicit model of commerce in the image of Sigismund's act of writing as a butterman crafting his product:

> [h]e sold his imagination, and Isabel lived upon hers […Sigismund] slapped his heroes into marketable shape, as coolly as a butterman slaps a pot of butter into the semblance of a swan or a crown, in accordance with the requirements of his customers. (*DW*, p. 28)

On the one hand the image of the butterman undercuts associations of authorship as an elite activity of leisure and genius, while on the other the butterman's mouldings present writing as a physical act of producing an aesthetically fine-finished, even regal article from an everyday product.[44] Sigismund fashions a beautiful novel out of everyday words and phrases. For Sigismund, fiction is a business product, valuable but malleable, but for Isabel it is alive and fundamental to life.

Through this fictional writer embodying stereotypical traits of sensation novelists, Braddon assumes control of the language of physical work, consumption, and profligacy fired at her and Maxwell.[45] Disrupting Waugh's claim that Victorian literature cannot be metafictional, in *The Doctor's Wife*, as Tomaiuolo remarks, '[l]ike a post-modern narration, on this occasion, Braddon is letting her readers enter the sensation writer's workshop'.[46] The last pages of the novel depict Sigismund with his 'bread-and-marmalade', 'very happy and very inky', carrying his writing as 'luggage', and pursued by 'infuriated proprietors of penny journals' (*DW*, pp. 403–4). Just as Braddon described writing as 'portable mental luggage',

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[42] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 251.
[43] Gilbert, *Disease, Desire and the Body*, p. 32.
[44] From a social historicist perspective Larson connects professionalism containing 'craftsmanship' in the mid-nineteenth century as resonances of pre-industrialism. See Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism*, p. 220.
[45] Focusing on *The Doctor's Wife* and *The Lady's Mile*, Juliette Atkinson identifies how, 'through her strong awareness of the strategies deployed to control her creations as both morally and aesthetically transgression, Braddon reproduces within her novels her opponents' language in order to (sometimes ambivalently) contest it, creating a space for herself to participate in contemporary endeavours to regulate the category of the "literary"'. See Atkinson, 'Braddon and Literary Transgression', p. 134.
[46] Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*, p. 159. As discussed in the introduction, Waugh argues that metafiction only existed after post-modern literature was established in the twentieth century. See Waugh, *Metafiction*.

Sigismund writes '"there's nothing like railway travelling or pedestrian exercise to working out an idea"' (*DW*, p. 194). Foretelling Braddon becoming a 'Conductor', Sigismund Smith is placed alongside Dickens as a wandering writer:

> Read the story of Mr Dickens's pedestrian rambles, and then see the difference between the great writer, for whom art is long and life's only too short, and the man of pleasure, who squandered all the wealth of his imagination upon the morbid phantasma of *Vathek*.[47] (*DW*, p. 299)

The explicit reference to Dickens in *The Doctor's Wife* can again be seen as evidence of Braddon consciously participating in contemporary discourse on the nature of authorship, celebrating prolific, commercially successful output through her metafictional sensation fiction writer.

Just as Braddon effectively utilised Sigismund Smith's interaction with Isabel the sensation fiction reader, so did she strategically employ Sigismund's dialogue with Roland the idolised, aristocratic Romantic poet.[48] Beller draws attention to Braddon's deliberate, and previously overlooked, employment of Roland Lansdell as the epitome of the Byronic hero in opposition to Sigismund: 'Both men's relationship to the construction of the Romantic poet works to situate them within contrasting modes of literary production'.[49] Braddon participated in the battle, blurring the division between the solitary, artistic writer and the business-minded, factory writer. *The Doctor's Wife* defends the financially-successful sensation fiction novelist, particularly through the representation of, as Beller describes, Roland's 'destructive pursuit of his own selfish desires'.[50] The juxtaposition of Roland and Sigismund powerfully undermines the Romantic poet and accentuates the sensation fiction writer's rational and respectable place in the publishing business.

*The Doctor's Wife* is a microcosm of the juxtaposition of genre in Braddon's career with the simultaneous serialisation of sensational, or realist, or social fictions in concurrent

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[47] Braddon compares Dickens with Sterne when examining the possibility of how to be a great writer: 'We only have to read Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and Dickens' *Uncommercial Traveller*, in order to find out how much there is in the world for the wanderer who has eyes to see' (*DW*, p. 299).

[48] As Beller examines, there is the figure of Mr Sleaford, Isabel's father, who is also Jack the Scribe, the professional forger. The use of the image of the pen firmly places Mr Sleaford in the role of the author as does the fulfilment of his narrative. His use of the pen is tied to earning money for the support of his family; it is irrefutably a job for survival rather than about the expression of feelings or boredom that Roland's writing is. As a writer, Jack the Scribe is tied much more closely to Sigismund rather than Roland, contributing to *The Doctor's Wife* positioning writing as trade. Beller even goes as far as to suggest that the tie between Sigismund and Jack the Scribe implicitly makes Sigismund Roland's killer too. See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', pp. 252–3.

[49] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 251. Beller asserts the prominence of the Romantic poet in the public eye: 'The Romantic, and romanticized) image of the isolated artist, moved to spontaneous creativity through emotion and inspiration, held sway in the Victorian popular imagination, and Braddon evokes these associations (and undermines them) in her depiction of Roland Lansdell'. Ibid., p. 250.

[50] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', pp. 251–2.

periodicals. Sigismund is at the heart of what Beller describes as 'the modern, bustling world of mid nineteenth-century publishing'.[51] In the figure of Sigismund, authorship is emphatically employment rather than a cerebral hobby. The performative depiction of writing perhaps reinforces Braddon's self-conscious position in *Temple Bar* and beginning a path to the higher echelons of the marketplace alongside women writers such as Hall as editor. With Sigismund's prominent position in the opening chapters Braddon presents her writing as a physical craft contained within the strictures of the literary marketplace.

On 27 May 1865, one month before the first instalment of *The Lady's Mile*, the *Saturday Review* wrote that, 'like any other business-like novelist, Miss Braddon adheres to certain common forms that are by this time universally recognised in the profession'.[52] In reply, *The Lady's Mile*, just as *The Doctor's Wife* did and *Hostages to Fortune* would, depicts an 'industrious' fictional writer engaged in 'hard labour', and Sigismund's presence in the novel continues Braddon's defence of the skilled, professional writer (*LM*, 6: p. 287). I argue that *The Lady's Mile*'s social commentary contains an under-appreciated dimension which undermines the stereotypes imposed upon Braddon as a sensation fiction writer. In the next stage of his literary career Sigismund, now Smythe and 'the "Bond Street" chief', and writing three volume novels, fictionalised Braddon's emergence as the '"queen of the circulating library"' (*LM*, 6: p, 287). Sigismund has moved from weak tea to dry sherry, a pet dog, and

> the inner little room lined with books, and furnished with a wonderful office table on which there were inexhaustible bundles of quill pens and innumerable reams of smooth, shining, foreign note-paper, [which] was the most sacred chamber tenanted by moral man. (*LM*, 4: p. 287)

The illustration of Sigismund at his sacred desk has a slightly comedic tone; however, despite the intimate and domestic atmosphere to the house, Sigismund's desk is emphatically a work desk, an office table, giving physical form to the way in which the professional and personal occupy the same space.[53] Continuing from *The Doctor's Wife*, Braddon deliberately and strategically unites Sigismund's industriousness and continued financial success with his social respectability to confront the debates on professionalism and the accusations of infectious immorality, which she would counter for decades to come.

Extending Beller's argument about the interrelated roles of Sigismund and Roland, in *The Lady's Mile* Sigismund Smythe is paired with the painter Philip Foley who fulfils the

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[51] Ibid., p. 251.
[52] 'Only a Clod', *Saturday Review*, 27 May 1865, pp. 639–640 (p. 639).
[53] Sigismund's desk in Russell Square is perhaps the closest to that portrayed in *David Copperfield* and the image of Sigismund and his wife can be read as in dialogue with Copperfield's home.

role of the hopelessly romantic hero of the novel.[54] Sigismund is only briefly in the later novel but through him Braddon speaks of an understanding of 'tender passion', implicitly defending her ability and right to write romance against continual conflations of her fiction and her personal life.[55] Intimately connected, the performativity of authorship is palpably present in how, Sigismund bemoans this reader's expectations: '"What would I not give to Madame Rachel if she would make me look like Mephistophiles! I know a man who *is* like Mephistophiles, and a very handsome fellow he is too; but he write essays on political economy, and his demoniac appearance is no used to him"' (*LM*, 4: p. 17). Despite the comedic tone, Sigismund Smythe aims criticism at his literary colleague and implicitly political essays claiming respectability and an authority. Foregrounding many of the novels serialised in *Belgravia* Braddon dramatises Philip Foley attacked by critics, 'ready to dip their pens into their ink-bottles to spread the tidings of the painter's calamity' (*LM*, 6: p. 289).[56] Braddon adds a hard edge to Sigismund's professional demeanour and, in direct combat, he proposes,

> "can't you take it out in violent reds and yellows, as I take it out in murder and villainy. When the critics fall foul of me, I buy an extra ream of paper and a gallon of ink, and go at my work with a will". (*LM*, 6: p. 289)

Braddon may offer her readers a romanticised return of her sensation fiction writer, but also depicts him ruthlessly confronting and defying literary critics. Previous research has focused on Sigismund's presence in *The Doctor's Wife*, but I argue that in *The Lady's Mile* Braddon extends her defence of professional authorship. Sigismund Smith becomes Sigismund Smythe but still casts an analytical gaze on Victorian society in *The Lady's Mile*.

At the end of the nineteenth century, in *His Darling Sin* (1899) Lady Perivale met Arthur Haldane, author of the tragic love story *Mary Deane*, and 'was surprised to find no trace of melancholy in his conversation. He did not wear his broken heart upon his sleeve' (*HDS*, p. 34). Haldane does not write sensational murders like Sigismund, but his readers, particularly 'feminine admirers', also wish the author to embody the narrative. Arguably symptomatic of Braddon's dislike of interviews, Haldane is constantly asked to explain his

[54] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.
[55] Sigismund says to Foley, '"I say though, old fellow, you don't suppose I've written two dozen three-volume novels without knowing something of the human mind when contemplated in relation to the tender passion. I know all about it you know"' (*LM*, 1: p. 14).
[56] Wagner discusses Braddon's use of the fictional artists, forgery, and creativity, in *The Lady's Mile* and the convention of the *Kunstlerromane*. See Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions', p. 17.

writing.[57] Haldane resists the automatic correlation between his plots and his biography but, speaking to a rapt audience at Lady Perivale's dinner, tells how '"[y]et there is often a central fact in the web of fancy, an infinitesimal point, but the point from which all the lines radiate"' (*HDS*, p. 35). Haldane's 'infinitesimal point' radiated to a plot web of romance, rescue, and ruin is a concern with society's neglect of children in the slums. Writing his second novel, Haldane is cast into a more mysterious, shadowy atmosphere, coupled with an intimate conversation with Lady Perivale in which he voices worries that a writer endlessly talking about their tales could bore their spouse. Echoing Haldane, and sounding slightly like a dig at Braddon's own readers, Faunce says how, '"one day I may let the reading world know that truth is stranger – and sometimes even more thrilling – than fiction"' (*HDS*, p. 66). Faunce is an avid reader, including Collins and Blazac, and it is his neat office, desk, and penwork that the reader sees. Like her husband, Mrs Faunce is a detective and writer with detailed scenes depicting her rigorously collecting information on the crime in a scrapbook vital to the cases.[58] Haldane is the only novelist but *His Darling Sin* is pervaded with images of desks, reading, collecting, researching, and writing.

Although set a century earlier, *The Infidel* too illustrates the act of writing. *The Infidel* is also connected by the more introspective gaze to the women writers in Braddon's later novels. However, Antonia's acts of writing and jobs, including writing theatre reviews, social gossip columns, and play scripts, perhaps most explicitly align with Sigismund and Herman. As will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, like *The Doctor's Wife* and *The Lady's Mile*, *The Infidel* places the act of writing firmly within the city, its buildings, and its streets. Antonia is depicted as living in a garret at the start of the novel and fulfils in many ways the stereotypical form of the poverty-stricken writer at the *fin de siècle* in a shabby garret looking over the streets of London.[59] Antonia and her father are professionals within a commercial system and adhering to the deadline-driven demands of eighteenth-century Grub Street journalism and the theatrical marketplace, echoing the 'exigencies of the periodical

[57] Mattacks discusses how, 'the respectability she had gained allowed her the relative freedom to engage with the issues surrounding literary stardom. *His Darling Sin* represents a response to its author's transition from the spectacular to the familiar, as Braddon explores the nature of a reputation based upon a series of images'. Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', p. 217.

[58] As Tomaiuolo sets out, 'The decision to introduce Faunce's wife as an indispensable helper proves Braddon's interest in asserting that behind the success of male professionals there are liminal female figures'. See Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*, p. 130.

[59] In *The Infidel*, 'The shabby second-floor in Rupert Buildings was Antonia's only idea of home. Her own eerie was on the floor above—a roomy garret, with a casement window in the sloping roof, a window that seemed to command all London, for she could see Westminster Abbey, and the Houses of Parliament, and across the river to the more rustic-looking streets and lanes on the southern shore' (*I*, I: p, 16). As will be explored in more detail in chapter four, the garret, or the 'room of one's own', is central to late-nineteenth century metafictions.

press' in *The Doctor's Wife* and *Hostages to Fortune* (*DW*, p. 44). The physical facet to the fictional literary marketplace is perhaps the most visceral in *The Infidel* and Antonia must '"tramp to the city sometimes when my feet are weary of the stones"' (*I*, I: p. 24). Similarly to Stella writing in the middle of the night, Antonia's 'tired hand sank on the foolscap page, and in the pause of the squeaking quill she heard the clock ticking on the stairs and the cinders crumbling in the grate' (*I*, I: p. 35). Vitally, in *The Infidel* Antonia's physical fatigue is felt alongside a powerful freedom. Despite her worn out feet, Antonia vehemently declares that, '"I love my books, and to sit with my feet on the fender and read Shakespeare [although] I should love just once in a way to see what people are like"' (*I*, I: p. 25).[60] For Antonia writing is not confined to hardship and exhaustion and authorship comes hand-in-hand with a love of literature, education, and her belief in an independent mind.

Although it characterises Braddon's depictions of authorship, there is arguably a particularly intense duality to Antonia's act of writing alongside her father in *The Infidel*; both freedom and fatigue, enjoyment and exhaustion. The conflict between Antonia's joy of writing and love for her father and the pressure and control exerted on her is illustrated in the scene of Antonia at her desk. The room is feminised through the sunshine, her hair, and the window, yet her father exerts authority, fictionalising the gender politics of the Victorian periodical press. Her father is solely financially motivated often foisting all the work on his daughter. Thornton acts as a physical manifestation of the many pressures and constraints shaping writing and Antonia's corporeal exhaustion is often directly a result of fulfilling his demands.[61] Antonia's pain comes from the restrictions imposed upon her and separation from the books she desires and loves. Arguably the dynamic between Antonia and her father echoes facets of the relationship between Braddon and Maxwell, an aspect of Braddon's career which will be discussed later in the chapter.[62] Antonia does not remain a relatively poverty-stricken writer instead becoming a high society, wealthy Lady; her fingers are stained with ink like Sigismund's but Lord Kilrush 'bent over the ink-stained fingers and kissed them, as if they had been saintly digits in a crystal *reliquaire*' (*I*, p. 50). Antonia's ink-stained fingers grant her social status and wealth. Antonia might end the novel as a lady, but

[60] Similarly to the image of Sigismund stood watching the carriage on *The Lady's Mile*, Antonia stands watching at Mrs Manderlay's rooms: 'Was *this* the dazzling scene she had longed for sometimes in the toilsome evenings, when her tired hand sank on the foolscap page, and in the pause of the squeaking quill she heard the clock ticking on the stairs and the cinders crumbling in the grate' (*I*, I: p. 35).
[61] 'Dearly as she loved to support her father's labours, there came an hour in the day when the aching hand dropped on the manuscript or the tired eyes swam above the closely printed page' (*I*, I: p. 20).
[62] For more on their relationship including letters between Maxwell and the Tillotsons referring to Braddon, which will be discussed in more detail in part three, see Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'.

she begins her life as a hack, as a writer within the commercial literary world. Antonia's joy in literature poignantly echoes Stella's dream of living by her pen.

The depiction of the act of writing as both a solace and an expression of sorrow in *One Thing Needful* counteracts the fast-paced pressure of weekly serialisation pervading Braddon's metafictional novels. The mechanical is noticeably absent, symptomatic of Braddon's more introspective novels in the 1880s, in which the reader is allowed to, as Carnell and Law phrase it, 'more fully enter the consciousness of such female protagonists'.[63] Stella wonders,

> [c]ould people accept that bold incursion into the region of the supernatural […] visions which had seemed almost real to her in the midnight silence, weird speakers, whose voices she seemed verily to have heard? Her heart thrilled at the thought that if the book were successful, thousands would read it, and be drawn nearer to her mind, never knowing who or what she was, yet one with her by sympathy. (*OTN*, II: pp. 69–70)

Her writing is aligned with the ghostly and supernatural, rather than her classical, dry, and inaccessible education.[64] With a paradoxical sense of the relationship between writer and reader Stella's readers are drawn close by a seemingly visceral experience, yet distanced from her identity.[65] As Mattacks identifies, '*One Thing Needful* appeared at a crucial juncture in both Braddon's career and in the feminist movement to provide a unique insight into Braddon's problematic de-centring of both herself and the women within her fiction'.[66] The gendered facets to Stella's acts of writing reflect Braddon's constant intimate engagement with her contemporary social context.

Perhaps symptomatic of Braddon's problematic position in feminism, in *One Thing Needful* Stella 'spun the thread of each story from her own heart' yet her writing comes with a physical cost in her sleepless nights and is allied with Braddon's image of writing as luggage (*OTN*, II: p. 254). Stella's writing is 'woven in the quiet of the night' but when she arrives in Brumm, 'her arms [are] strained by the weight of the little carpet bag' in which she carried her manuscripts (*OTN*, II: pp. 69–70 and p. 146). Importantly, the Chapmans give

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[63] Ibid., p. 155.

[64] Kate Mattacks discusses the presence of the supernatural in the novel in the context of Braddon's whole career and its relationship with female identity and the theatricality of spiritualism. See Mattacks, '*Beyond These Voices*'.

[65] On anonymity and the Victorian author see Alexis Easley, *First-Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830–70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) and Buurma, 'Anonymity, Corporate Authority, and the Archive'.

[66] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 224. Mattacks argues, '*One Thing Needful* marks the beginning of this self-referential phrase of writing exploring how the formation of female identity, and by implication Braddon's public persona, is a political act'. Ibid.

Stella the most practical advice on how to build her writing career offering a room, writing materials, and a reader in Polly, a 'devourer of periodical literature' (*OTN*, II: p. 148). Finally, Jem Busby appears in the literary marketplace of Brumm, a printer's reader and factotum at the *Independent*. Just as Lady Sophia is asked to produce an identity shaped by the newspaper, Stella is asked for

> "[h]alf a column of green-room gossip three times a week [which] would go down like butterscotch with our subscribers [or] perhaps if she was to knock off a little story for the Christmas Number 1 I might get our chief to look at it […] there'd be a fi'pun' note in Miss Boldwood's pocket, and it would be getting in the thin end of the wedge into the bargain." (*OTN*, II: pp. 159–160)

In Brumm, Stella stands on the edge of the collaborative periodical press and close to Braddon's experience of working as a professional writer. Stella is asked to provide specific work fulfilling the demand expressed by a newspaper and their audience, echoing Sigismund catering to his voracious readers and Antonia to the requirements of a variety of periodicals. As discussed earlier in the chapter, writing across a variety of genres or forms shaped Victorian authorship and is a mode of writing characterising Braddon's fictional writers.[67] Significantly, as she comes into contact with the periodical press in Brumm, Stella is drawn closer to the commercialised literary marketplace threading through Braddon's metafiction. A more practical writing desk is offered here rather than Castle Lashmar and these scenes are the closest to mechanical acts of writing in *One Thing Needful*.

Braddon attempts to marry two disparate aspects of writing in Stella's yearning which comprises an idyllic or naïve vision of being a professional author, tied to a more pragmatic awareness of the independence it could bring. Stella dreams of 'a cottage beside the Avon, with faithful Betsy for her housekeeper, friend, companion; an abundance of books, and her pen as the course of her income' (*OTN*, II: p. 35). Stella hopes for independence and freedom from what she terms slavery as a servant funded by her writing. Throughout *One Thing Needful* reading and writing offer Stella comfort, as well a sense of independence and a voice: 'Her pen had been her friend and confidant for the last seven years. It was as natural to her to write as to live' (*OTN*, II: p. 137). As with Sigismund, there is a gently comedic image of a partly romanticised act of writing, but as in *The Doctor's Wife*, when read in contrast with the high-class, ridiculed figures in the novel Stella is affiliated with hard work, a desire for independence, and ultimately rewarded with popularity. The strategic motivations behind Braddon's illustrations of the act of writing in *One Thing Needful* are the hardest to discern

[67] Van Remoortel brings together 'the diversity of women's work for the press' and the tension between their 'constructed fictional identities' and private self'. See Van Remoortel, *Living By the Press*, p. 1.

reflecting a turbulent period in her career and in women writers' position in the literary marketplace more broadly.[68] Stella sees writing as integral to her identity but struggles to resolve how it will shape her public persona and position in society. Stella's fiction is sensationalist, popular, and the product of hard work, even within this domestic novel of manners.

'Ink-stained fingers'

Juxtaposing the metafictional depictions of a writer at their desk, there are few descriptions in the periodical press of Braddon's own writing practices. One is in the article mentioned earlier in the chapter in which Mary Angela Dickens details that 'In Miss Braddon's private "den" are rows and rows of books'.[69] In 1899 the *Chicago Tribune* reported that,

> [s]omewhere, between 4 and 5 in the afternoon she becomes "Miss Braddon," writing as steadily and evenly as if were taking the words down from dictation. At dinner time she becomes Mrs. Maxwell again. It might even be said that "Miss Braddon" and Mrs. Maxwell do not exactly get on well together. At any rate, Mrs. Maxwell does not like to talk about "Miss. Braddon's" novels, or hear others talk about them, while "Miss Braddon" betrays slight interest in Mrs. Maxwell's many social duties.[70]

Rarely among reviews, the *Chicago Tribune* confines Miss Braddon rather than Mrs Maxwell within quotation marks, exposing Braddon as her public persona or stage name. Among the relatively few visual representations of Braddon, the existing paintings, photographs, and cartoons typically depict her at a desk.[71] Many of these visual representations imply a 'quiet and dignified' library. However, arguably reflecting the interruptions and demands of her family, servants, and friends, a sense of urgency and the weight of responsibility for literary production are evident in the images of aching limbs and luggage pervading her metafictional novels. Braddon's career is framed by grubbier illustrations of writing in Sigismund's portrayal as a 'pale-faced young man, with a smudge of ink upon the end of his nose, and very dirty wrist-bands' in *The Doctor's Wife* (1864) and Antonia's aching feet and 'ink-stained fingers' in *The Infidel* (1900) (*DW*, p. 10 and *I*, p. 50). Nevertheless, all of Braddon's

[68] Peterson addresses the concepts of romantic myths and modernist distinction suggesting that the binaries they assume – 'literature versus journalism, priestly vocation versus business or trade, high art versus commercial production, literary classic versus ephemeral writing' – came from 'complexities and confusions with which it unfurled, and [teases] out the implications for fin-de-siècle authors' self-conceptions and public self-presentations, especially those of women […] in the 1880s, the literary field in England was not so clearly delineated' as many theoretical models construct them. See Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, p. 54.
[69] Dickens, 'Miss Braddon At Home', *Windsor Magazine*.
[70] See Curtis Brown, 'Riches from her Pen', p. 14.
[71] These include Frith's well-known painting, the 1865 photographs discussed earlier, and a cartoon in *Punch*. See Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England*.

fictional writers demonstrate a desire to write and associate authorship with a measure of independence.

**The House: From Camberwell to the Renowned Lichfield House, Richmond**

Braddon's son added to his extensive account of her career 'that with scarcely any help from a housekeeper she actively conducted the domestic affairs of two households'.[72] Miss Braddon's 'den' stood within her home. As *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900* considers,

> Work and home, the domestic and the professional, were competing pulls in the lives of nineteenth-century women writers in ways recognizable to the modern women. The power structure inherent in the domestic household, and the codes of social conduct, on the other hand, were aspects of life from which no nineteenth-century woman was immune.[73]

These 'competing pulls' were evident in Braddon's personal and professional lives as well as her fictions stretching through the second half of the nineteenth century. Although Braddon and Maxwell were financially successful, established landowners by the 1870s, she began her career supporting herself and her mother. Early in her life Braddon and her mother lived in Camberwell and, as Carnell discusses, 'the Camberwell Braddons worried about bills and rates, made trips to the local shops on the Walworth Road and: "were those social pariahs, poor relations"'.[74] Braddon moved to Bloomsbury providing for her new family due to the losses incurred by Maxwell's financial failings in the 1860s. Maxwell was the owner of the periodicals and the publishing company; however, as editor, the name used to promote their

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[72] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 282.

[73] *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 5. The collection as a whole looks in practical terms at the networks and various forms of income, arguing they are essential to authorship. Also, Gleadle argues that, 'The spate of household manuals produced during [the mid-nineteenth century] suggest high expectations of domestic performance'. See Kathryn Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave 2001), p. 52. Ledbetter explores the broad variety of articles and periodicals surrounding servants and household management through Victorian period, including the *Leisure Hour*, the guide *Common Sense for Housemaids* (1853), the *British Workwoman*, the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine*, and the *Illustrated Household Journal*. See Kathryn Ledbetter, 'Regulating Servants in Victorian Women's Print Media', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 32–45.

[74] Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 8. Carnell reads the early chapter of *The Story of Barbara* (1880) [serialised in Yates's the *World* as *Her Splendid Misery* 1879–80] and *A Lost Eden* (1904) as very close to first-hand accounts of Braddon's early life, particularly in the figures of the Trevornocks in *The Story of Barbara* (1880), "those social pariahs, poor relations". Carnell also identifies how 'Eventually Mrs. Travornock packed her bags and left with her daughters [and] Braddon was frank in her novel about Mr. Trevornock's dissolute habits […] Despite the separation of her parents, Braddon's life was not so very different from many middle class families without ample means'. Ibid., pp. 8–9.

business, and author of the novels forming the backbone of the publishing house, Braddon arguably became the breadwinner, especially at the outset of her career. Braddon's and Maxwell's households and family grew through their lives as parents to eleven children and owners of multiple houses and estates.[75] According to her son W. B. Maxwell who took on the role of secretary, by the end of Braddon's life 'there was a considerable amount of property in the New Forest, and she owned a much larger estate at Richmond' at which there were agents working for them; also, 'all her books were on her hands […] for in fact she was her own publisher'.[76] At the turn of the century, Braddon held demanding and authoritative roles as mother, household manager, author, and publisher.

Braddon's and Maxwell's unstable marriage circumstances exacerbated the tensions between the home and the marketplace in her personal life and her metafictional novels. As considered in chapter one, the romance narrative and marriage are at the centre of critical debates about Braddon's unstable position in feminist criticism.[77] The marriages in Braddon's novels often serve to fulfil narrative conventions. However, the constructions of her fictional writers' marriages contribute to Braddon's confrontations of the tensions inherent to the experience of women writers in the Victorian period. The fact that women writers were not passive victims of the pressure of dual responsibility can be read in the parties and gatherings that some women invited into that domestic sphere.[78] Arguably they are physical manifestations of the way in which literature was an opportunity to disrupt the divide between the public and domestic sphere. As explored by Shattock,

> novelist and the editor Anna Maria Hall and her husband Samuel Carter Hall at their cottage "the Rosery" in old Brompton, where writers, artists, and publishers crowded

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[75] When Braddon first moved in to Mecklenburgh House she lived with Maxwell, her mother, and three servants; Maxwell's children, her step-children were away at boarding school. Her first child was born 21 March 1862. Braddon suffered a mental breakdown in 1868 after her mother's death and the birth of her fourth child.

[76] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 144. Braddon was very much still a mother as on the very next page he writes of how she 'rescued me from my slough of despond. At that time it was an axiom with doctors that a sufferer from insomnia must not read at night […] My mother said in effect that this was utter nonsense. To an active-minded person reading was the only possible method of defence against sleeplessness'. Ibid., p. 145.

[77] Braddon is neither defined as a categorical feminist or anti-feminist in critical work. As Jessica Cox sets out, 'the revival of interest in Braddon's work since the 1970s has been marked by the repeated portrayal of Braddon as a sensation writer with pseudo-feminist sympathies and one of the key critical debates that has emerged is the question of Braddon's subversion of or adherence to Victorian gender ideologies'. The collection seeks to challenge these critical debates. See Cox, 'Blurring Boundaries: The Fiction of M.E. Braddon', p. 7.

[78] These literary gatherings merging the public and private sphere can be read as acting against the more masculine communities of writers considered by Patrick Leary, *The* Punch *Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid-Victorian London* (London: The British Library, 2010). As will be discussed in chapter four, Hughes discusses the increasing presence of the woman writer in public establishments, concentrating on 'The Literary Ladies' a women writers' dining club founded in 1889. See Linda K. Hughes, 'A Club of their Own: "The Literary Ladies," New Woman Writers, and "fin-de-siècle" Authorship', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 35.1 (2007), 233–260.

> into the small rooms on Thursday afternoons […] Her memoir [*Landmarks of a Literary Life*] illustrated the intimate world of literary London of the 1840s and 1850s, and the ease with which writers and artists of different backgrounds and degrees of seniority mingled. It also illustrates the ready acceptance of women writers in these circles.[79]

The idea that Braddon's home became a place of literary gatherings can be seen as an echo of Braddon following in Hall's footsteps to become editor after her apprenticeship in *Temple Bar*. As discussed in chapter one, Lichfield House and then Annesley Bank were great undertakings but the work and their guests were important to the Maxwell family's lives and identities, both professionally and personally. The dual pressure exerted on authors, particularly women writers, as workers within domestic space means that the public and private spheres should not be read in isolation in their novels. Braddon's metafictional novels construct household management as integral to and influential upon professional authorship.

The juxtaposing identities of writer, spouse, and household manager can be found in *The Lady's Mile*, *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Hostages to Fortune*, and *Vixen*. In all these novels there are household managers, Charlotte, Editha, Mabel (Diana, Myra, Violet), as well as romances and marriages: the Smythes, Valentine and Charlotte (Diana and Leonoble), Herman and Editha (Herman and Myra), Mabel and Lord Mallow (Violet and Rorie). *The Lady's Mile* dramatises the change in household that comes with a rise in literary success as Sigismund Smith is transformed into Sigismund Smythe. In *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*, there are multiple households and earning money for romance becomes a legitimate motivation for writing. The novels chart Valentine and Charlotte's marriage and the romances of Diana as well as constructing the households and businesses of the Sheldon brothers and Captain Paget. Braddon uses *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* to illustrate the tensions between professional authorship and Victorian codes of conduct surrounding marriage, femininity, and business. Rather than so many disparate homes, in *Hostages to Fortune*, Herman distinctly occupies two seemingly opposing households, relationships, and identities. In *Vixen*, the gender politics integral to the 'competing pulls' experienced by women writers in the nineteenth century are most vividly depicted.[80] In the binary between Mabel and Violet, the social conventions of fashion, social occasions, and marriage are illustrated and resisted. This section examines how Braddon's novels confront the 'competing pulls' between a professional writer's multiple roles,

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[79] Joanne Shattock, 'Women Journalists and Periodical Spaces', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 306–318 (p. 306).
[80] See *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, p. 5.

responsibilities, and identities, and how the powerful influence of the household in a writer's career is portrayed.

Heightening the significance of domestic sphere and geographical location present in the eponymous drive 'The Lady's Mile' is Sigismund Smythe's home in Bloomsbury.[81] The Smythes' new home in Russell Square is close to 26 Mecklenburgh Square in Bloomsbury, where Braddon was living unmarried with Maxwell and his children; she was what Ingleby describes as a 'Bloomsbury wife and a word-pressed Bloomsbury bread-winner'.[82] In *The Lady's Mile* Sigismund has left penny fiction, his office in the Temple, and a 'cracked teapot on the hob' for the three volume novel and a respectable marital home (*DW*, p. 14). Sigismund Smythe's home and marriage accentuate the divide between his personal life and 'demoralizing' novels.[83] His professional achievements and change in readership advance Sigismund's career but implicitly so does the successful household. Although now in a domestic home, in Bloomsbury Braddon's fictional writer is still financially successful, popular, and intimately connected to the Victorian publishing industry.[84] In a letter in January 1865 Braddon herself wrote, '"I work against time, & I am here close to the Brit. Mus. if ever I can get time to read"'.[85] However, *The Lady's Mile* also reflects how, as Ingleby argues, as well portraying Bloomsbury 'at the centre of literary production' its proximity to London's social centre infused Braddon's depictions.[86] As Lichfield House would become renowned as an artistic gathering point, within the Smythes' home 'some of the brightest luminaries of modern literature assembled round the hospitable hearth' countering the vicious criticism

[81] Lynch identifies 'Braddon's use of the "unknown region" metaphor' for the area of London beyond The Lady's Mile was 'borrowed from a widely recognized image explaining economic and social divisions in England as a business of national boundaries'; Lynch argues that Braddon used it 'for an "impenetrable" English domestic space that lurked side-by-side with respectable society but was silently isolated by convention shame, and secrecy, covering up the despair of social ills haunting Victorian life'. Lynch links *The Lady's Mile* with Gertrude Himmelfarb's work on the trope of 'nations', 'distant lands', and foreign country in Victorian fiction and the periodical press, further demonstrating Braddon's engagement with literary fashions and the significance of placing her novels within the context of the periodical press. See Lynch, 'Spectral Politics' and Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Ages* (New York: Vintage, 1985), p. 236.

[82] Ingleby, *Novel Grounds*, p. 118.

[83] The conversation on morality coincides with the descriptions of their home: '"As writer and a ratepayer I believe in my fictions; but as a husband I defer to the critics, and forbid my wife to read my novels"' (*LM*, 6: p. 287). Sigismund confidently participates in the profession but separates his wife from his work participating in appropriating the language of addiction, morality, and consumption as in *The Doctor's Wife*.

[84] The home and its geographical situation is prominent in Victorian criticism, particularly from a gendered perspective, led by work such as Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, and Tosh, *A Man's Place*.

[85] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, 'Letter to Bulwer-Lytton (January 1865)'. See Wolff, '"Devoted Disciple"', p. 32.

[86] Ingleby, *Novel Grounds*, p. 118. Ingleby suggests that the benefits 'were not insubstantial for such a hardworking writer' as Braddon. Ibid.

Braddon was subjected to while living unmarried in Bloomsbury (*LM*, 6: p. 287).[87] The political aspect of Sigismund moving house can be seen as indicative of Braddon assuming a degree of loyalty in her readership presumed to have read *The Doctor's Wife*, despite its being published in a different periodical.

In 1867 Braddon and her family left Bloomsbury for Lichfield House, bought with the profits from *Lady Audley's Secret*; as she describes in a letter to Charles Kent, '[m]y household is in the business of "moving", and I have no doubt you well know the misery involved in that one word'.[88] Braddon also wrote to Bulwer-Lytton admitting to being full of '"considerable wavering"' over her decision.[89] Braddon was caught between its social proximity to London's literary sphere and connotations of immorality.[90] As well as writing to him, Braddon actively participated in wider literary fashions, particularly Bulwer-Lytton's novel *What Will He Do With It?* (1857–9), by constructing Bloomsbury as associated with bachelor lawyers. However, in Cecil O'Boyneville, Braddon turns the gaze to the women's perspective.[91] Ingleby examines how in *The Lady's Mile*,

> Braddon exploits to the full the trope of the Bloomsbury barrister's marital status, turning a magnifying glass on the conjugal difficulties […] While Bulwer-Lytton [invested] bachelordom with misogynist nostalgia, Braddon feminizes the issue treating the geographically problematic conjugal home as a site of marital neglect on the husband's rather than the wife's part.[92]

Echoing Isabel (and Roland) in *The Doctor's Wife* and overturning *What Will He Do With It?*, Cecil rejects the allure of adultery. At the end of *The Lady's Mile* the O'Boynevilles leave the bachelorized Bloomsbury. By ending in respectable social situations, Cecil and Florence overcome the accusations of impropriety, even immorality, many contemporary novels set in Bloomsbury would condemn them to.

While strategically engaging with fictional depictions of marriage, *The Lady's Mile* consciously participates in and foretells of dialogues in the periodical press, most notably in

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[87] As discussed in chapter one it was in the 1870s and 80s after their legal marriage that Lichfield House was particularly prominent in the London literary scene. For lists of names included in the guests see Tromp, Gilbert, and Haynie, 'Introduction', *Beyond Sensation*, p. xxiii.
[88] The letter is dated March 1867: 'Every day brings some new trouble. And my literary work scarcely begins till late at night". See Mary Elizabeth Braddon to Charles Kent, 19 March 1867, Wolff Collection.
[89] Braddon to Bulwer Lytton, 3 November 1868. See Wolff, '"Devoted Disciple"', p. 147.
[90] Ingleby discusses in depth the autobiographical facets to Braddon's fictional lawyer: 'Like O'Boyneville, Braddon herself had to weight up the demands of home and career in making her residential choices'. Aligned with critics identified in the introduction, Ingleby situates his work with Levefvre and Bourdieu to examine demographic and cultural status, cultural production, zoning, and symbolic capital. See Ingleby, *Novel Grounds*, p. 118 and pp. 12–14.
[91] In this respect *The Lady's Mile* can be linked to *Lady's Audley's Secret* and future novels, including *Vixen* and *One Thing Needful*, in which Braddon offers a more psychological portrayal from a woman's perspective.
[92] Ingleby, *Novel Grounds*, pp. 113–4.

the figure of Florence. As identified by Schroeder and Schroeder, many of Florence's improprieties are those criticised in the controversial essay 'The Girl of the Period' published in the *Saturday Review* in 1868.[93] Condemning 'a creature whose sole idea is fun; whose sole aim is unbounded luxury [and] whose main endeavour is to outvie her neighbours in the extravagance of fashion', Eliza Lynn Linton sparked a phenomenon including spin-off comedies and farces.[94] In Russell Square the households are placed in direct comparison; reading Sigismund Smythe alongside the successful and rich lawyer O'Boyneville accentuates the questioning of professionalism in dialogue with social standing and the landscape of London.[95] As Lynch argues, *The Lady's Mile* stands within Braddon's 'radical social criticism'.[96] When read through the lens of the periodical press as a self-conscious reconstruction of Bulwer-Lytton's and Linton's portrayal of the Victorian conventions, *The Lady's Mile* takes on a strategic role in Braddon's sustained defence of popular and profitable writers. *The Lady's Mile* can be read as an understated exploration of professional authorship within Victorian class structures and geographical spheres.

Sigismund forms a powerful connection between *The Doctor's Wife* and *The Lady's Mile*, and Bloomsbury ties together *The Lady's Mile* and *Birds of Prey*. *The Lady's Mile* concluded in *St. James's Magazine*, September 1866 and in November *Birds of Prey* opens with the chapter 'The House in Bloomsbury' in *Belgravia*. Indicative of the intimate dialogue between a novel and its social context, two of Braddon's metafictional novels both set in Bloomsbury appeared either side of her assuming the role of editor, drawing attention to the momentousness of this change in her career. Just as Sigismund's home is in opposition to O'Boyneville's, Valentine's desire to provide a home for Charlotte is more significant in the wider context of the other households in *Birds of Prey*. Living in Bloomsbury Braddon would have been intimately acquainted with its specific geographical association with social medicine and the hospitals as sites of medical breakthroughs, but also with corruption and

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[93] See Schroeder and Schroeder, *From Sensation to Society*, p. 196.

[94] See Eliza Lynn Linton, 'The Girl of the Period', *Saturday Review*, 1868, pp. 339–40. Hamilton and Anderson look at Linton's writing more widely including the response to 'The Girl of the Period' such as the periodical *Girls of the Period* and the Linton, Caird, and 'Wild Women' debate in the 1890s. See Susan Hamilton, 'Women's Voices and Public Debate', *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1830-1914*, ed. by Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 91–107 and Nancy Fix Anderson, *Women Against Women in Victorian Women: A Life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978).

[95] As discussed in chapter one, Wagner identifies the power of Sigismund as a minor character in terms of stock-market and finance investments, particularly placed alongside a lawyer in Bloomsbury. See Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions'.

[96] Lynch, 'Spectral Politics', p. 236. Lynch argues that the social commentary in *The Lady's Mile* 'transmuted into a newly popularized form that could carry the weight of her critical examination' the uncanny short story. Ibid., pp. 326–7.

crime.[97] Ingleby discusses Bloomsbury's association with medicine in the periodical press, most pertinently those for 'reasons other than praise for the altruistic vocation'; these include crime-reports on Bloomsbury, including Mecklenburgh Square itself.[98] The medical professionals in *Birds of Prey* contributed to *Belgravia*'s deliberate defence of Braddon and sensation fiction. In her examination of the medical facets of *Birds of Prey*, Buscemi argues 'one of the lessons of Braddon's novels is to look beyond the respectable facades generated by social standing [and] Braddon's *Belgravia* also serves as an instrument for reform'.[99] Philip Sheldon's corruption and murderous intentions as a dentist undermines the veneer of respectability and medical authority. In *The Lady's Mile* Bloomsbury is a legal and literary district of London, but *Birds of Prey* turns its gaze towards medical professionals.

In 'The House of Bloomsbury' chapter two depicts 'Philip Sheldon reading "The Lancet"' a symbol of medical advances and social reform.[100] Through unveiling his evil morality *Birds of Prey* undermines the susceptibility of women and criticises assumed authority of medical practitioners and the *Lancet*. Braddon unifies an examination of authority of medicine and of a doctor with a defense of sensationalism and her novels. Despite his love for Charlotte, rising morality, and perseverance, Valentine occupies a contentious space between the definitions of professional author; he is at once Bohemian and commercial, romantic and economic, motivated by sacrifice and profit.

Followed by *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Bird of Prey*'s fictional author's literary career and financial success is inextricable from the romantic plot. Although not as pronounced as the one in *Hostages to Fortune*, there is a triad between Valentine, Charlotte, and Diana. Valentine's first romantic interaction is with Diana, his 'fellow Bohemian' and her 'bright girlish dream' saw them 'living honestly [by] some of those liberal arts which have always

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[97] Gilbert explores the broader dialogue between sensation fiction and the 'dramatical increase in the production of medical knowledge', briefly 'Braddon's Dr Mosgrave, the mad-doctor' in *Lady Audley's Secret*. See Pamela K. Gilbert, 'Sensation Fiction and the Medical Context', *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction*, ed. by Andrew Mangham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 182–195 (p. 182). Phegley discusses the representation of the dissecting room in *Birds of Prey*. See Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*.

[98] Ingleby provides examples such as: William Boyd, 18 Mecklenburgh Square, physician, charges of bigamy, *Daily News*, 16 January 1862; Dr. Robert Lalor, Mecklenburgh street, bankrupt in 1866, *Daily News*, 19 October 1866; Mr. Andw Paul, 27 Mecklenburgh Square, advertised book in *Pall Mall*, 1 August 1866 – a couple of weeks before *Birds of Prey* started – then bankruptcy notice, A. Paul Mecklenburgh Square, Surgeon, *Lloyds Weekly Newspaper*, 26 November 1865. See Ingleby, *Novel Grounds*, pp. 134–5.

[99] Only a few pages after Valentine's career is charted it is suggested that, 'It is possible that the stockbroker is like the poet, […] a child of spontaneous instincts and untutored faculties. Certain it is that the divine afflatus from the nostrils of the god Plutus seemed to have descended upon Philip Sheldon' (*BoP*, 3: p. 275). Likening poets with stockbroker challenges social standing, genius, and education. Wagner looks at the continuing alliance between authorship and finances in *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*. See Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions'.

[100] Ingleby and Buscemi discuss the *Lancet* in Victorian society and Braddon's constructions of the publication. See Ingleby, *Novel Grounds* and Buscemi, '"The disease, which had hitherto been nameless"'.

been dear to the children of Bohemia' (*BoP*, p. 111). Similarly Charlotte's desire for him begins as a schoolgirl's vision of 'a penniless Bohemian' who brought a 'flavour of romance' (*BoP*, pp. 147–8). Braddon's illustration participates in how, as Ingleby identifies, 'there was a strand within London's nineteenth-century cultural imaginary that constructed Bloomsbury as "bohemian"'.[101] Throughout *Birds of Prey* Valentine offers freedom from the 'trammels of Captain Paget' or stifling social conventions in grey Bayswater, occupied by George Sheldon, a morally questionable lawyer. Valentine and his fiancé must adhere to the demands and strictures of a corrupt and untrustworthy head of a household in the figure of Philip Sheldon. Importantly, the theatre tickets, received as a reviewer bring Valentine, Charlotte, and Diana a sense of freedom, daring, and release from the restraints placed on them. As the novel progresses, the household forms a key part of Valentine's motivation for writing as he strives to reach the income set by Philip for permission to have Charlotte's hand in marriage.[102] Valentine's fiancé reassures him, '"The magazine people will soon give you thirty pounds a month"' by the end of *Birds of Prey* Valentine is working hard and gaining a place within the literary economy (*BoP*, 12: p. 449). Braddon's plot presents readers with the practicality of earning money as a writer as permission to be romantic.

Valentine unites yet questions sensationalism, romanticism, respectability, and the financial. He occupies a contradictory position in the profession and, as Costantini argues, he 'undergoes an evolution [but it is] ridden with contradictions'.[103] The fictional author is the most vulnerable in the plot and ultimately manipulated; however, just as Sigismund occupies the stereotype of the sensation fiction writer yet is not the one who tempts his young reader to adultery, Valentine brings romance and sentimentality but not immorality. As Phegley puts it, 'despite Hawkehurst's bird-like name, he is not one of the novel's "birds of prey"'.[104] The political aspects of *Birds of Prey* are especially notable when it is seen in its position in *Belgravia*, a publication which, at least in part, is written by 'The young *littèrature* of the present day' (*BoP*, 10: p. 209). Braddon employs her fictional writer to challenge continuing

[101] Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*, p. 25. Andrew Dowling discusses Thackeray's metafictional novel arguing that, '*Pendennis* was an enormously influential novel in the mid-Victorian period in terms of its overt treatment of sexuality, its evocation of a new "stenuous masculinity," and its introduction of a new, "Bohemian" discourse to describe the male novelist'. Ibid. As set out in the introduction Bandish considers Bohemianism in association with *Belgravia*. See Bandish, 'Bakhtin's Dialogism and the Bohemian Meta-Narrative of Belgravia'.
[102] Meeting a financial demand for marriage can be linked with the section in chapter three on the article 'Marriage *Versus* celibacy', *Belgravia*, August 1868, pp. 290–7.
[103] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 112.
[104] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 160.

accusations of the immorality of sensationalism.[105] *Birds of Prey* adopts a political stance amid the competitive marketplace accepting an author's need to provide a secure home. *Birds of Prey* champions the financially-motivated writer over the 'giant boys', romanticised poets, and Bloomsbury's corrupt medical professionals.

Valentine's romantic love, authorship, and search for marriage within a sensational plot of deception, inheritance and secrets continues into *Charlotte's Inheritance*.[106] *Birds of Prey* ended with the lines,

> [t]here was a cloud, no bigger than a man's head, but the harbinger of tempest and terror. It yet remains to be shown what form that cloud assumed, and from what quarter the tempest came. The history of Charlotte Halliday has grown on the writer; and the completion of that history, with the fate of John Haygarth's fortune, will be told under the title of CHARLOTTE'S INHERITANCE. (*BoP*, 12: p. 459)

Valentine's new home is built on the profits of his writing, his hard work, but is also an over-romanticised rendition of a writer's home, a 'half-cottage, half-villa' named 'Charlottenburg' (*CI*, 10: p. 442). The juxtaposition reflects the awkward combination of hard work and extravagance in Valentine the writer. Continuing from *Birds of Prey*, the importance of Valentine's and Charlotte's domestic and social conventions are read alongside Philip and George Sheldon's, and Captain Paget's, disgrace and immorality. Despite the instability of Valentine's moral conversion or evolution, it assumes a more political and strategic dimension when placed in opposition to the high-class men falling from social respectability. Echoing how the friction between the sensation fiction writer and the Byronic poet in *The Doctor's Wife* exposes the artificiality of the genius author, the comparison between Valentine and Philip Sheldon exposes the artificiality of social respectability and protects the professional writer from it.

The importance of the household is perhaps particularly evident in the chapter, titled 'Bohemian Independence'. Lending a biographical element to *Charlotte's Inheritance*, Diana is staying in a hotel in Brighton for her honeymoon, the city in which Braddon lived and acted at various points in her life.[107] Within a bohemian domain Diana and Valentine decide what they will do with Charlotte's Inheritance and exert some control over Philip and the

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[105] Julia M. Chavez uses *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* to exemplify the development in Braddon's fictional construction of reading: 'If *The Doctor's Wife* argues that novel reading is potentially valuable as a conduit of moral values in an immoral world, Braddon's later novels expand the educational value of novel reading to include safely educating women about that dangerous world'. See Chavez, 'Wandering Readers and the Pedagogical Potential of *Temple Bar*', p. 141.

[106] Palmer discusses the shifting forms of sensationalism across Braddon's metafictional novels in *Belgravia*. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

[107] Braddon moved to Brighton in 1857 to join Henry Nye Chart's company; she acted as Mary Seyton in The Theatre Royal and wrote for the *Brighton Herald* from 1857–1860.

financial scandal. Hence, the alliance between Diana and Valentine established at the very beginning of *Birds of Prey* is important in foregrounding this progression and defence of sensation fiction writers. Costantini argues that, '[t]he upward movement of both [Valentine and Diana] validates the arguments of anti-elitist critics and novelists who, like Braddon herself, deny the danger of contagion and view sensationalism as a vehicle for an honest depiction of contemporary life'.[108] Valentine embraces a literary career to gain love and financial security while Diana has to some extent accepted capitalism and excess in the 'sparkling jewels' on her fingers. Importantly, Diana's independence is found in the first time 'she had been sole mistress and centre of a household' (*CI*, 10: p. 433). Diana's marriage to Leonoble could be read as a precursor to how, in *Vixen*, Mabel gains authority through her marriage to Nestorius and, in *One Thing Needful*, Stella gains a measure of independence in her marriage to Lord Lashmar. Braddon is frank about capitalism as offering a degree of domestic stability and independence for many women.[109] Braddon employs the household as fundamental to her construction of professional authorship, and the conventional marriage plot endings are more political than they at first appear.

Valentine's unstable construction as a professional author was first presented and read within the pages of *Belgravia*, a periodical participating in the literary marketplace's economic systems. He is a pivotal point for discourses of professionalism, domesticity capitalism, and sensationalism. Both *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* move between multiple domestic spheres; from Captain Paget's immoral lodgings, to grey Bayswater, Philip Sheldon's dentist surgery, George Sheldon's office, Diana's and Leonoble's home, to Valentine's and Charlotte's household.[110] In both novels professional authorship and domesticity are interwoven with anti-establishment or social criticism depicting the constant contradictions and conflicts in the homes of professional authors. In many of Braddon's novels, comparisons are established between multiple writers, but arguably Valentine internalises many of those contrasts. Valentine is perhaps the most contradictory of Braddon's fictional writers, indicative of the most unstable moment in Braddon's career.

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[108] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 119. Costantini argues that Valentine, Charlotte, and Diana, 'confirm the impression that sensational experiences may lead to clear headed thinking […] Like the writer Hawkehurst, Diana is strengthened by her contact with the abyss, learns from her experiences and is finally rewarded with a happy marriage and wealth'. Ibid.

[109] On the practicalities of running households, social security, and authorship see Langland, 'Women's Writing and the Domestic Sphere'.

[110] On medical professionals and the house see Buscemi, '"The Disease, Which Had Hitherto Been Nameless"'.

In the late 1860s Braddon and Maxwell were subject to vicious attacks from the press due to them living together without being legally married. Although the scandal returned in the 1870s, Braddon's, as Palmer describes it, 'burgeoning respectability' was 'jeopardized' but not destroyed by the re-emergence of the marriage scandal.[111] The extended narrative of a writer's marriage in *Hostages to Fortune* (1875) exposes the influence on the intense conflict between the home and profession. At the heart of the novel Herman, his wife Editha, and the actress Myra form a triangle and he 'is a young man capable of living two distinct lives' (*HF*, 5: p. 11). The interplay between the domestic and the professional is central to the novel's plot and foregrounds how Myra becomes the focal point for feminist identity. Editha provides a conventional, married, and morally secure domestic sphere in opposition to the sphere of the theatre, vibrancy, and potential immorality inhabited by Myra. Just as Braddon engaged with literary fashions in her depictions of Bloomsbury, the division between physical spaces in *Hostages to Fortune* is key to Braddon's comparison between aestheticism and sensationalism. Palmer argues that,

> [t]The exclusive and amoral world of aesthetic writers, artists, and actors, in which Herman socializes when he and Editha move to London, is a constant temptation away from the family home […] By speaking to the burgeoning ideas of aestheticism, but also the criticism they encountered, Braddon's magazine participates in a contemporary debate and uses that topicality to its advantage.[112]

The competing pulls are characterised by two women exerting both financial and personal pressures on an author; however, the influence on Herman's life and literary success does not remain in strict opposition fictionalising the fluctuating dynamic, particularly for women writers. Braddon's career was reflected in her domestic sphere with Lichfield House becoming increasingly aligned with the literary parties. The domestic and the professional were merged within the walls of the same house.

Herman and Myra are established as colleagues before they are introduced and there are intimate scenes in the boxes, wings, and dressings rooms of the successful theatre unashamedly named Frivolity. Through Lord Earlsworth, owner of Frivolity, and Myra Brandreth, manager and actress, Braddon creates a vivid characterisation of the theatrical marketplace intertwined with the domestic and romantic plots.[113] The question of Myra's

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[111] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 26. Mattacks links *Hostages to Fortune* to the marriage scandal, explicitly looking at Gilbert and Gubar on 'doubling' and argues, 'This interplay between the actress, the mad women and the writer is at its most effective in Braddon's *Hostages to Fortune*'. See Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley', p. 78.
[112] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 26.
[113] Janine Hatter uses the short story 'Prince Ramji Rowdedow' to look at Braddon's 'experimental techniques' arguing that, 'In her 1870s tales [Braddon] explores the distinctions between reality and façade, which

collapse at the end of the novel and her association with Braddon's career in the theatre is much discussed in criticism, and often seen in terms of the actress's retribution for greed and her ultimate immorality.[114] Mattacks argues for the conflict within Myra seeing her 'crucially as a metaphor for literary creativity' but as desirous to 'gain economic stability'.[115] Also, Liggins suggests that the actress's ambition and relationship with the maternal is indicative of Braddon's engagement in the 'antagonism of the materialist woman towards children'.[116] However, I argue it is significant how much is heard through gossip rather than from the narrative voice directly relating to the marriage scandal around Braddon and Maxwell at the time.

Braddon's and Maxwell's identities were appropriated and shaped by the periodical press and social gossip reinforcing the importance of reading Victorian novels in context, as discussed in the introduction. Mattacks suggests that, 'Braddon and Maxwell's domestic arrangements encouraged a masquerade of respectability that destabilised the boundaries between the theatrical and social spheres'.[117] Braddon's heightened sense of performance in both professional and personal identities can be seen in the indirect accounts and portrayal of Myra's collapse and illness in *Hostages to Fortune*. Almost all the details are heard through accounts of social gossip and journalism rather than directly from the narrative voice and '[s]ociety talks a good deal and speculates wildly' (*HF*, 13: p. 96). Myra's stroke and the idea of her illness as a deserved punishment is spoken by the press and social rumour, rather than by Braddon or the narrator. Despite all the images of failure, immorality, and intoxication more narrative space is given in the final instalment to Myra than Herman. In the closing

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complicates the barriers between the stage and real life. She engages with the debate surrounding the purity of actresses in her 1880s stories […] each story demands that readers challenge their prejudices against the theatre through experimental theatrical and literary techniques, such as metafictional references, structural repetition or narrative perspective deconstruction, which would be unsustainable in a novel'. See Hatter, 'Voicing the self', p. 29.

[114] For instance, Carnell and Law write that also *A Strange World* has a theatrical setting in 1874 but that *Hostages to Fortune* 'is a much bleaker work, whose theatrical characters display all the forms of immorality and corruption imagined by popular prejudice, and are detached from authorial sympathy'. See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 153. Heidi J. Holder reads *Hostages to Fortune* as a reply to Braddon's own unsuccessful career as an actress. She sees Myra as an expression of her hostility to the theatre with all the stereotyped immorality and part of Braddon's desire to rework the theatrical world. Holder looks at *Hostages to Fortune* in connection with the marriage scandal around Mrs Maxwell's death and the theatres' resistance to immorality and loss of respect. Her reading does not acknowledge the narrative sympathy with Myra or the power she is granted within the novel to advance the plot as well as the hero's success as a writer. See Heidi J. Holder, 'Misalliance: M. E. Braddon's Writings for the Stage', *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context*, ed. by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert and Aeron Haynie (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), pp. 165–179.

[115] Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley', p. 71 and p. 84.

[116] Liggins, 'Her Mercenary Spirit', p. 80.

[117] Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley', p. 71.

pages of *Hostages to Fortune*, the space is given to the female actress rather than the male author, foregrounding the shift to women writers in Braddon's subsequent metafictions, *Vixen*, *One Thing Needful*, and *The Infidel*.

Myra and Editha differ in the motivations and mode of carrying it out but both exert financial and personal pressure on Herman; *Hostages to Fortune* offers the reader a fractured depiction of authorship. Braddon was preeminent in uniting her management skills and the public realm, and the conflict between Editha and Myra can be seen as two dimensions of a woman writer's job.[118] Editha, who initially fails at household management, could be read a comedic representation of a failing wife, but goes a long way to demonstrate the value of the usually unrecognized female labour of domestic management. Ledbetter examines how '[t]he acquisition, management, and control of servants was a significant domestic task and expectation for women of secure financial status or aspiring social rank during the Victorian period', a significance reflected in the periodical press.[119] Although the most obvious biographical facet may be seen in Myra as an actress, there are vivid echoes between Editha's experience with her household staff, particularly the cook, and Braddon's with the deceitful, and thieving cook in her first marital home in Mecklenburgh Square.[120] Herman's first literary dinners and their financial debts are caused by Editha's inability to run a household, to manage staff or to budget.

Through the novel Editha learns to treat household management as a financial task and Herman also ends up aligning his desire to be professionally successful with domesticity. There is perhaps a compromise in Herman at the end between his artistic achievement and love of writing with popularity, financial success, and domesticity: 'Happily his new book is not a failure' (*HF*, 13: p. 99).[121] Braddon places an inherent need for efficient household management alongside artistic ambition and ability. In *Hostages to Fortune* Edith's isolated

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[118] As Elizabeth Langland identifies, 'The importance of a wife's management skills is glaringly evident in the monetary losses a family could sustain if she were inefficient and careless [which] enables us to appreciate the short step it became for women from management in the private sphere to management in the public realm'. See, Langland, 'Women's Writing and the Domestic Sphere', p. 128.

[119] Ledbetter, 'Regulating Servants in Victorian Women's Print Media', p. 32. Ledbetter examines how 'most high- and middle-class women's periodicals of the mid-Victorian era featured articles about using the proper etiquette with her servants [and] a burgeoning genre of household manuals assisted the effort from downstairs'. Ibid.

[120] During the first couple of months Braddon's 'mother had to sack the cook for fiddling the grocery expenses and threatening to injure the monthly nurse'. Braddon mentioned the incident in a letter to Lady Monkton in 1913 'adding that she had been unable to breast feed and the month's nurse's "lapse from strict morality" (about which the cook had taunted her) meant "she was worth a pound a week as G. M.'s [Gerald Maxwell's] larder'. See Carnell *Literary Lives*, p. 146 and p. 186.

[121] We are told that 'The *Censor* has its accustomed sneer. The *Microcosm* is doubtful, and compares Herman disparagingly with its half dozen pet authors—writer whose works enjoy a limited sale and the approval of high class critics. The *Connoisseur* praises the book warmly, and the public are delighted with it' (*HF*, 13: p. 99).

and restricted role as a wife, is particularly poignant when placed in opposition to a relatively-autonomous actress, a life that Braddon arguably had to sacrifice when she took her place within Maxwell's home.[122] While their relationship cements domestic convention, Herman and Editha are united when they both see professional authorship and household management as economic activities, and the novel shows that both are needed to survive in the Victorian literary marketplace.

Similarly to Mabel's flawed choice in poetry, Braddon implicitly celebrates and commends successful households through the failings of her characters. Myra's creative and apparently risqué household is implicitly a result of her being financially savvy, both in the running of the theatre and her home. The financial responsibility and budgeting that comes with his home with Editha, whilst conforming to Victorian social conventions, ultimately leads to Herman's most expressive, artistic writing, and popularity at the end of *Hostages to Fortune*. His novel is not created in solitude but within the well-managed family economy supported by the earnings of a financially-successful previous novel: '"No, love; we must have a house of our own, and I must see the baker's cart under my window every morning to remind me that I am a bread-winner"' (*HF*, 13: p. 89). The novel's ending with a relatively-conservative marriage could be read as submission to Victorian social and literary conventions.[123] However, in the face of the constant criticism she received, *Hostages to Fortune* provides Braddon with a voice for how women writers were faced with conflicting pulls and identities.[124] Braddon moved from a theatrical household to a marital and financially-successful literary household and *Hostages to Fortune* self-consciously defends household management as a business crucial to effective authorship, as it was vital in her own professional career.

Unlike the previous novels considered in this section, *Vixen* does not follow the career of an explicitly professional writer; however, in *Vixen*, Mabel and Violet are strong-minded in different forms. Violet is independent in her riding and rebellion against social conventions and fashions.[125] Mabel's weakness was to 'fancy herself a second Browning' but is 'strong-

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[122] Costantini suggests that 'Editha is a slavish admirer of her husband's occupation and thus seems to validate the orthodox binary *male professionalism vs. female domesticity*'. See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 123.
[123] Costantini suggests that it was 'probably conceived to limit the charges of immorality'. Ibid.
[124] Focusing on Oliphant and Gaskell, Langland examines, 'the social practices that controlled rhythms of the domestic sphere, the novels that represented domestic life and the evaluations that have informed our appreciation of Victorian domestic fiction'. See Langland, 'Women's Writing and the Domestic Sphere', p. 122.
[125] Ofek examines Braddon's and Oliphant's representation of hair as a tool for their involvement in in gender conflicts around representations of women in fiction. See Galia Ofek, *Representations of Hair in Victorian Literature and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

minded', in her ambition, social understanding, and estate-management (*V*, III: p, 73). The clear binary established between Violet and Mabel in their clothing, their mannerisms, and their family relationships is important in examining Braddon's constructions of the household, Victorian codes of conduct for women, and authorship. As explored by Beller, if Violet is the heroine challenging the restrictions, blame is placed on the social conventions controlling Mabel's writing as much as, if not more, than her poetry per se.[126] Mabel is placed within social conventions, standing in conservatories filled with fashionable plants, whilst Violet fights for physical freedom in the form of horse riding across the moors. Unlike Mabel, Violet refuses to be drawn into the 'languid drawing-room life. […] No life could well have been more useless or rigid' (*V*, II: p. 12).[127] Most fervently, Violet stands in conflict with her stepfather's imprisoning of her mother and herself.[128]

Discussing Vixen's clothes Seys argues that Braddon employs depictions of fashion trends as a metaphor for literary fashions, particularly to reform sensation fiction: 'Braddon uses dress to tell the women's story and narrate her own authorial process of transition from the genre of sensation fiction'.[129] Violet's outfits are emphatically tied to practicality over prescribed social patterns and the narrative voice commends an absence of fripperies, rather than endorsing Violet's mother's fear that her daughter looks like '"the kind of girl to go around the country lecturing upon women's rights"' (*V*, II: p. 119).[130] A more understated and unstable binary is established between Violet's mother and Miss Skipwith, implicitly the fictional writer's attempt to defy social convention becomes particularly poignant. Participating in Braddon's challenging use of fashion, Mrs Winstanley's clothes gain an implicitly political edge. Her husband dramatically limits her control over her clothes and body: '"Why the finest gown Madame Theodore ever made cannot hide one of your wrinkles"' (*V*, III: p. 55). The importance of woman's appearance, in the eyes of social convention, is voiced in her reply; '"you fell in love with me in my gown, dear; and you

[126] See Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.
[127] Knowles examines the place of the French language as 'a marker of cultured activity', particularly Violet's rebellion against is as an accomplishment which is tied to her 'preferring to model herself on her male parent who has no need to pursue "accomplishment"'. See Knowles, 'The French Connection', p. 163.
[128] There are strong echoes of *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* in *Vixen*, particularly, as discussed, the marital blame placed on the lawyer O'Boyneville. As Knowles identifies, 'with so many of Braddon's novels, the villain is found to be within respectable English society and even the respectable English home itself'. Ibid., p. 165.
[129] Seys, *Fashion and Narrative in Victorian Popular Literature*, p. 81, Similarly to Casey and Sears, Seys sees *Vixen* as breaking the pattern of Braddon's sensation fiction heroines expected by her critics. See Seys, *Fashion and Narrative in Victorian Popular Literature*, Casey, '"Other people's Prudery": Mary Elizabeth Braddon', and Sears, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the "Combination Novel"'.
[130] Very similar descriptions are given to Lady Sophia in *One Thing Needful*.

don't know how different your feelings might have been if you had seen me in a gown cut by a country dressmaker"' (*V*, III: p. 56). Violet's mother chose a second marriage and has ended trapped, desperately using 'crewel-work' as an expression and comfort. In contrast, Miss Skipwith is dressed in '"dreadfully strong-minded"' clothes, a physical manifestation of rejecting social restrictions (*V*, II: p. 119). Miss Skipwith has chosen an isolated life alone but has 'literary labour' as her voice. Both women are trapped, one turning to writing the other to sewing, but Miss Skipwith's situation has a degree of independence and happiness, whilst Violet's mother is imprisoned and eventually destroyed by Captain Winstanley. While neither woman presents a figure of feminism, Violet's refusal to forgive her mother for marrying the Captain and her escape to Jersey and Miss Skipwith from the Captain implicitly defends writing and a refusal to adhere to social convention.

As with Braddon's other metafictional novels, the marriages in *Vixen* are integral to the representation of the home and gender stereotypes.[131] I suggest that this can be extended to include Mabel as, when she marries Lord Mallow, Mabel might have stopped being a poet but has achieved her desired marriage, her control of estate management, and involvement in politics. She left 'feminine humdrum [and] assists in the composition of her husband's political pamphlet, which bristle with lines of Euripides, and noble thoughts from the German poets. She writes a good many of his letters, and is altogether his second self' (*V*, III: p. 165). Echoing Stella and Antonia, Mabel had a classical education and her political knowledge exceeds that of the male characters. Mabel initially appears as an anti-feminist character, but through criticising social conventions and the masculine, aristocratic literary marketplace surrounding her, *Vixen* defends the commercialised, professional literary sphere. Braddon constructs Mabel's political prowess and education as wasted by being misdirected into romantic poetry by social convention.[132] In *Vixen* Braddon endows women in the household or estate management roles with power constructing it as a career, rather than negating or dismissing domestic work.

As discussed throughout the thesis, Braddon's fictional writers assume a more political dimension when the novels in which they appear are seen in their literary context as

[131] Knowles draws connections across the novels between Violet's marriage to Rorie and Diana's and Charlotte's marriages in *Charlotte's Inheritance* arguing that, 'Braddon portrays admirable marriages as those which draw on the cultural experience of each spouse and blend them satisfactorily'. See Knowles, 'The French Connection', p. 173. On Braddon's constructions of marriage see in the 1870s more generally see Liggins, 'Her Mercenary Spirit'.
[132] On the sense of waste see Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.

serialised fictions.[133] The dialogue between *Vixen* and the surrounding content in *All the Year Round* was important in constructing the novel's stance in the politics of the periodical press and, as discussed in chapter one, echoing Braddon's use of 'Conductor' of *Belgravia*.[134] The serialisation was also influential in Braddon's engagement in social politics in the 1880s, particularly the marriage market. Two particularly pertinent poems were published alongside *Vixen* in *All the Year Round*, 'In the Conservatory' (18 January 1879), and 'The Task' (22 February 1879).[135] Excessive floral imagery, 'The passion-flowers o'er her bright head dropped', 'Great crimson fuchsia bells', roses, violets and 'white lilies', echoes Mabel repeatedly depicted in a conservatory amid orchids.[136] Reflecting the binary between the two women, there are also 'flying feet, flushed cheeks, and sparkling eyes' whilst in the very same instalment, Violet emphatically declares that she rejects society making excuses for refusing all invitations.[137] However, the true division in the poem is between 'the happy dream of youth and love' and an illustration of 'a pale girl stood alone, Where withered tendrils choked a fountain's lip'.[138] The poem's fear of not achieving marriage and losing 'spring and beauty' compliments Braddon's social commentary and heightens the implicit strategy behind Mabel's marriage to Lord Mallow. 'The Task' stands between the instalment of *Vixen* and the article 'Wild Irish Weddings'.[139] *Vixen* ended with the line, 'Christmas came with its festivities, all of a placid and eminently well-bred character', immediately followed by the poem's opening lines:

> Life's school has many tasks we all must learn,
> Lessons, of faith and patience, hope and love;
> […] Hardest of all the masters we must hear.
> Experience, with cold eyes and measured voice.[140]

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[133] As identified in chapter one, Braddon's gender constructions shift through her extensive career reflecting how, as Pykett argues, 'nineteenth-century discourses on woman were deeply contradictory […] These contradictions and instabilities constitutes the ideological matrix within which and by which the women's sensation novel and the New Woman writing were produced'. See Lyn Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, p. 19.
[134] *All the Year Round* and Dickens more broadly are prominent in book history criticism. As discussed in the introduction, Dickens was central to Patten's work asking 'What is a Book?, but Dickens is also prominent in influential works on serialisation and the periodical press including Feltes, Edwards, and Sutherland. See Patten, 'Dickens as Serial Author', Feltes, *Modes of Production*, Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*, and Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction*.
[135] Presumably coincidentally and ironically both poems contain the image of a violet. The image arguably foregrounds the prevalence of the literary device, but also the unstable relationship between Vixen and the social convention she rails against.
[136] 'In the Conservatory', *All the Year Round*, 18 January 1879, p. 106 (l. 1).
[137] Ibid., l. 10.
[138] Ibid., ll. 12–14.
[139] 'The Task', *All the Year Round*, 22 February 1879, p. 288 and 'Wild Irish Weddings', *All the Year Round*, 22 February 1879, pp. 228–233.
[140] 'The Task', *All the Year Round*, ll. 1–4.

The poem powerfully reflects the restraints of society imposed on young women such as Violet and Mabel. The threat and physicality of society is palpable arguably drawing parallels between 'the masters' and Vixen's stepfather exerting control over their family. Readers saw 'The Task' published alongside Mabel being forced to participate in the marriage market, to undertake her task.

Arguably, most powerfully resonating with Braddon's metafictional novel, on 8 March 1879 *All the Year Round* contained an article entitled 'Idle Women' pondering the employment of women:

> The irrepressible women of the upper classes appear for the most part to write novels; a safety-valve of which they can avail themselves without any special training. But to every ten of these there are a hundred or two whose capacities never have fair play; who never throw off the incubus of an artificial education, and of a conventional code of life, sufficiently to find out the gift that is in them and the work they were intended to do.[141]

The article is perhaps tongue-in-cheek but speaks of high-class women as trapped by social conventions accentuating aspects of Mabel's character when read alongside *Vixen*. Their proximity adds a more sinister undertone to Rorie's words, '"I can fancy no affliction greater than an ambitious wife. No. My poor mother left Mabel her orchids. Mabel will confine her ambition to orchids and literature. I believe she writes poetry, and some day she will be tempted to publish a small volume, I daresay"' (*I*, I: p. 315). Braddon aligns Mabel's poetry with orchids and Greek choruses symbolising the restrictive 'artificial educations' and 'conventional code of life' imposed by her family and Victorian society. Placing Mabel as Vixen's opposite intensifies *Vixen's* dialogue with contemporary social conventions and trends in fiction. In *Vixen*, Miss Skipwith left the 'feminine inanity of needle-work' (*V*, III: p. 43) and Mabel left 'feminine humdrum' (*V*, III: p. 165).

## 'The domestic affairs of two households'

In *The Lady's Mile*, *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Hostages to Fortune*, and *Vixen*, the characters are not models of success in the literary profession – arguably the opposite for much of each novel – yet the fictional writers defend a pragmatic economical approach to writing and embrace the practicalities of professional authorship. The metafictional novels face and understand the barriers erected by the Victorian marriage market, domestic responsibilities, and a capitalised profession, particularly those faced by women writers. Yet

[141] 'Idle Women', *All the Year Round*, 8 March 1879, pp. 274–277.

Braddon champions the independence, voice, and authority offered to writers such as herself through the literary marketplace. Despite predominantly depicting male fictional writers, Braddon's novels dramatise the 'competing pulls' placed on women authors. The landscape of private spheres, public spaces, and geographical locations illustrate the tensions between a writer, Victorian society, and the literary context. Braddon's novels do not entirely support idealised representations of authorship and romanticised representations of the home or marriage, nor do they emphatically reject those narrative conventions and take a definite feminist stance. Braddon fictionalised the dual liberties and restrictions inherent in Victorian codes of conduct, household management, and the profession offering a more complex, interesting, and revealing insight into the experience of women writers.

**The Public: Braddon, Maxwell, and the Middlemen**

Braddon's son writes that,

> With my memory of all this there mingles a strong odour of printer's ink. Somebody had given us a toy printing press, and we were busy with it in the nursery—my brother Gerald as master printer, and the rest of us as printer's devils. The task was to print in the top right-hand corner of a lot of sheets of manuscript paper the title of the novel which my mother had just started writing. It was the one word "Vixen". We had pretended that it would enormously facilitate her work if she had the title printed for her; and she sweetly encouraged our pretense, and would come into the nursery asking for further supplies. We doled them out to her, two or three sheets at a time, concealing, I am ashamed to say, the masses of paper that we had destroyed in the process of "machining."[142]

Braddon dramatised the collaborations fundamental to nineteenth-century authorship. As the previous section discussed, professional authors wrote within the house, a site of collision between public and private, and financial demands and emotional pressures. This section considers the vital collaborations beyond the house to create the physical book. As Easley argues, 'an investigation of women's authorship necessarily begins with an exploration of the periodical medium itself, which enabled women's literary careers in a number of significant ways'.[143] Braddon's novels include narratives surrounding the practicalities of publishing; the

[142] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 280.
[143] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p. 2. Krueger examines how Broughton used John Maxwell and *Temple Bar* to establish a place within the literary marketplace and bring her fiction to the public gaze. See Krueger, *British Women Writers and the Short Story, 1850–1903*.

need for agents, publishers' readers, the physicality of the book, anonymity or pseudonyms, prices, and reception. As discussed in the introduction, connections can be drawn between the nineteenth-century practicalities of publishing and Genette's term paratext, the physical entities and correspondence surrounding a text.[144] Braddon's fictions were surrounded by letters, transactions, fictions, poems, and advertisements, practicalities and materials which her novels fictionalise. Braddon's interest in the dynamics between author, agent, and publisher extended throughout her extensive career, reflecting the constant changes in publishing practices, readerships, and collaborations. Braddon worked within a range of publishing systems, including monthly serialisation in periodicals such as *Belgravia* and *All the Year Round*; weekly serialisation in *Temple Bar*, *St. James's Magazine*; newspaper syndicates; volume editions with publishers such as Maxwell himself, Lock and Tyler, and Simkin; and, finally, one volume novels. But it was tinted with the risks of dominance and confinement by agents and publishers, to which women writers were particularly vulnerable.[145] In the novels, the domestic and professional dynamic exists amidst the larger marketplace of interactions that form the literary product.

This section examines the dual opportunities and restrictions at the heart of the Victorian publishing industry, a duality present in Braddon's metafictional novels. As Carnell and Law discuss, the cartoon 'The Mask' was symptomatic of 'a perception in the London literary world that Maxwell was a hard taskmaster (adept at exploiting female writers and appropriating their work)'.[146] However, alongside many other "Queens of Sensation fiction",

> while Braddon was generally content to conform to the financial and ideological demands of the fiction marketplace, she was also quite capable of using popular fiction paradigms to challenge specific social and sexual prejudices.[147]

For Braddon writing and money were both palpably in conflict, yet synonymous and, as Costantini describes, she 'established provocative connections between writing and money' in her fiction.[148] Extended through her career the dual sense of liberty and inequality changed as the numbers of professional women increased in the 1880s and 90s. For instance, Braddon herself remained editor of *Belgravia* until 1876, her double readerships continued, and, as

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[144] Genette, *Paratexts*. On the definition of 'paratext' and the periodical see *Encounters in the Victorian Press*.
[145] Concentrating on the scandals Hadjiafxendi draws parallels between Braddon and Eliot and their public and private literary collaborations: 'The protective roles of Lewes and Maxwell in both controversies also raises questions concerning the way the professional identity of women writers was still mediated through their partners'. See Hadjiafxendi, 'Negotiating Fame', p. 203.
[146] Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'.
[147] Ibid., p. 158.
[148] Wagner explores Trollope's and Oliphant's metafictional representations of authors and the other professions offered to readers as alternatives trying to solve the conflicts between finance and literary ability, including preachers and stock-brokers. See Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions'.

discussed in chapter one, her short stories contributed to her social politics. As will be further explored in chapter four, Braddon alongside many prominent women writers continued to challenge the pervading Victorian literary gender (im)balance in various genres, as authors, journalists, and as editors at the end of the century.[149]

Reflecting her intimate understanding, Braddon's fictional representations of professional literary collaborations differ across her novels, typifying the constant fluctuations in the mode of publication and the gender dynamics in the second half of the nineteenth century.[150] In *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* Valentine works within a diverse range of collaborative relationships reflecting his contradictory motivations for authorship. Herman Westray participates in dynamic collaborations within the theatrical and literary spheres in *Hostages to Fortune,* allowing Braddon to examine the experience of the professional woman through the voice of an actress in Myra. Both of these fictional authors publish a multitude of forms of writing reflecting Braddon's complex and diverse modes of collaboration as both author and editor; Valentine and Herman work within unstable collaborative systems. The fictional women writers are more limited in their modes of writing and collaboration, but these novels contain very physical depictions of the process of publication and editing. In *Vixen,* Mabel's editor, publisher, and agent are domineering and the gender difference exacerbates the idea of the 'middleman'.[151] In *One Thing Needful* Braddon used Stella's publication and interactions with Victorian Lashmar, Mr Mallow, Mr Allan, and Jem Busby to narrate the problematic collaborations at the heart of professional authorship. Both *One Thing Needful* and *Vixen* represent the increasingly liberated position of women writers in the literary world. However, these novels were also published by Braddon working within a male-dominated collaborative relationship with the Maxwells working with the Tillotsons and their newspaper syndicate. In this section I will ask how much independence or creative freedom is found by the fictional writers and how far they are

[149] On the trajectory into the fin de siècle see Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters,* Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), and Ann Heilmann and Valerie Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti": Femininity, Anti-feminism, and the Victorian Woman Writer', *Feminisms and Print Culture, 1830–1930s, in the Digital Age. Women's Studies International Forum,* 29.3 (June 2006), 289–300.

[150] Wagner explores Trollope's and Oliphant's metafictional representations of authors and the other professions offered to readers as alternatives trying to solve the conflicts between finance and literary ability, including preachers and stock-brokers. See Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions'.

[151] Law discusses the material history of publishing, including of *One Thing Needful*, addressing the friction between female authors and 'middlemen', book publishers, newspaper proprietors, journals editors, or library owners. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press.*

constrained by agents, editors, and publishers. Just as Braddon constructed household management as integral to professional authorship, so was collaboration.

Unlike many of Braddon's other fictional writers Valentine Hawkehurst is not depicted working with a publisher or editor in as detailed a manner in *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*. However, he is depicted among '[t]he young littèrature of the present day [who] has not such a very hard fight for a livelihood', unlike the "giant boys" with epic poems who, Braddon claims, 'needs must "perish in their pride," or stoop to the drudgery of office or counting-house' (*BoP*, 10: p. 209).[152] In *Birds of Prey* the ambitious geniuses are condemned to failure and drudgery rather than the hacks. Valentine briefly allies himself with the Ragamuffins, a literary association whose headquarters are in Gray's tavern: one of whom is in the 'dramatic-author line, who was reading the morning criticism on a rival's piece the night before, with a keen enjoyment of every condemnatory sentence' (*BoP*, 7: p. 275). In moments like this Braddon unashamedly teases the literary community by placing the Ragamuffins among the young *littèrature* against the giant boys. Valentine, ironically, declares himself a genius but as an employee is 'going in for unlimited pen and ink like a hero' and earning twenty shillings a week for spending and romantic love (*BoP*, 5: p. 21). Costantini argues that 'Braddon's commercialized writer infringes no sacred rules; he just accepts a part in a capitalist system within which he develops through hard work and perseverance'.[153] His contradictory relationship with work, as hard working and with a bourgeois taste, is present in his declaration that, '"I can dine one day on truffled turkey and champagne, another day upon bread and cheese and small beer"' (*BoP*, 3: p. 265). In *The Doctor's Wife*, Sigismund Smith retaliates against his critics by using a 'gallon of ink' to write the murders in his novels, but Valentine and the Ragamuffins name the opposition, openly enjoying earning money through their hard work. In *Charlotte's Inheritance*, '[Valentine] was pelted with more mud, flung by nameless assailants hidden behind the hedges [but] happily he found pleasant fellow-travellers and kindly encouragement from an indulgent public' (*CI*, 10: p. 442). In a review, Braddon is described as showing '"a wonderful fellow-feeling with this literary freebooter, and is very noisily angry with the imaginary critics who set their faces against him"'.[154] In many such reviews Braddon's fictional writers are read as aimed at the gentlemen in the press who desire to be distanced

[152] On the myth of sacrifice for fame see Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*.
[153] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 115.
[154] 'Charlotte's Inheritance', *Saturday Review*, 4 April 1868, pp. 458–460 (p. 459). On reviews of *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* see Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 145.

from her and other women writers. Braddon has crafted her own literary colleagues and 'assailants'.

Importantly, the most detailed understanding of employment as a writer is fictionalised through the process of writing as a detective. *Birds of Prey* can be read as a precursor for *Thou Art the Man* (1894) in which Coralie Urquhart writes as a diarist for herself and official accounts as a detective for her father, and *His Darling Sin*'s detective and novelist. In his role of detective Valentine writes two publications. One is a personal one for himself charting his more emotional experience as he uncovers the inheritance plot and one is an edited version for Philip Sheldon, his employer, which is a change of tone and adaption of the details: one in a 'free-and-easy fashion for my own guidance, and [one] in a more precise and business-like style for my employer' (*BoP*, p. 168). Written and sent to his employer daily, these narratives are arguably serialised instalments, echoing the nature of writing for a periodical and their particular audience. Phegley places *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance* in the context of Braddon's metafiction, arguing that her 'Belgravian strategy [was] to define the relationship between women readers and sensationalism rather than try to live up to the standards of realism'.[155] Phegley's reading of the intimate dialogue between Braddon's novels and *Belgravia*'s political stance emphasises the importance of viewing Braddon's novels as both serialised fiction and volume novels.[156]

Braddon's final Belgravian metafictional exploration of the literary marketplace takes place in a theatrical sphere. Interestingly, Herman's professional collaborations with periodicals are not as explicitly narrated as his interactions with actors, managers, and owners of theatres.[157] In *Hostages to Fortune* Myra is openly cast as financially savvy and, in an interesting gender reversal, predominantly the one who exerts demands on Herman for scripts; as Costantini identifies, the 'two professionals appear as hard-working figures, endowed with talent and capable of conquering the public sphere'.[158] Despite their successful and vibrant collaboration, Myra is, in part, employed as a voice for the intense and

[155] Ibid., p. 137. Phegley argues that Braddon 'abandoned Isabel Gilbert to create an independent women who could read more skilfully and critically than anyone around her'. Ibid. As discussed in the introduction, the concept of an individual reader's gaze is important in research on the periodical press.
[156] Anne DeWitt also argues that, 'The imbrication of the novel and the periodical press was so indelible that even those authors who did not issues their works in serial form were nevertheless still entangled within its capacious cultural reach'. See Anne DeWitt, 'Gender and Genre in Reviews of the Theological Novel', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 442–455 (p. 397).
[157] On Braddon's dramatisations of the theatre and adaptations of those novels for the stage see Lindemann, 'Dramatic Disappearances'.
[158] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, pp. 123–4.

unrelenting pressure upon Braddon to write for financial gain and satisfy the professional demands of Maxwell. Yet simultaneously, Myra can be seen as holding a position of authority in the theatrical sphere, analogous to the position of editor and echoing Braddon's prominence as *Belgravia*'s 'Conductor'.[159]

In the 1870s, charges of personal profligacy and of what was presented as a promiscuous desire to fulfil reader demands was the crux of antipathy to Braddon's work. Herman resorts to borrowing, implicitly plagiarising, to meet the unrelenting demand for his work.[160] The explanation that, '[t]his sense of absolute need of incessant work [means] he is obliged to resort to other men's inventions for suggestions' can surely been read as Braddon expressing the burden placed on her (*HF*, 7: pp. 312–3). Debates on plagiarism recur in *Hostages to Fortune* and Herman and Myra discuss productions of French plays either as translations or adaptations in terms of morality and literary success. Myra is determined in defending her translation of a French play, *The Fallen Angel*, giving a strong sense of creative freedom being fought for. Importantly there is the gulf between the critic's and the audience's reactions, drawing a powerful connection between Myra and Braddon. Despite harsh criticism, *The Fallen Angel* is a huge financial success and, particularly her acting, is very popular. Myra gains the status of a celebrity; she creates a new fashion trend in the hat that she wears in the play. Just as with sensation fiction the images of consumption and addiction are intimately tied with the act of plagiarism and 'Myra Brandreth tastes the sweetness of artistic success. She drains the intoxicating cup greedily' (*HF*, 13: p. 95). Pedlar identifies Braddon's 'ambivalen[ce] about theatre as an environment for the virtuous heroine'.[161] Myra's case is key to the plot and the chapter begins with the foreboding that, '[t]here is a fatal kind of success which attends the desperate player in life's hazard' (*HF*, 13: p. 92). Myra displays addiction but she is surely also poisoned, arguably transferring a degree of the blame to her readers, to those who form and fund the popularity themselves. Myra's punishment at the end of the novel is confined to her emotional excess and personal deception, rather than professional conduct or theatrical collaborations.

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[159] Braddon's work with the contributors to *Belgravia*, including Dickens's Young Men, including Sala, will be discussed in chapter three.

[160] Concepts of plagiarism, translation, and morality will be discussed in relation to Braddon's novel *Circe* serialised in *Belgravia* under the pseudonym Babington White in chapter three.

[161] Pedlar, 'Behind the Scenes, Before the Gaze', p. 204. Pedlar continues arguing that 'By drawing on her theatrical experiences for the content of her novels, Braddon not only provides a flamboyant setting and characters, lending to the domestic the charm of the exotic, but she also conveys a moral message that is firmly grounded in traditional Christian values, however ambivalent she may be about theatre as an environment for the virtuous heroine'. Ibid.

Herman's collaborations and publication of his plays, his journalism, and his fiction bring pressure, creativity, popularity, and financial profit, in various combinations. As Costantini reads it, *Hostages to Fortune* narrates an author's career 'as [Herman] comes, like [Braddon], to terms with a market-orientated field of cultural production'.[162] With his final novel, Herman sees his writing and his gardening as leisure, yet is refused the approval of high-class critics and it is the most popular novel, therefore commercially successful, of his career. As discussed in terms of his household, Braddon does not simply align hard work and respectability with literary achievement. Nor does she equate leisure or 'genius' with artistic creativity and popularity. *Hostages to Fortune* fictionalises the constant conflicts between joy and pain, success and pressure, creativity and popularity as a professional author.

Echoing Braddon's engagement with Bulwer-Lytton in *The Lady's Mile* and with the "Fleshly School" of aestheticism with *Hostages to Fortune*, authors and their work are referenced throughout *Vixen*, most pertinently *Pickwick Papers* in the disputes over popularity. Rorie advocates for Bryon as a 'Prince of Poets', claiming that he would be proud of writing 'The Giaour': '"My poor Roderick!" exclaimed Mabel, with a pitying sigh. "You might as well say you would be proud of having written 'The Pickwick Papers'"' (*V*, III: p. 69). In reference to this passage Beller proposes that 'Braddon is clearly confident that her own readers will respond to Mabel's views as empty pretension and literary snobbery, since readers of the type of novel Braddon is writing are arguably likely to admire the fiction of Dickens also'.[163] Continuing her interaction as 'Conductor', Braddon deliberately and performatively placed her metafiction within the parameters of Dickens's legacy or reputation in the literary marketplace. Braddon strategically capitalised upon and manipulated the collaborative nature of the Victorian publishing world to influence her identity as an author in the public eye.

The collaborative nature of the literary marketplace is present within *Vixen*, yet it is a corruptive community and she is confined to the 'umbrageous avenues of Kensington Garden' (*V*, III: p. 66). Mabel's poetry is described as either 'diluted Hegelism', or 'a feeble imitation of Browning's obscurest verse' and published in an exaggerated display of class and taste, distancing itself from popularity and commodity (*V*, III: p. 66).[164] The published

[162] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 120.
[163] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 255. Beller's argument begins, 'Not only is Braddon implicitly questioning high-culture critical opinions that depreciate the work of popular writers such as Dickens, but she also expands here a philosophy of writing that places the reader's pleasure at the centre of the process'. Ibid.
[164] Mabel's words echo the oppositions between the artistic and the popular, between the moral and the entertaining, pervading the periodical press and references to other authors run throughout the novel; including,

volume is 'a gem of typographical art' with 'its depth of thought, its exquisite typography and vellum-like paper', embodying the qualities of an aesthetic creation rather than mechanised product (*V*, III: p. 77, p. 182).[165] Drawing attention to the impact of physical location and appearance, Ledbetter outlines how

> A volume of poetry elegantly bound often suggests an elite status, perhaps intended to display class and taste or to signify its place in class literature; if the individual poems appear in a periodical, their elite status is removed and they become the heavily commodified property of a mass readership who can perhaps afford only the cheapest newsstand reading.[166]

Ledbetter's reading of poetry links with *Vixen* as in many ways it is not the poetry that is at fault but the physical entity in which it is published and read. By lending Mabel's, and by extension Lord Mallow's, publishing technique a comedic or farcical tone Braddon allies readers with *Vixen* itself. Publishing a metafictional novel juxtaposing the collaborations surrounding her, Braddon gives a political edge to *Vixen*'s construction of the literary marketplace.

Intertwined with Mabel's poetry's physical form is the process of editing. Although there were burgeoning publication opportunities, perhaps seen in *Vixen*'s position in *All the Year Round*, Braddon implies an inevitable element of restriction to professional literary collaboration through her metafictional explorations of the editing process. Braddon powerfully depicts editors' and publishers' authority over a writer, a role she both received and carried out. As has been discussed, the term middlemen can be applied to *One Thing Needful*, but I suggest that Lord Mallow and Rorie are also middlemen; Mabel is at their mercy. Mabel's desire to be a romantic poet is foolish, but she is controlled by men, who, as seen earlier, vocally condemn ambitious women, particularly ambitious wives. Mallow claims to edit Mabel's manuscript ready for publication but fails to provide this service and instead his secretary cuts it, arguably, destroying her poetry. Echoing how Daniel Mayfield in *Dead-Sea Fruit* 'assumed the butcher's apron and armed himself with the deadly knife' (*D-SF*, 2: p. 257), Mr Allan 'sat far into the small hours, ploughing through "The Sceptic Soul" [...] This autopsy of a fine lady's poem was a congenial labour' (*V*, III: p, 75).[167] Mr Allan's

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Bryon, Rogers or Campbell, *Pickwick Papers*, Macaulay: 'Mabel remembered Brougham's savage onslaught upon the boy Byron' (*V*, III: p. 65) and, after the reviews, 'Lord Mallow gave a strong of names, sacrificing the most famous reputations of the age to Mabel Ashbourne's vanity' (*V*, III: p. 85).

[165] On theory and criticism on Victorian poetry in terms of modernism, Arnold, and Pre-Raphaelite aestheticism see Paula Bernat Bennett, *The Emancipatory Project of American Women's Poetry, 1800-1900* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[166] Ledbetter, *British Victorian Women's Periodicals*, p. 206.

[167] In *Dead-Sea Fruit*, 'Daniel the man was tender and courteous in his treatment of all womankind, but Daniel the racy essayist knew no mercy' (*D-SF*, I: p. 79).

editing is perhaps an entertaining image portraying Mabel as a deluded lady who writes poor poetry; yet, in tension with his 'congenial' experience, Mabel's intimate collaborator is untrained, violent, and intrusive. As a result, 'The Sceptic Soul' is harshly cut and pruned, a process almost as painful to Mabel as the reviews. Although she is financially detached from the professional sphere 'reviewers had ground the poor little aristocratic butterfly to powder upon the wheel of ridicule' and Mabel 'writhed under the criticism' (*V*, III: p. 82–3). As Beller argues, 'Mabel is not punished for being a woman who desires to write, but for her conceited denigration of popular writing and readerships'.[168] Mabel is not isolated in her rejection of popular writing, and a degree of responsibility is implicitly imposed on the middlemen.

Reading *Vixen* in dialogue with its surroundings offers an even more potently political and strategic angle to Braddon's writing. As discussed in the introduction and, as Brake writes, 'the spheres of the serial and the book were interdependent and […] the apparent separateness of the two spheres is mitigated by a profound interrelatedness'.[169] The dialogues within each issue of the periodical and the strategic continuum stretching across the serialisation are inextricably linked with how the book is read. As considered earlier in the chapter, many of *All the Year Round*'s articles and poems published alongside manipulate reader sympathy and perception regarding social conventions, but some also draw attention to the literary commentary within the novel.[170] On 21 December 1878, the article, 'Town-Bred Poets', holds forth on failures of poets writing on landscapes, revealing all of their mistakes and the 'rhymed trash' in newspapers.[171] 'The landscape school of poetry' and 'the sublimities of rural scenery' is placed in opposition to Greek and Roman poets who 'delighted in describing the actions of men and women', or 'as a cynic might say, "the hardest study"'.[172] Implicitly adopting the role of the 'cynic' the article's tone stands in opposition to Mabel's exaggerated and earnest declarations. *All the Year Round* contained recurring articles on Shakespeare, such as 'On the Origin of Hamlet' (8 February 1879) which declares that 'Shakespeare was wont to build upon the foundations laid by other hands'.[173] With echoes of the defence of translation and 'borrowing' in *Hostages to Fortune*,

[168] Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation', p. 257. Beller discusses in depth the differences in Mabel and Vixen's reading and relationships with it as readers. Ibid.
[169] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 3.
[170] As set out in chapter one, alongside, Braddon's novel, run the novels, *All or Nothing*, *My Land of Beulah* and *Sebastian Strome*.
[171] 'Town-Bred Poets', *All the Year Round*, 21 December 1878, pp. 8–12.
[172] Ibid., p. 8.
[173] 'On the Origin of Hamlet', *All the Year Round*, 8 February 1879, pp. 173–178.

the article could be seen as implicitly defending Braddon and querying what is deemed plagiarism. The 1 March 1879 number includes an overtly metafictional short story entitled 'The Poet's League: A Story' which tells of Henri and François; these poets are 'two pretty men; they lay in bed till the clock struck ten'.[174] Mabel is not the only fictional writer employed to comment upon literature in *All the Year Round*.

Braddon may have been defending the commercial literary marketplace with its collaborative processes as a route into professional authorship for women writers, nevertheless the physicalised depictions of editing and the restrictions imposed upon Mabel by male colleagues are palpable. Braddon makes Lord Mallow's domination in editing, choosing the publisher, designing the binding, decoration, paper, and business deals, powerfully obvious. *Vixen*'s defence of the professional literary sphere does not negate or remove the barriers erected against women writers. Braddon may be a highly successful writer implicitly ridiculing social conventions and literary stereotypes but *Vixen* also voices how Braddon is, to some extent, confined by Maxwell as her publisher and agent, directed by the editors at *All the Year Round*, and attacked by many reviewers. Just as in *The Doctor's Wife*, *The Lady's Mile*, *One Thing Needful*, and *The Infidel*, the disparity between the fictional writer inside the novel and the public personas associated with the publication heighten Braddon's undermining of the idealised high-class, female poet whilst fictionalising the process of publication. The literary figures within the novel are not in the commercial sphere but *Vixen* emphatically was. Readers of *All the Year Round* saw *Vixen* in conjunction with adverts, short stories, and articles, tangible evidence of the collaborative system behind the novel.[175]

*One Thing Needful* was also read within a commercial periodical, run by a newspaper syndicate, and, like Mabel, Braddon's fictional author is not firmly located within the commercial modes of production. Stella desires professional authorship, holding an arguably idealised image of her new life, and only realises as the novel progresses how dependent she is on the novel's male figures. Most prominent and influential, Nestorius, Victorian, Jem Busby, and a publisher's reader assume the roles of middlemen.[176] At a pivotal moment in the plot, Stella was thanking Nestorius for organising the publication of her novel, naïvely

[174] See 'The Poet's League', *All the Year Round*, 1 March 1879, pp. 254–260.
[175] As looked at in chapter one, the last few instalments of *Vixen* were accompanied by an advert for the volume form of the novel as well as the Summer Number of *All the Year Round* in which Braddon's work will be present. See 'Advertisement', *All the Year Round*, 14 June 1879, p. 620.
[176] Stella's father Mr Boldwood wrote letters to the *Independent*: as Mrs Chapman says, '"such letters! They lashed the Conservatives like a cat-o-nine-tails"' (*OTN*, II: p. 144).

hoping to achieve her long-held dream of 'liberty, which she had never known since her benefactor's death […] by the kindly aid of Mr. Nestorius' (*OTN*: II: pp. 61–2).[177] However, Victorian, who repeatedly casts Stella as ugly, even repulsive, and as an unworthy servant, accuses her of deceptive dealings with Nestorius to gain fortune, to save herself from the shame of being a factory girl, or as Stella describes it '"the bread of dependence"' (*OTN*: II, p. 116).[178] Stella may have the chance to publish her novel but is trapped between these two men's constructions of her, forced to effusively thank one and justify herself to the other, illustrating a vulnerability and accentuating her naivety. Even when Stella attempts to secure her sense of independence and 'cease to eat the "bread of charity"' in Brumm she must accept a degree of reliance on Jem Busby to act as as agent with the newspapers (*OTN*, II: p. 145). Stella may rebel against dependence and desire her liberty through her pen providing her income, but her writing is never seen as providing her with the means to buy bread.

*One Thing Needful* offers an insight into Braddon's view on authorship, but also a glimpse into her view of Victorian politics. Wolff identifies *One Thing Needful* as '[f]ar more political than any of its predecessors, [and it] showed MEB still strongly radical, but more obviously a Tory in politics than she had hitherto revealed herself'.[179] Mattacks sees 'Mr. Nestorius as a thinly disguised portrait of Gladstone' and Victorian 'a caricature of conservatism and Victorian values'.[180] The liberal conservatism echoes Braddon's membership in the female community of the Lady's Council of the Primrose League. Mattacks argues that, '[t]he narrative sympathy between Boldwood's radicalism and Lashmar's liberal conservatism is carefully balanced in order to appeal to the wider demographics of Braddon's readerships'.[181] Nestorius is believed to have been a poet and translator himself, but Stella is unable to criticise how Nestorius used his imagination rather than accurately translating; Stella is silenced.[182] Stella's reliance on these middlemen is exacerbated by how, as the novel unfolds, they spend many an hour in the public sphere

[177] Set in the library, this moment reinvents the scene earlier in the book in which Victorian and Clarice degrade her. Mattacks sees doubling between Stella and Clarice and Lady Lashmar's attempt to make a deal between Victorian and Clarice as indicative of Braddon' scathing satire on the Victorian marriage market'. See Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 222.
[178] In *The Lady's Mile*, Cecil also uses the phrase 'the bread of dependence' to speak of feeling trapped in a household and financial reliance of the acts of charity (*LM*, 3: p. 415).
[179] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 338.
[180] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 224. Gladstone returned as Prime Minister while *One Thing Needful* was being serialised.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Braddon's editing of novels was known about in some instances: for example her editing of Walter Scott was discussed in the *Saturday Review*. See 'Improvements on Scott', *Saturday Review*, 24 September 1881.

discussing Stella's writing, personality, and education in her absence.[183] Just as *Vixen*, *One Thing Needful* is peppered with author's names; Nestorius tells Victorian that '"three or four of the tribe rejected Miss Brontë's 'Jane Eyre,' and it is said that 'Vanity Fair' went a-begging [but Stella] has genius as original and unique as that of Charlotte Brontë"' (*OTN*, II: p. 194 and p. 204).[184] Echoing how Mabel is deceived, Stella's work is published but she is denied knowledge of editors' real opinions, the practicalities of the business dealings, and Nestorius' funding; Stella, unknowingly, is reliant upon an act of charity.[185] Stella is helped and hindered by her (uncertain) place in an 'aristocratic' sphere and detachment from the professional marketplace.

Victorian and Nestorius can be read as a doubling of Maxwell and Tillotson, and the conversations in the coffee-house a dramatization of their business negotiations. Just as Nestorius and Victorian had to pressurise the publisher, so Maxwell pressurised Tillotson to accept *One Thing Needful*. As discussed in chapter one, the relationship broke down during these dealings. Interestingly, R. E. Leader advised Tillotson not to 'to let Miss Braddon get "out of your hands all together"—and yet I think Mr Maxwell far too shrewd to let anything of that kind take place. But I quite agree with you that an annual tale from her pen would be quite too much'.[186] However, it was too late and Maxwell had already written a letter to Tillotson. Their working relationship and the combination of both friendship and professional collaboration collapsed. As Carnell and Law describe, the letters 'reveal a fluid mixture of commercial and social intercourse' with talk of family, costs, social invitations, publication dates and 'personal banter'; the final one almost 'amounts to almost a lover's farewell'.[187] Maxwell writes, 'as we really have a future I do not wish to lessen the confidence I have always felt in our relations [but] our dearest "Willie" [Wilkie Collins] pronounced the Degree of severance after long years of peaceful and pleasant servitude'.[188] Whilst the letters are

[183] As discussed earlier in relation to the home, their location in a coffee shop illustrates the divisions between the public and private spheres, demonstrating the importance of literary parties within the home for women writers. On the shifts through the century see Hughes, 'A Club of their Own'.
[184] On the myth surrounding Charlotte Brontë see Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*.
[185] Mr Nestorius returns from London with the story of '"one of the keenest publishers in town." […] "he declares the story is one of the finest things he has read by way of fiction for the last five years." […] 'Mr. Nestorius did not add that Stella's novel was to be produced at his expense, and that the clever West-end publisher had only risked—an opinion' (*OTN*, II: p. 67).
[186] Tillotson to R. E. Leader, 25 March 1888.
[187] Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 141.
[188] John Maxwell, 14 January 1888. There was a form of a future with Braddon selling some rights to the Tillotsons sons in the 1890s including five short stories in the 1890s. Law gives a comparative study on Braddon and Collins, particularly on their work with provincial syndicates, 'their complex relations with the new literary middlemen in the light of their earlier careers', their bohemian sets and fame as sensation fiction writers. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, p. 170.

indicative of business and affection, Carnell and Law suggest that the discourse 'can also be read as an allegory of gender relationships in the later Victorian literary world'.[189] The middlemen stand in the foreground as agents and publishers, and the women sit in the background occupied in writing and sewing.[190] The instability of the gendered roles is epitomised in how, highly ironically, after the incapacitation and death of their husbands, Mary Tillotson and Mary Elizabeth Braddon took over the Fiction Bureau and negotiated publishing deals respectively.[191] It is difficult to know exactly how much control Braddon had over Maxwell's letter and over the negotiations over prices, publishing rights, and periodical choices. But Braddon undoubtedly used her fiction, particularly her metafiction, to exert criticism and rebellion against the restrictions faced by Victorian women writers.

As discussed in part two, Braddon addressed the symbiosis of literary work and home management in her novels, and marriage is also instrumental in her construction of fictional writers. Indeed, Sarah Grand writes, '"The Woman Question is the Marriage Question"'.[192] Developing the connections drawn between Maxwell and the 'middlemen' in *One Thing Needful* is Victorian's and Stella's marriage. Although Stella initially occupies a conventionally subservient role in a high-class home, often illustrated sewing, reading aloud, and writing, she ends the novel with status and marriage hand-in-hand with independent wealth and a popular novel, rather than sacrifice for aesthetic value. Mattacks argues that a 'Cinderella-like Stella' is the centre of Braddon questioning female autonomy within the patriarchal family; her journey from orphan to writer to wife offers 'a rare glimpse into Braddon's complex political stance'.[193] Braddon writes explicitly that their wedding is tied to the class politics *One Thing Needful* challenges: Stella's and Victorian's marriage was 'an union of hearts that had grown to each other unawares, overstepping all boundaries of rank and circumstance' (*OTN*, II: p. 276–7).[194] Stella may return to the patriarchal home, but has gained a sense of power through exerting choice refusing to return until receiving an

[189] Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"', p. 141.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Mary Tillotson's hobby was also collecting famous writers' signatures. Another example of a widow taking over a publishing business is Mary Harrison who briefly took on the *Sheffield Times* after her husband died, although few women were. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, p. 160.
[192] Sarah Grand, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', *North American Review*, March 1894, pp. 270–276 (p. 276).
[193] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 224.
[194] Their marriage chimes with those in *Vixen* and can arguably be placed among Knowles' concept of Braddon's 'admirable marriages'. See Knowles, 'The French Connection', p. 173.

invitation from Lady Lashmar to enter the home.[195] Arguably, Stella questions the power that the 'middlemen' exert on her by marrying Victorian and gaining a degree of social authority.

The biographical element to the novel, with Stella marrying one of the middlemen, contributes to the idea of an insight into Braddon's personal views in conjunction with social and literary politics.[196] Importantly, Stella's request to be published anonymously is met and neither the publisher nor the reading public knew her identity.[197] Most poignantly, Stella's novel 'would tell its own story'; her desire for anonymity can be read as Braddon's fight against her own public identity (*OTN*, II: p. 49). Mattacks argues that Stella shows 'the tension between Braddon's public image borne of a desire to write and a deep-rooted fear of the connections that were drawn between the material and the writer. As a result, Braddon's style is carefully posed between expression and repression'.[198] *One Thing Needful* was written in a period of huge change in Braddon's life as the Maxwells established Annesley House and their country estate as well as moved between publishing houses and agents. Braddon's domestic and professional spheres and daily life underwent a remarkable reinvention, including the collaborations fundamental to her professional authorship. In the midst of Braddon and Maxwell's change in publishing practice and patterns, and personal lives, I argue that a metafictional novel with a fictional writer as its heroine can be read as Braddon offering her readers a comment on the practicalities, barriers, and successes of literary collaborations in the 1880s.

After Maxwell's death in 1896, Braddon assumed greater responsibility and control over the publishing. According to her son, '[s]he bought the paper, gave orders to printers and binder, and finally sent the bound and wrappered books to Simpkin, Marshall, and Company for distribution', novels including *His Darling Sin*.[199] At the heart of the detective

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[195] Gilbert and Gubar examines the metaphor of the house in nineteenth-century literary arguing that due to the entrapment of Victorian women in men's houses women's writing is pervaded by 'spatial imagery of enclosure and escape'. See Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1979/Yale: Yale Nota Bene Press, 2000), p. 83.

[196] Victorian fulfils the role of Stella's adoptive father's brother (uncle), 'middleman', and then husband. Johnson suggests that the 'difficulty of distinguishing between the father and husband [in *Eleanor's Victory* (1863)] might owe something to Braddon's liaison with and then marriage to John Maxwell', but also the 'fatherly hand that directs the course of the daughter's narrative in [*Eleanor's Victory* (1863) and *Thou Art the Man* (1894)] finds its type in Braddon's manipulative early patron, John Gilby, […] who had to be cast off for Braddon to forge her own fictional and actual plots' and who Wolff describes as 'an anxious authoritarian father'. See Johnson, 'Electra-fying the Female Sleuth'.

[197] Stella's novel is firstly assumed to be by a male author, but *One Thing Needful* ends, 'There was, however, a small section of the reading public—chiefly women—who knew by a fine instinct that this story could have been written only by a woman; since only to a woman is Love the One Thing Needful' (*OTN*, II: p. 280). Both of the other writers in *One Thing Needful* are published under pseudonyms, however; Captain as Mrs Vavasour and Lady Sophia as 'Spur-Box', interestingly both gender reversals.

[198] Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret', p. 227.

[199] Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 144.

plot Faunce's tactical use of the periodical press demonstrates the power of the press to simultaneously create scandal and disprove accusations. Mattacks argues that, 'through the detective Faunce, Braddon depicts her own acceptance of her complicity in the construction of her public image'.[200] Faunce understands the public nature of society as he says, '"it is necessary that Lady Perivale be publicly insulted, in order that she may be publicly justified"' (*HDS*, p. 81). Arthur Haldane may be the published author and writer for the Quarterly, but it is the detective who is old friends with Brown Smith, proprietor and editor of *Bon Ton and Cricket Review* and, in collaboration with one of the ladies for the gossip column, Faunce wrote 'three atrocious paragraphs' to be published next to the 'usual short story of the ultrasmart world' (*HDS*, p. 86). Only with material proof of society's accusations and a specific culprit to take to court can her innocence be defended. Faunce acted with valid and professional intentions but, unbeknownst to her, Lady Perivale's hundred guineas paid for those 'three atrocious paragraphs' lending a dark, threatening tone to his actions and the periodical press itself. Expressing the physical pain of libel, Kate Dalmaine, almost pitifully, says, '"I'm a lady, Mr. Faunce, and I loathe being mugged about in the newspapers"' (*HDS*, p. 97). Faunce also rescues Kate Dalmaine through Lady Perivale's wealth, but the actress ends behind the scenes in Ventnor rather than being restored to the stage. Haldane also has an impassioned reaction to the libel and desires to lash out at those writing these defamatory words about the woman loves. The network of figures in *His Darling Sin* creates a microcosm of how Braddon's and Maxwell's reputations were simultaneously at the mercy of the press and strategically constructed by their own hands. In *His Darling Sin*, Lady Perivale stands among the rational, tactical detective John Faunce, the impulsive novelist and husband Arthur Haldane, the actress and her double Kate Dalmaine and a wider web of readers, writers, detectives, and editors.

## 'A Strong Odour of Printer's ink'

*Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Hostages to Fortune*, *Vixen*, *One Thing Needful*, and *His Darling Sin* fictionalise the necessity of collaboration for publication at the heart of the literary marketplace. These novels showcase how the politics and processes behind every piece of writing is integral to Victorian literature, a position elaborated in periodicals studies and scholarship on the history of the book, as established in the introduction. Easley argues

[200] Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', p. 213. Mattacks suggests that in *His Darling Sin*, Braddon uses the process to show how 'her public image was as manufactured as her novels'. Ibid.

that an 'understanding of the complexity of Victorian authorship may cause us to re-think our assumptions of literary authority and power'.[201] The metafictional depictions shifted across her career as Braddon moved in the literary and social spheres concurrently with the constant evolutions in the process of publication and therefore collaborations in the periodical press. *The Infidel* can be seen as a pertinent reflection of the final shift in Braddon's mode of writing, publishing, and collaborating with the literary marketplace. Bringing together the collaborations within the pages of the novel and the collaborations surrounding the novel themselves offers a complex picture of the multi-faceted profession in which Braddon actively participated. The regular disparity between the fictional depictions and the literary networks Braddon herself moved within reflects her acceptance and resistance to the publishing world. Her fictional writers exemplify Braddon's enterprise in dramatising and challenging the impositions and barriers faced by Victorian authors, most powerfully, women writers.

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As this chapter has demonstrated Braddon's fictional authors provided her readers with an intimate understanding of an author's profession. Braddon's depictions confront the physical and emotional costs of writing, utilising images such as luggage for the burden imposed on authors. The households created in the novels defend, even champion the influence carried by household management; Braddon narrates the interdependence of the literary profession and the household as businesses. Braddon's marriage was inextricably linked to her position in the literary marketplace and public identity. Hence, the romances and marriages in these novels are important in understanding Braddon's constructions of authorship, as well as her gender politics more generally. Braddon's characters do not embody an idealised narrative of publishing illustrating instead many of the barriers and restrictions imposed upon writers, particularly female authors. Yet the fictional authors also portray the liberations and freedoms available to writers such as herself who were at the forefront of gaining authority for female authors through the second half of the nineteenth century. By constructing collaborations Braddon dramatised the conflicts and contradictions pervading the profession. My research also considers how the novels themselves were in dialogue with the periodicals they were published within. Participating in the literary culture Braddon's fictional authors portray

[201] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p. 6.

aspects of both her own life and the lives of those around her through the second half of the nineteenth century. By following a writer and their work through the process of writing, the household in which they wrote, and the collaborations through which they published, we can see Braddon's remarkable illustration of the practicalities of authorship in the nineteenth century. The desk, the house, and the public are united by an understanding of words as daily bread.

# Chapter Three

## ‘Briskest in all the Magazines is BELGRAVIA’: Braddon as *Belgravia*’s ‘Conductor’ and *Dead-Sea Fruit*’s Author

On Tuesday 27 November 1866 one hundred guests gathered in Langham Hotel to celebrate the launch of *Belgravia: A London Magazine*. The guest list included dramatists, journalists, and writers, many of whom were Maxwell’s and Braddon’s loyal contributors and friends.[1] Speeches were not given but the evening was a lively affair with a dinner and ended with songs.[2] Among the guests were national and provincial journalists, one of which, from the *Western Morning News*, declared that ‘[a]nother very agreeable feature in the entertainment was the presence of ladies, who mustered in considerable force, and gave a pleasant relief to the broad expanse of black coats and white ties’.[3] *Belgravia* also burst onto the literary scene with a court case involving Maxwell and the Messrs. Hogg each filing an injunction against the other for using *Belgravia* for their magazine’s title. As *The Times* reported, Maxwell’s main justification appears to be considerable financial costs:

> MR. DICKINSON and MR. SWANSTON appeared for Mr. Maxwell, and contended that he had, by his expenditure in the preparation of the magazine, and by advertising [on monster posters] its intended publication, acquired a right of the exclusive use of the term *Belgravia* as the title of a magazine.[4]

The case ended with both claims being immediately dismissed; however, Maxwell achieved success with what Palmer describes as a ‘publicity stunt’ and Mr Hogg’s magazine, *Belgravia: A Magazine of Fashion and Amusements*, only lasted for five numbers.[5] *Belgravia* began with a petty argument and a celebrity dinner.

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[1] Missing were George Augustus Sala and Charles Kent.
[2] For extended discussions on the launch see Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, pp. 174–5 and Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 58.
[3] ‘From Our London Correspondent’, *Western Morning News*, 30 November 1866, p. 4.
[4] ‘Law Report’, *The Times*, 16 January 1867, p. 11. Phegley discusses Braddon’s slight apprehension on becoming very visibly advertised as editor expressed in letters to Bulwer-Lytton and describing her name ‘“blazoned anon on hoardings and railway stations”’. See Phegley, ‘“Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule”’, p. 151. For the letter see Wolff, ‘“Devoted Disciple”’, p. 136.
[5] As Palmer describes, as well as “blazoned” on “hoardings & railway stations”, [Braddon’s name] was printed in the sober pages of the highbrow *Athenaeum*, and published in a myriad of locations in between’. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 58.

As discussed in the introduction, Genette's concept of 'textual paratext' refers to the multiple physical entities constructing a book.[6] Genette includes items such as the preface and dedications, but the physical entities creating a nineteenth-century periodical can also be usefully constructed as paratextual.[7] The *DNCJ* identifies how, 'there is little doubt that [the paratextual matter] formed a crucial element of the way in which serials and periodicals were experienced by their first readers'.[8] As considered in earlier chapters, influential critics including Brake, Law, Weedon, Easley, Gill, and Rogers undo the concept of a Victorian novel as an isolated entity and it is this perspective from which I will consider Braddon, *Belgravia*, and *Dead-Sea Fruit*.[9] This chapter aims to draw together Braddon research and periodical research more widely by suggesting that the paratextual is crucial to understanding both Braddon's novels particularly her metafiction, and *Belgravia*. As Brake writes, '[i]t is a mistake to construct the nineteenth-century book as a stand-alone commodity'.[10]

Chapter three will explore the influence of seriality, demands of the literary marketplace, and power balances within the literary marketplace in Braddon's career and as dramatised in her metafictional novels. Patten sets out the importance of seeing serialised novels' collaborative nature and contextual setting:

> Serials are topical both specifically and more generally; And serials interact, during the course of production, with a wide variety of readers whose responses impact successive instalments.[11]

From a gendered perspective, Easley, Gill, and Rogers consider how, '[t]he press as a publishing venue functioned symbolically and materially in different ways for Victorian women whether they were considered "great" in their time or not'.[12] There is a continuous dialogue between Braddon and reviewers, journalists, and correspondents, and between the novels and their surroundings within *Belgravia* itself, both internal and external conversations. Braddon offers a valuable insight into the collaborations and commodification within the Victorian periodical.

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[6] Genette focuses on what he defines as the 'textual paratext', as opposed to the factual, including the name of the author, dedications and inscriptions, the preface, and the public epitext. See Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 7.
[7] Ibid.
[8] 'Paratexts', *DNCJ*, p. 480.
[9] See works such as Brake, *Print in Transition*, Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*, and *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900s.*
[10] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 30.
[11] Patten, 'Dickens as Serial Author', pp. 150–1. Patten identifies how 'annotated editions for modern classrooms use often pick up particular references but neglect the general ideological and aesthetic resonances'. Ibid.
[12] Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers, 'Constructing Women Readers and Writers: Introduction', p. 395.

**DEAD-SEA FRUIT**

***A Novel***

**By the Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," etc.**

I have selected *Dead-Sea Fruit* as a case study as the most extensive exploration of the literary marketplace and the network between writers in Braddon's metafiction. My chapter will consider in more specific terms the conversation between reviews, advertisements, Braddon's novels, and *Belgravia*'s articles. Costantini describes *Dead-Sea Fruit* as a 'text that hyper-codifies the literary marketplace and the periodical press as sites of conflicting needs and aspirations'.[13] Importantly, *Dead-Sea Fruit* is published in *Belgravia* therefore offering a valuable opportunity to consider Braddon's metafictional marketplace in intimate dialogue with her position as both editor and author, working alongside her lover Maxwell, the owner of the periodical. As considered in chapter two, personal and public identities were particularly tense for women writers, arguably particularly women editors.[14]

The prominent role of other contributors' work in Braddon's conversation with her critics and her readers in tandem with her own writing should not be underestimated or ignored. Braddon employed influential writers, including many of Dickens's 'Young Men', to strengthen her authority in the literary sphere and bring expertise to *Belgravia*'s work defending sensationalism and sensation fiction writers. Major work on *Belgravia* includes Phegley and Palmer who consider its multiple facets, content, and debates. Phegley centres her work on the construction of readers arguing how Braddon utilised her position as editor to resist the influence of critics who sought to direct both reader's choices of what to read and their reactions to it.[15] Phegley brings together aspects of the novels and articles, including Sala's essay 'Cant', 'A Remonstrance', and *Birds of Prey*'s Philip Sheldon.[16] Palmer places *Belgravia* and Braddon as editor alongside Wood and Marryat in the literary marketplace as

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[13] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 64.

[14] As Palmer identifies, Braddon, like the editors Wood and Marryat, were 'emphasizing their domesticity and "natural" femininity while simultaneously involving themselves in "unfeminine" pursuits like editing […] In the multiplicity of their careers, they reveal the contingency and performativity of each aspect of their personality'. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, pp. 12–3.

[15] Phegley identifies how both *Belgravia* and Thackeray's the *Cornhill* contributed to the growth of family magazines which 'opposed the argument that women were inherently uncritical readers who were unable to make good decisions about reading'. She uses items from *Belgravia* such as the illustrated poem 'In the Firelight'. See Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 106.

[16] Phegley's article work touches upon *Dead-Sea Fruit* and there is a more detailed discussion of *Charlotte's Inheritance* and of *Birds of Prey* alongside selected poems and articles. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 145.

pioneers.[17] She argues that Braddon influentially contributed to how 'women writers utilised the powerful position of author-editor and sensationalist to re-work and perform conventions of gender and genre'.[18] My chapter builds on the scholarship on *Belgravia*, particularly Phegley's and Palmer's work, examining how Braddon's fictional writers encapsulate the politics inherent in the periodical press as well as the tension and collaboration between her editorship and authorship.[19] This chapter hopes to address the tension, even disparity, between the volume editions and the serialised editions by focusing on the dynamic dialogue between author, fiction, editor, periodical, and reader within individual numbers, as well as reviews and advertisements.

Chapter three is divided into three main sections addressing distinct yet intimately connected aspects of the interaction between *Dead-Sea Fruit* and *Belgravia*. The first section of the chapter looks at the day-to-day running of *Belgravia*, the overall construction of the periodical, the act of contributing, and the act of reading. The second narrows the focus to individual issues of *Belgravia* through the fourteen months in which *Dead-Sea Fruit* was serialised exploring the dynamic interactions between *Dead-Sea Fruit*, the articles, the periodical press, and the readers. The third section opens out to consider the place of *Dead-Sea Fruit* in the marketplace more broadly, particularly in reviews and advertisements. I will look at the practical demands and limitations placed upon writers and their work as well as the conceptual constructions of Braddon and *Belgravia* by their collaborative networks and readerships. By re-placing *Dead-Sea Fruit* explicitly within the pages of *Belgravia*, this chapter reflects on the disparate yet unified identities of novels, periodicals, and even authors in the Victorian literary sphere.

## *Belgravia* Began in November 1866

In this section I will discuss the material in the pages of *Belgravia*, the day-to-day running of *Belgravia*, and the network of contributors while Braddon was editing. Palmer considers *Belgravia*'s place as standing alongside women editors such as Wood and Marryat building on Dickens's shaping on the figure of the editor in the Victorian periodical press: 'Learning from Dickens, the Beetons, and other novelist-editors of shilling monthlies made Braddon

[17] See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.
[18] Ibid., p. 17.
[19] Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, pp. 137–145 and Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*. Palmer also places *Belgravia* in its urban setting. See Palmer, 'Sensationalising the City'. Gabriele provides listings of each issue's content. See Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*.

self-reflexive about how to market and present her celebrity self and her fiction'.[20] Interestingly and as will be discussed later in the chapter, the publishers Ward, Lock & Tyler took on Dickens, Braddon, and Mrs Beeton by the end of the 1860s. Palmer examines how Braddon 'orchestrates multiple voices (including her own) to sing her personal praises and to promote and perform the sensational strategies for which her fiction is famous'.[21] Reading *Dead-Sea Fruit* in the light of deliberate contributions to the periodical press's debates and in response to more personal attacks is key to understanding Braddon's metafictional constructions of the collaborative literary sphere she worked within. Braddon strategically used both her fiction and *Belgravia* as part of more political arguments.

The Textual and the Visual Co-inhabit: The Material Making Up *Belgravia*

Beginning with a broader view of the construction of numbers is important in understanding *Belgravia*'s and Braddon's readers' experiences. As Brake argues, readers are making choices 'with rival texts to hand and in view'.[22] Each reading pattern is individual and it cannot be assumed that every reader will have read the entire issue, but the physical proximity between these contradictory and complimentary items needs to be taken into consideration when examining *Dead-Sea Fruit* in its serialised form.[23] Important to Genette's concept of the textual is the individual rather than identical act of reading. He also argues that the physical paratext does not form a barrier to the reader, rather a doorway or 'threshold'.[24] In *Belgravia* the threshold can be seen as the front cover. On the volume edition is stamped, 'Conducted by M.E. Braddon', dominating the reader's gaze and establishing Braddon's double position as editor and author.[25] On the monthly front covers, however, Braddon employed her renown under the banner 'Author of "Lady Audley's Secret"' prioritising her identity as author rather than editor, which is echoed immediately afterwards on the first

[20] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 50.
[21] Ibid. In her article Palmer also considers Ella Hepworth Dixon and editorship. See Beth Palmer, 'Ella Hepworth Dixon and Editorship', *Women's Writing*, 19.1 (2012), 96–109.
[22] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 50.
[23] See Genette, *Paratexts*, p. 4.
[24] Ibid., pp. 1–2.
[25] Phegley considers that gendered aspect to how *Belgravia* was 'distinctly unfeminine in its prominent display of the name of its "conductor" on its cover, with the name of her married lover and publisher in a subordinate position'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 151.

page.[26] In *Belgravia* Braddon's signature fluctuated between 'M', 'M. E. Braddon', 'by the author of', 'B', or even 'by the editor'.[27]

The textual and the visual co-inhabit *Belgravia*. Each number opened with an illustration accompanying one of Braddon's current novels.[28] There were customarily three illustrations per month, two of which accompanied poems and one of which was the first page showing a scene from the novel occupying the first pages.[29] Through the interaction between the novels, the articles, and the illustrations within the pages of *Belgravia*, Braddon questions the hierarchies between genres imposed on literature and author; as Phegley argues, '*Belgravia* maintained that the opinions of the critics about cultural divisions were inherently flawed and should in fact be disregarded'.[30] Braddon also tackles the gender division within the literary profession and *Belgravia* offered its readers both textual and visual depictions of women trusted to make their own decisions.[31] The intertextual facets to periodicals are typifies in how, as Phegley identifies, '*Belgravia*'s support for the independence of women readers is most striking in its illustrations'.[32] The union of the sensational, critical reading, escapism, and safe reading is fundamental to Braddon's overturning of critics.

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[26] Phegley considers the gendered aspect to how it was 'distinctly unfeminine in its prominent display of the name of its "conductor" on its cover, with the name of her married lover and publisher in a subordinate position'. Ibid.

[27] For example, during the serialisation of *Dead-Sea Fruit*, 'Lyrics of the Month' series was signed 'M.' for a few months, 'M. E. Braddon' for the next few, and finally 'B' for one; generally her fiction was 'by the author of', apart from one novelette; the non-fiction, 'Glimpses' and 'French Novels', were signed 'M'. The article 'Glimpses' will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

[28] For an example of Braddon's awareness of the importance of illustrations as eye catching, she wrote to George du Maurier asking him to illustrate *Eleanor's Victory* even though the novel was being serialised in *Once A Week* (1863), rather than *Belgravia*: 'I have been delighted with the two pictures I have seen, & I hope the numbers will provide you decent subjects. I will try & make them so'. Undated letter, author's collection. See Carnell *The Literary Lives*, p. 176.

[29] Poems can be used as 'staple ingredients'; Ledbetter discusses how, 'Poetry appears in women's periodicals of all types of class of readers to the end of the Victorian period, and it gets displayed in an immense variety of textual formats, from elaborate artistic illustration, anecdotal references, and reviews, to brief stanzas at the end of a page or an issue'. See Ledbetter, *British Victorian Women's Periodicals*, p. 3.

[30] Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 128.

[31] Examples are Sala's 'Cant' and the illustrated poem 'In the Firelight'. Although concentrating on 'In the Firelight', Phegley considers the illustrated poems published later in *Belgravia*'s life such as 'The Elopement-Door' (July 1869), 'Summer Reminiscences' (December 1869), and 'One Summer Month (August 1871) concluding that these illustrations, coupled with the novels and the articles, were crucial to '[d]emonstrating that women readers were capably of reader potentially corrupting material in ways that were socially acceptable allow[ing] Braddon to argue that sensation fiction was suitable for women'. See Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader,* p. 135 and W. T., 'In the Firelight', *Belgravia*, March 1868, p. 66 and George Augustus Sala, 'The Cant of Modern Criticism', *Belgravia*, November 1867, pp. 45–55.

[32] Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 128. Phegley's work explores the serialisation of *Milly Darrell* and the poetry in *Belgravia* in relation to debates on women readers, and the 'ways in which Braddon legitimized both her literary production and women's enjoyment of sensation novels'. Ibid., p. 111.

The opening novel is usually followed by three poems, one or two instalments of other novels, five or six articles, and often a short story.[33] *Belgravia* strikes a determined balance between genres, but a clear narrative tone to many of the non-fiction items blurs the line between the fictional and the factual.[34] *Belgravia*'s strategic plan to defend sensationalism, popular literature, and the professionalisation of authorship was not confined to Braddon's metafictions and within the year in which *Dead-Sea Fruit* is serialised multiple articles were written emphatically fighting for sensation fiction, openly vindicating Braddon herself in a few.[35] As Phegley argues, 'the popularity of *Belgravia* and the culmination of criticism directed toward her motivated Braddon to articulate a philosophy of sensationalism that reflected more than a desire to make money'.[36] Braddon employed her position as editor to shape *Belgravia*'s stance in the contentious debates on professionalisation and sensationalism.

Braddon's renown for prolific production was manifest in *Belgravia*. The first few years were filled with her own novels all overlapping with one another. Presumably commercially motivated, *Belgravia* engaged the reader's sympathy and investment in the next novel whilst the previous one was brought to its denouement. During the year in which *Dead-Sea Fruit* was serialised, Braddon published novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction items. Braddon's first Belgravian novel was *Birds of Prey*, followed by *Circe*, *Dead–Sea Fruit*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, and *Robert Ainsleigh*.[37] The two-part short story, 'The Mudie Classics' was written under her pseudonym Babington White.[38] Braddon wrote four poems through this period of her editorship including the illustrated poem 'Lunch on the Hill' subtly placing Braddon within the community of writers contributing to the series *Lyrics of*

[33] Often the short story is included when there are only two novels, in order to present three fictions. The short stories are a mixture those in a single part and those with a couple of instalments.
[34] Liggins and Duffy aim to 'demonstrate an awareness of the ways in which markets could both limit and liberate popular writers, who were able to manipulate generic conventions in order to allow readers to interpret texts oppositionally'. See *Feminist Readings of Victorian Popular Texts: Divergent Femininities*, ed. by Emma Liggins and Daniel Duffy (University of Michigan: Ashgate, 2001), p. xx.
[35] Costantini argues that 'the cross-class position [Braddon and Charles Reade] occupied in the literary marketplace gave them a better vantage point for observing the complexities of their cultural system'. See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 56.
[36] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 151.
[37] Braddon went on to write *To the Bitter End* (11 monthly instalments: February 1872 to December 1872), *Milly Darrell* (3 monthly instalments: November 1870 to January 1871), *Stranger and Pilgrims* (12 monthly instalments: November 1872 to October 1873), *Lost for Love* (13 monthly instalments: November 1873 to November 1874), *Hostages to Fortune* (13 monthly instalments: November 1874 to November 1875), and finally *Joshua Haggard's Daughter* (13 monthly instalments: December 1875 to December 1876).
[38] See Babington White, 'The Mudie Classics, No 1. Sir Alk Meyonn, or the Seven against the Elector', *Belgravia*, March-April 1868. Braddon's other short stories during *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation appeared in the *Belgravia Christmas Annual* in December 1868, presumably to occupy the fictional dimension to the issue rather than a novel.

*the Month*.[39] Perhaps most interestingly and certainly the most political were her non-fiction pieces. The article 'Glimpses at Foreign Literature' appeared in *Belgravia* in April 1868 asserting Braddon's active participation within literary fashions and business, which will be discussed later in the chapter.[40] Braddon's article most directly connected to literary scandal and dialogue is 'A Remonstrance by Captain Shandon' in November 1867.[41] This scandal will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, but it is important that *Dead-Sea Fruit* began in the midst of such a ferocious battle.

The Day-to-Day Running of *Belgravia*

Exactly how involved Braddon was in the day-to-day running of *Belgravia*, and in the selection of its contents, is hard to determine. Fitzgerald's memoir recalls how, '[w]hile Miss Braddon conducted the *Belgravia Magazine*, her busy, untiring husband looked warily after all the business details, finding contributors, etc. He was assisted by Mr. Charles Cheltenham, a dramatist'.[42] Maxwell carried out the financial dealings assisted by Cheltenham who may well have made many choices of contributors.[43] Cheltenham also wrote a series of poems entitled 'Belgravian Prose Ballads' which participated in *Belgravia*'s critique of London's pretentious aristocracy.[44] However, Carnell argues that,

> when [Braddon] did take a stronger editorial line, it was to see to her own interests as a writer, enlisting George Augustus Sala to write defensive articles on her behalf [and] she probably still took a great deal of interest in the look of the magazine and knew the importance of eye catching illustrations and subject matter […] As the conductor of the magazine, Braddon was also able to fight back against the critics.[45]

[39] M, 'Lunch on the Hill', *Belgravia*, September 1867 [illustrated]. The series ran through 1867 and Braddon's three other poems were 'After the Battle', *Belgravia*, February 1868, 'The Hawking Party', *Belgravia*, March 1868, and 'The Lady of the Land' in *Belgravia*, July 1868 [Illustrated].
[40] See M [Mary Elizabeth Braddon], 'Glimpses at Foreign Literature', *Belgravia,* April 1868, pp. 156–160. The article was included in an advert in the *Athenaeum*, 12 October 1867.
[41] See Charles Shandon, 'A Remonstrance', *Belgravia*, November 1867, pp. 80–86.
[42] Percy Fitzgerald, *Memoirs of an Author*, 2 vol. (London: Bentley, 1895), I: p. 177.
[43] Carnell gives examples of letters from Braddon to critic Charles Kent and novelist W. Clark Russell on contribution requests, reading submissions, and content rules. Carnell also notes that Cheltenham wrote the play version of *Lady Audley's Secret* authorised by Braddon. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 176.
[44] Palmer discusses the choice of Belgravia as the magazine's title and argues that Cheltenham's first poem in the series, 'The Chaperone', 'ironises upper-class gender conventions using the voice of a rich woman, who is desperate to marry her daughter to aristocrats'. See Palmer, 'Sensationalising the City', p. 4.
[45] Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 176. As mentioned in chapter two, Braddon's son, W. B. Maxwell, wrote: 'Her position in this respect was I think unique. For in fact she was her own publisher. She bought the paper, gave orders to printers and binders, and finally sent the bound and wrapped books to Simpkin, Marshall and Company for distribution'. See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 144.

Although Braddon may not have had a practical involvement on a daily basis I suggest that she took a vested and strategic interest in *Belgravia*'s political and literary stance.[46] Costantini argues that *Belgravia* was employed as part of Braddon's efforts to defend sensation fiction and its authors writing that, the 'campaign [Braddon] launched in the magazine to defend sensationalism was undoubtedly a personal means to fight back against the criticism she had attracted with her unconventional writings and lifestyle'.[47] As Carnell, Costantini, and Palmer imply, Braddon used *Belgravia* to her own advantage, yet it was run through a collaborative team of writers.

Braddon's Young Men: *Belgravia*'s Contributors

*Belgravia*'s contributors were writing for a communal performance rather than a solo act. In previous chapters I have considered the networks and collaborations in the Victorian literary sphere, predominantly in regards to Braddon's career and her novels, and in chapter four I will explore those in connection with New Women writers. In this chapter, I will concentrate on those that shaped each issue of a periodical. Patten identifies the collaborative and performative facets to the Victorian periodical: he argues that they were 'constructed by the producers, editors, and other contributors […] appealing to readers in ways more dynamic and theatrical than contemplative'.[48] Over the time *Dead-Sea Fruit* was serialised *Belgravia* included a large number of contributors many of whom just published one item. As Phegley describes, '[n]ot only did Braddon use her editorial clout to accuse her attackers of professional jealousy and defend popular writers as professional craftsmen, but she also enlisted a barrage of critics to make similar argument on her behalf'.[49] This section demonstrates the importance of mentorship and employment that challenge the idea of authors being made through the influence of a single, powerful, male figure. Although not exclusively, *Belgravia*'s contributors were, particularly in the early years, predominantly men. Remoortel argues for the importance of questioning the 'sovereign nature of the editorial function [and] that the editor's authority is necessarily fragmented, dispersed and

[46] Phegley argues that, 'Though Braddon told Bulwer-Lytton that she was prepared to disregard the critics, she concentrated most of her resources against them in *Belgravia*'. See Jennifer Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule": Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Belgravia* Magazine, women readers, and literary valuation', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 26.2 (2004), 149–171 (p. 164).
[47] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 51.
[48] Patten, 'Dickens as Serial Author', pp. 150–1. Also on the nature of literary networks see Shattock, 'Professional Networking'.
[49] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 166.

even contested through the multitude of voices that comprise the periodical'.[50] *Belgravia* balances acknowledging writers' identities with the sense of a unified voice.[51]

Influential in establishing *Belgravia* in terms of content, tone, material, and identity were Scoffern, Sterry, Clarke, and Scott. Scoffern contributed medical and scientific articles with one published in nearly all of the instalments in which *Dead-Sea Fruit* is serialised.[52] Interestingly, J. Scoffern, M. B.'s articles are published under his own name with the initials confirming his medical qualifications.[53] *Belgravia* has a predominantly fictional content, with a narrative style to many of the articles. However, articles such as Scoffern's medical and scientific pieces lend a powerful non-fictional element. Poems were important to periodicals to practically fill the pages, but by being flexible in terms of genre, style, and politics could be effectively used to diversify the content, from romance to satire.[54] With three in every number, the majority of which were illustrated, the poems were influential to *Belgravia*'s textual and visual composition. Much of the poetry was published without a signature, but several with their writer's initials with W. T. and W. S. appearing most regularly.[55] However, among those named, Sterry, Clarke, and Scott are key to *Belgravia*'s poetry.[56] The

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[50] Van Remoortel, *Living By the Press*, p. 3.

[51] Phegley identifies this as a deliberate tactic to 'combat some of [her critic's] critical practices, particularly the use of anonymity'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 165. Laurel Brake asks in practical terms, 'Innes Shand contributed anonymously an eight-part, serial article to "Contemporary Literature" to *Blackwood's Magazine*, or should I have written *Blackwood's Magazine* published an eight-part, serial article etc.?' See Laurel Brake, 'The "Trepidation of the Spheres": The Serial and the Book in the 19th Century', *Serials and Their Readers, 1620–1914*, ed. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris (University of Michigan: St. Paul's Bibliographies 1993), pp. 83–102 (p. 84).

[52] As discussed in chapter two, the scientific and medical professions were important in Braddon's mid-century novels, most importantly, *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*; chapter four will look at the scientific in terms of post-Darwinism and New Women novels, particularly conceptions of the genetic, genius, and degeneration. As set out in chapter two, on Braddon, *Belgravia*, and science see Onslow, 'Sensationalising Science'.

[53] Gabriele looks at Scoffern's articles as engaging with debates on world trade, man-made artefacts, the relationship between the industrial and natural, and commodity culture. See Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*, pp. 92–4.

[54] The *DNCJ* identifies that, 'Poems in periodicals were vehicles of high culture, patriotic and domestic sentiments, religious piety, satire, political commentary, class identity, humour, as well as fillers […] Domestic and sentimental poetry played key roles in annuals, women's magazines and the popular press as well as high-prestige titles […] Poetry also functioned visually in periodicals through its distinctive stanzaic layout and its embellishment with numerous illustrations'. See *DNCJ*, p. 497.

[55] It is unclear who they are but W. T. may be Walter Thornbury who is one of Dickens's Young Men and writes other material for *Belgravia*. W. S. may be either William Stigand or William Sawyer, both of whom have work published under their own name in *Belgravia*. There is also the possibility that one of them is William May Thomas another of Dickens's Young Men, but he is not published in *Belgravia* under his own name.

[56] Sterry wanted to be an artist but was a writer, wrote for *Punch* and others, mostly comic pieces 'based on his vast and curious knowledge of London and the Thames'. He also wrote fiction at the end of the century, 1890s. Sutherland discusses how 'In 1895, Ashby-Sterry published the conservative polemic: *The New Fiction, A Protest Against Sex Mania*. BL 3. Wol. WW'. See John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 27 and Joseph Ashby Sterry, 'Charles Dickens and Southwark', *English Illustrated Magazine*, November 1888), p. 241.

appellation of the short stories is the most diverse with 'by the author of', the name itself, or anonymity.[57]

With the exceptions of Babington White and Justin McCarthy, *Belgravia*'s novels appear 'by the author of', symptomatic of using the fiction rather than the writer name as a brand name. McCarthy was also the first author other than Braddon to occupy the foremost position in *Belgravia* with *My Enemy's Daughter*.[58] McCarthy was a politician as well as novelist, historical writer, contributor to the *Contemporary Review*, *Fortnightly Review*, and *Nineteenth Century*, assistant editor for New York's *Independent*, and lecturer in the USA while writing *My Enemy's Daughter* for *Belgravia*. McCarthy was an overtly international presence in Braddon's periodical. Although not named as McCarthy was, the first novel serialised in *Belgravia* by an author other an Braddon was Fitzgerald's *Diana Gay* replacing *Circe* and published concurrently with *Dead-Sea Fruit*.[59] Fitzgerald can be counted among Dickens's 'Young Men' who are usually identified as George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, Blanchard Jerrold, Sydney Blanchard, William Moy Thomas, Walter Thornbury, John Hollingshead, James Payn, Percy Fitzgerald, and Andrew Halliday.[60] These professional authors were frequent and valued contributors to Dickens's publications, whilst Sala, Blanchard, Thornbury, Jerrold, and Fitzgerald also wrote for Braddon and Maxwell in *Belgravia*.

Edwards offers a valuable insight into the intricacies of the Victorian literary marketplace and how its authors bridged the spheres of fiction, journalism, and editing from the perspective of Sala's and Yates's careers, and their position with Dickens and his publications. This chapter chooses a different perspective on these men and their associated newspapers, colleagues, and marketplace, from the direction of Braddon and *Belgravia*, rather than the more established one of Dickens, *Household Words*, and *All the Year Round*. Blanchard wrote just one article for *Belgravia*, but, as will be discussed, 'Literature of the

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[57] On anonymity in practical and conceptual terms in the periodical press see Buurma, 'Anonymity, Corporate Authority, and the Archive' and Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*.
[58] See Justin McCarthy, *My Enemy's Daughter*, *Belgravia* (November 1868 – October 1869).
[59] See Percy H. Fitzgerald, *Diana Gay*, *Belgravia*, October 1867 – October 1868 (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1868). *Diana Gay* ran from October 1867, two months after *Dead-Sea Fruit* did, and ended in one month after *Dead-Sea Fruit*. It also overlapped by one month with *Birds of Prey*, by seven-months with *Charlotte's Inheritance*, and by four months with *Robert Ainsleigh*. Interestingly, this meant that *Belgravia*'s readers have Fitzgerald's Diana Gay in one novel and Braddon's Diana Paget/Lenoble in *Birds of Prey/Charlotte's Inheritance* for several months at a time.
[60] P. D. Edwards has written an important work on the collection of writers known as 'Dickens's Young Men' and listing these authors. Edwards notes that apart from Fitzgerald and Halliday this list is from Sala's *Things I Have Said and Done and People I Have Known* (London: Cassell, 1894). See Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*.

Line' was key to the campaign defending Braddon and sensation fiction.[61] Jerrold wrote for *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* as a novelist, journalist and playwright, and from 1857 was editor of *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* .[62] His article for *Belgravia*, 'Father Prout in Paris', reflected his life as an author in Paris.[63] Another key member of Dickens's Young Men to be commissioned by Braddon is Walter Thornbury who wrote, often as foreign correspondent, for multiple periodicals including *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, the *Athenaeum*, and *Bentley's Miscellany*.[64] Thornbury's series of articles on London were significant in maintaining a consistency to *Belgravia*'s content as well as being used to attract readers in advertisements.[65] Thornbury and Fitzgerald were actively writing articles and fictions respectively for both *All the Year Round* and *Belgravia* during *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation.

As one of this group of writers, Fitzgerald simultaneously serialised *Diana Gay* in *Belgravia* and *The Dear Girl* in *All the Year Round* embodying the sharing of labour through a network of professional writers.[66] These collaborations and interconnections forged a literary community, yet the writers and the periodicals maintained distinctive identities. Fitzgerald's alliance with Dickens is perhaps much stronger, but his fiction was commissioned by Braddon and through the presence of *Diana Gay* amongst Braddon's novels full of fictionalised authors and overt defences of sensationalism, Fitzgerald is allied to *Belgravia*'s strategic campaigns. Fitzgerald's own very self-conscious writings later in the century were non-fiction works on the profession of authorship, such as *The Life of Sterne, The Romance of the English Stage* (1874), *The Recreations of Literary Man; Or, Does Writing Pay?* (1882), and Fitzgerald devoted an entire book to his recollections of his most famous literary friend with *Memories of Charles Dickens*.[67] Similarly to the constant

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[61] See Sidney L. Blanchard, 'Literature of the Line', *Belgravia*, June 1868, pp. 499–504. There is very little criticism on Blanchard.

[62] Sidney L. Blanchard was the son of journalist and playwright Douglas William Jerrold.

[63] See Blanchard L. Jerrold, 'Father Prout in Paris', *Belgravia*, July 1868, pp. 121–130. Jerrold lived in, worked in, and wrote on Paris a lot from 1850s.

[64] As well as a novelist, Thornbury was a contributor to *Household Words* and *All the Year Round* (1866-68), for example 'As the Crow Flies' and 'Old Stories Retold' in *All the Year Round*. He also contributed to *Bentley's Miscellany*, *Ainsworth's*, *Welcome Guest*, *Once a Week*, *Chamber's Journal*, and, particularly, art criticism, in the *Athenaeum*. His work in translations includes *The Fables of La Fontaine* (1867). For *Belgravia* Walter Thornbury wrote thirteen articles and poem(s).

[65] The series in *Belgravia* during *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation is, 'London Squares' (August 1867), 'London Parks' (September, October and November 1867 and January 1868), 'London Palaces' (February, March, April, May, June 1868), 'London Clubs' (July, August, September 1868). Thornbury also wrote the poem, 'Horace in Pall Mall' (August 1867).

[66] See Percy H. Fitzgerald, *The Dear Girl*, *All the Year Round*, 19 October 1867 – 8 February 1868.

[67] Percy H. Fitzgerald, *Memories of Charles Dickens: With an Account of* Household Words *and* All the Year Round *and of the Contributors Thereto* (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, 1913).

presence of metafiction through the nineteenth century, non-fiction works such as Fitzgerald's were written by Victorian authors. Notably, Camilla Crossland's memoir *Landmarks of a Literary Life* (1889) chronicles her own literary career, networks, and friendships, including Anna Maria Hall who was, interestingly, *St. James's Magazine*'s first editor.[68] The nineteenth century saw a range of accounts, memoirs, and autobiographies recounting or recording a professional writer's career and their involvement in the periodical press, including those by Kavanagh, Howitt, and Oliphant.[69] Many authors of these non-fictions also wrote semi-autobiographical novels, for example Mary Cholmondeley who will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.[70]

Importantly, like Yates and Fitzgerald, Sala is another one of Dickens's and Braddon's Young Men. Both Yates and Sala had an intimate and influential relationship with Maxwell at the outset of their careers as novelists, both were reliant on their employment on *Temple Bar* to support their writing and, as Edwards argues, '[f]or both of them the impetus to turn, or return, to fiction was provided by their employment on *Temple Bar*'.[71] Dickens was perhaps more instrumental in defining their style, but it needs to be remembered that just as these men were employed as contributors to *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, they were also employed as contributors to *Temple Bar* and *Belgravia*. Palmer identifies Braddon, Wood, and Marryat as building upon how Dickens performed as a celebrity, novelist, and editor, each reinforcing the other: 'The women author-editors of the 1860s and 1870s also learned from Dickens that these editorial-authorial performances and negotiations could be very profitable'.[72] Fascinatingly, Maxwell was part of the famous quarrel, the Garrick Affair, between Dickens and Thackeray ignited by Yates's article in *Town Talk*, owned and edited by Maxwell.[73] There is currently, though, a lack of attention to Dickens's Young Women and Braddon's Young Men in scholarship.

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[68] See Mrs Newton [Camilla] Crossland, *Landmarks of a Literary Life 1820–1892* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1989). As will be discussed in more detail in chapter four, Crossland was also influential in the social parties in the later nineteenth century. Her husband, Newton Crossland, also wrote an autobiography, *Rambles Round my Life* (1893). See Shattock, 'Women Journalists and Periodical Spaces', p. 306.

[69] See Julia Kavanagh, *English Women of Letters: Biographical Sketches* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1863), Mary Howitt, *Mary Howitt: An Autobiography* (London: Wm Ibstister, 1889), and Margaret Oliphant, *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and His Sons* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1899).

[70] See Mary Cholmondeley, *Red Pottage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1899) and *Under One Roof: A Family Record* (London: Murray, 1918) In chapter four Cholmondeley's writing will be placed alongside *The Infidel* and Braddon's unpublished family memoir, *Before the Knowledge of Evil*.

[71] Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*, p. 73.

[72] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 26.

[73] The fascinating Garrick Affair is explored in great detail by both Edwards and Leary. Dickens and Thackeray, epitomised by this scandal which which divided publishers and readers of the periodical press, were central and

As touched upon in chapter one, Yates, Braddon, and Sala exchanged letters particularly on their shared fascination with French literature, including Balzac; however, despite the three authors' regular correspondence, Yates did not write for *Belgravia*.[74] Sala was the most prominent of Dickens's Young Men in *Belgravia* and had an ongoing working partnership with Braddon.[75] Both Sala and Yates wrote metafictional novels in the 1860s: *The Baddington Peerage* (1860), *Quite Alone* (1864), and *Broken to Harness* (1864).[76] Immediately preceding *The Doctor's Wife*, Yates's *Broken to Harness* ran in in *Temple Bar*. Yates's metafiction is distinctly autobiographical. Just as *The Doctor's Wife*'s Sigismund Smythe moved, like Braddon, to Bloomsbury, *Quite Alone*'s fictional journalist, Churchill moves, like Yates, to Camden.[77] Sala's unfinished novel *The Baddington Peerage* appeared in 1857 and, as Edwards describes, was 'almost universally derided'.[78] Significantly however, Sala created a self-portrait in Zillah the Betrayed: 'a flat-footed, shambling, heaving Tower-of-Pisa [with] a flaming nose'.[79] As touched on in chapter one, Sala re-appears in *Dead-Sea Fruit* as the slightly reckless journalist Daniel Mayfield, also sporting a red nose, who has a passion for literature and is a generous mentor to a rising writer in his nephew. In 1864, Sala wrote *Quite Alone* serialised in *All the Year Round*: Edwards suggests that, '[a]s if to acknowledge Balzac as his master openly, Sala actually introduces him in not *Quite Alone* in person'.[80] Although in the same numbers of *Belgravia* as Sala published articles, *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s 'sketch' does not seem to be noticed by reviewers who, instead, see Daniel as Braddon's alter ego.

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influential to the re-configuring of professional authorship. See Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"* and Leary, *The* Punch *Brotherhood*. Crawford examines the relationship, specifically the quarrel, between Dickens and Thackeray as indicative of the gender politics and disputes over public and private discourses in Victorian publishing. See Iain Crawford, 'Harriet Martineau, Charles Dickens, and the Rise of the Victorian Woman of Letters', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 68.4 (March 2014), 449–483.

[74] On Braddon's, Sala's, and Yates's interest in French literature and its influence on their work more extensively see work such as Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*. For quotations from some of their letters see Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*.

[75] Interestingly, Sala was not writing for Dickens during that period of time, perhaps showing greater loyalty to Braddon for a period of his career.

[76] See George Augustus Sala, *The Baddington Peerage*, (London: John Maxwell, 1865) [serialised in *Illustrated Times*, March to December 1857], George Augustus Sala, *Quite Alone*, *All the Year Round* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1864), and Edmund Yates, *Broken to Harness: A Story of English Domestic Life*, *Temple Bar* (London: John Maxwell, 1864).

[77] Frank Churchill, named after Austen's *Emma*, was one of two fictional journalists in *Broken to Harness*. As mentioned in chapter two, Sala's novels *Quite Alone* (1864) and *Twice Around the Clock* (1859) contained scenes set on the The Lady's Mile in Hyde Park.

[78] Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*, p. 78. *Baddington Peerage* was serialised in the *Illustrated Times.*

[79] George Augustus Sala, *The Baddington Peerage* (London: John Maxwell, 1865),1: pp. 145–51

[80] Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*, p. 79. As identified in chapter two Sala used the setting of the Ladies' Mile in *Quite Alone* (1864).

## *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s Serialisation (August 1867 – September 1868)

The diversity of fictional writers in *Dead-Sea Fruit* reflects the novel's position within the pages of a journal containing the works of a range of writers exacerbating the need to consider the dialogue between novel and periodical and the duality of Braddon as novelist and editor. As Palmer argues, seeing these novels in their periodical context casts a light on Braddon's fiction and editing and 'gives us the necessary perspective to see her performances of sensation as empowering rather than as a fate to which she was passively consigned'.[81] Mary Elizabeth Braddon used *Dead-Sea Fruit* to dramatise her experiences, but also the collaboration and competition pervading the periodical press. Costantini argues that Eustace Thorburn, Daniel Mayfield, Laurence Desmond, Harold Jerningham, and Theodore de Bergerac 'establish a web of interactions that show their world to be shaped by a cluster of contending interests'.[82] Unlike the majority of her novels which contain poets, playwrights, or novelists, *Dead-Sea Fruit* offers its readers an editor in the figure of Laurence Desmond. *Dead-Sea Fruit* also holds a journalist in the figure of Daniel Mayfield who Wolff reads as a 'wholly recognizable sketch of George Augustus Sala'.[83] I will consider chosen issues of *Belgravia* to examine in close detail the intimate relationship between an individual instalment of *Dead-Sea Fruit* and the articles published alongside it.

### August 1867: *Dead-Sea Fruit* Enters *Belgravia*'s Pages

Alongside the first instalment of *Dead-Sea Fruit*, is a collection of material typifying *Belgravia*'s diverse content:

> Braddon, '*Dead-Sea Fruit*' [novel]
>
> 'Ceyx and Halcyone' [illustrated poem]
>
> Walter Thornbury, 'London Squares. IV. St. James's-Square, Tavistock-Square,
>
> Euston-Square, Queen-Square, Hanover-Square' [article]
>
> Dutton Cook, 'The Friend of Talleyrand' [biographical sketch]
> J. Scoffern, M. B , 'Salamanders' [article]
> 'Periodical Literature, Part II' [article]
> Braddon, *Birds of Prey* [novel]
> R. Arthur Arnold. 'Life in An Oasis' [article]
> J. Ashby Sterry, 'Lyrics of the Month. August. The Grape-gatherers' [illustrated poem]

[81] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 57.
[82] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 64. Costantini continues, 'Yet, Braddon avoids tracing clear-cut lines of demarcation between the values attached to the two men [Desmond and Thorburn]'. Ibid., pp. 65–6.
[83] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 185.

> ‘by the Author of “Bitter Sweets,” “The Tallants of Barton,” etc.’, ‘Outside the World’ [short story]
> W. Winwood Reade, F. R. G. S, ‘The Gorilla as I Found Him’ [article]
> Babington White, *Circe* [novel]

The number exemplifies the way in which the periodical offered readers a fusion of constancy and the new and unexpected. *Belgravia*, Braddon, and her novels were participating in what Brake identifies as how, ‘individual articles in periodicals *are* part of a sequence of issues which is strategically designed to be read as part of a continuum. Serialisation from issue to issue is part of that strategy, as articles which are presented as “replies” to earlier pieces’.[84] Thornbury’s tour of London traces narratives of previous residents, including here Dickens in Tavistock Square, tying together the dramatic, the historical, and celebrity. Palmer places Thornbury’s series in *Belgravia* as a whole arguing that, ‘Braddon’s magazine differentiated itself from competing periodicals by offering its middle-class readership alternative and accessible ways to knowing and navigating the London cityscape’.[85] The metropolitan is employed to create both a marketable brand and a unifying concept to the breadth of material within each number. Interestingly, Thornbury was simultaneously writing a series of articles for *All the Year Round* entitled ‘Old Stories Re-Told’.[86] ‘Salamanders’ typifies Scoffern’s scientific gaze upon the natural world bringing together the urban and the natural in one issue. The poetry series, ‘Lyrics of the Month’, to which Braddon contributed, continues the meeting of a joint identity in the series and an individual voice in the writer, this month named J. Ashby Sterry.

Indicative of the metatextual nature of Braddon’s novels is ‘Periodical Literature, Part II’, and could be attributed to Braddon herself.[87] Using key examples of periodicals and newspapers to chart the history of the periodical press, the article proposes that the *Edinburgh Review* was the most influential.[88] ‘Periodical Literature’ participates in *Belgravia*’s collaborative project rather than promoting an individual’s voice and the conspicuous

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[84] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 50.
[85] Palmer, ‘Sensationalising the City’, p. 6. Gabriele considers the implications of the London location as *Belgravia*’s title. See Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*, pp. 36–7.
[86] (George) Walter Thornbury, ‘Old Stories Re-Told: Trafalgar’, *All the Year Round*, 27 August 1867, p. 108. Appearing off and on, often in clusters, and with increasing infrequency, the series ran from (George) Walter Thornbury, ‘Old Stories Re-Told: The Two Great Murders in Ratcliff Highway’, *All the Year Round*, 20 October 1866, p. 34 to (George) Walter Thornbury, ‘Last of Old Stories Re-Told: The Accident at the Brunswick Theatre’, *All the Year Round*, 18 July 1868, p. 133.
[87] See ‘Periodical Literature: In Two Parts: Part I’, *Belgravia*, July 1867, pp. 102–107 and ‘Periodical Literature: In Two Parts: Part II’, *Belgravia*, August 1867, pp. 185–191. Beth Palmer includes these in her list of anonymous articles in *Belgravia* written by Braddon. The authorship of ‘Marriage *Versus* Celibacy’ will be discussed later in the chapter.
[88] See ‘Periodical Literature, Part II’, August 1867.

presence, even simply in the title, visible to all readers regardless of how much of the periodical they read in detail, arguably encourages the readers to associate the characters in *Dead-Sea Fruit* with the broader literary context. Braddon's novels and 'Periodical Literature' united in *Belgravia* reinforce the sense that these fictional characters are strategically employed by Braddon. The material context and the reader's gaze must be considered in relation to these metafictional novels.

November 1867: 'A Remonstrance', 'The Cant of Modern Criticism', and Laurence Desmond's 'remorseless pen'

*Belgravia*'s November issue was one of the most self-conscious and metatextual during *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation. The pages contained the fourth instalment of the Braddon's metafictional novel, Captain Shandon's 'A Remonstrance', and Sala's infamous article 'A Cant of Modern Criticism', read alongside the customary collection of fictions, poems, illustrations, and articles including continuations of Thornbury's 'London Parks'.[89] This number was a multi-pronged confrontation of the literary marketplace, particularly Braddon's, Maxwell's, and *Belgravia*'s adversaries. As discussed in previous chapters, Braddon and Maxwell were subjected to scandal surrounding their marriage at various points in their careers, however 1867 saw controversy surrounding *Circe*. Although the public arguments may have intensified her association with disgrace and infamous identity, particularly plagiarism, direct articles such as 'A Remonstrance' and 'A Cant of Modern Criticism' helped to place Braddon at the heart of the marketplace and strengthen *Belgravia*'s defence of professional authorship and sensationalism.

Published under the fictional name 'Captain Shandon', Braddon boldly replied to the furore surrounding the identity of Babington White and the accusations of plagiary in *Circe*.[90]

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[89] See Charles Shandon, 'A Remonstrance: *Captain Shandon to the Editor of the "Pall-Mall Gazette*"', *Belgravia*, November 1867, pp. 80–6 and George Augustus Sala, 'The Cant of Modern Criticism', *Belgravia*, November 1867, pp. 45– 55. The November issue also includes: 'Horse-Shoes on Church Doors' [article including a poem]; C. S. Thompson, del. W. L. Thomas, sc.), 'Lyrics of the Months November. Home Amusements' [illustrated poem]; J. D. B., 'The Romans at Home' [article – Foreign Correspondent?]; Ada Buisson, 'My Aunt's Pearl Ring', 'by Ada Buisson, the author of "Put to the Test"'' [short story]; T. H. S. E. (ill Thomas Beech, del. W. L. Thomas, sc.'), 'Happy Tidings' [illustrated poem]; (George) Walter Thornbury, 'London Parks. III. Hyde Park' [article]; Charles Shandon, 'A Remonstrance' [letter]; T. Ansted, F.R.S., 'A Fortnight in Corsica' [article – foreign correspondent?]; 'Netting', ill G. Cruikshank, Jun., del. W. L. Thomas, sc. [illustrated poem]; Major H. Byng Hall, 'Bric-A-Brac Hunting. Quest the Third The Bazaars of Stamboul' [article (narrative?)]; Diana Gay, *Diana Gay* 'A Novel By the Author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," etc.' [novel]; Louis Huard, Del. W. L. Thomas, sc.', 'Miss St. Albans' [illustration for *Dead-Sea Fruit*].

[90] Wolff identifies the character 'Mr. Skith' as Braddon's friend, the artist Frith and suggests that the pseudonym was used to 'avoid giving the impression that M. E. Braddon was writing virtually the entire

There were a series of letters and 'Occasional Notes' appearing in the *Pall Mall Gazette* through September and October 1867 debating both the literary morality of *Circe* but also the apparent forgery of her letter stating that Braddon was not Babington White. 'A Remonstrance' stands as the as the last word in a battle between Braddon and the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s editor, Frederick Greenwood.[91] The viciously-worded war named 'the "Circe" controversy', the 'Circean episode', the 'significant "Circe" business', began with with a review of Babington White's novel on 16 September 1867.[92] The *Pall Mall Gazette* vehemently, even violently, criticised *Circe* as an inappropriate copy of M. Octave Feuillet's *Dalila* (1853) and accused White of adding in 'living persons under silly disguises and silly pseudonyms'.[93] Greenwood proceeded to appropriate Braddon's name and write a seemingly apologetic letter claiming innocence to the connection to *Dalila*, declaring loyalty to *Belgravia*'s readers, and making unlikely promises to return payments.[94]

In the days following, a flurry of letters on the forgery and Babington White's identity appeared in the 'Correspondence' column in the *Pall Mall Gazette* written by Greenwood under the names 'Chesterton Smith', 'A Mag's Man', and 'T. T.'.[95] Braddon interjected accusing Greenwood of forgery, but to little effect.[96] Braddon and *Circe* were at the receiving

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contents of the magazine'. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, pp. 207–8. Early in her career Braddon used the pseudonym 'Lady Caroline Lascelles' for the novel *The Black Band* (1861-1862) which was, as discussed in chapter one, reincarnated as Sigismund Smith's novel, *The Black Hand* in *The Doctor's Wife*.

[91] *DNCJ* sets out how the *Pall Mall Gazette* (first published on 7 February 1865) was edited by Frederick Greenwood: 'Leslie Stephen famously dubbed it "Greenwood's incarnation", and for 15 years, his editorial dominance remained unchallenged. He acquired a reputation as the "perfect editor", finding and fostering new writing talent, and thereby leaving a permanent mark on the Victorian literary scene'. The *Pall Mall* had many contributors of 'higher journalism', such as George Meredith and John Ruskin, as well as being political: 'In many respects it resembled a daily version of the *Saturday Review* or *Cornhill Magazine*'. See *DNCJ*, p. 478.

[92] See 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 September 1867, p. [1121], 'Opinion in the Weekly Reviews: The Romance of Babington White', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 September 1867, pp. [119–20], and 'Good-Natured Criticism', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 October 1867, p. 9.

[93] '"Dalila" and "Circe"', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 September 1867, p. 981. There is no overt suggestion that Braddon is the author; however, the review draws attention to its presence within *Belgravia*, as well as likening the relationship between *Dalila* and *Circe* to novels, including *Madame Bovary* and *The Doctor's Wife*.

[94] The letter reads, 'SIR,—With the deepest regret I have perused your severe criticism of "Circe" in this evening's impression. The discovery of the theft from M. Octave Feuillet has fallen like a thunderbolt on my sense. Let me at once assure your readers, those who are subscribers to *Belgravia*, that I was unconscious of Mr. Babington White's deception, he having undertaken to contribute an original novel. As the worker of precious metals will never refuse for his honour's sake to take back the base stuff he may have sold, unconsciously for gold, so I should wish at once to publish my willingness to return the amounts paid by my subscribers for those numbers of *Belgravia* in which "Circe" has usurped a place.—I am, Sir, Yours faithfully, M. E. Braddon'. See [Frederick Greenwood] M. E. Braddon, 'Correspondence', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 September 1867, p. 3.

[95] See 'A Mag's Man', 'Correspondence', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 September 1867, p. 4, 'Chesterton Smith', 'Correspondence', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 September 1867, p. 2, 'T. T.', 'Correspondence', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 September 1867, p. 4, and 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1867, p. 8.

[96] A letter in the 'Correspondence' column reads, 'Miss Braddon presents her compliments to the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and begs to inform him that the letter purporting to be written by her, which appears in his paper for the 17th inst., is a forgery'. See Mary Elizabeth Braddon, 'Correspondence: "Circe"', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 September, p. 2.

end of a barrage of vicious and intensely personal accusations of deception in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Indicative of Maxwell as *Belgravia*'s owner, Braddon's publisher, and her lover, Greenwood also targeted Maxwell. Greenwood and 'Chesterton Smith' exerted relentless desire to unveil Babington White's identity and validation for reviews, particularly those Maxwell used in advertisements for *Circe*. Greenwood asked Braddon's publisher, therefore Maxwell, to explain 'how it came to pass that the *Edinburgh Review* has published a special number in order to call "Circe" "an extraordinary book" […] and where that special number is to be published'.[97] The ongoing rows on the business-management facets of the periodical press circulated around the *Edinburgh Review* and Maxwell's foolish letter to the *Morning Star* revealing his misleading claims in advertisement.[98] As Wolff writes, 'Maxwell had been effectively demolished'.[99] Arguably, Greenwood had more success in decimating Maxwell's reputation than Braddon's.

On 28 September the scandal burst from simply the 'Correspondence' column to fill the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Saturday Review*, and the *Spectator*, and a highly sarcastic poem appeared in *John Bull*.[100] Sparking anger in Greenwood, whilst admitting that *Circe* was 'sham' writing, the *Saturday Review* defended Braddon's right to a pseudonym and the *Spectator* feared 'a journal of such standing as our respected contemporary would make an unjustifiable use of a woman's name in order to gratify a literary animosity'.[101] As Wolff argues, in the *Spectator*'s response, 'one of the most respected and feared critical

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[97] 'Chesterton Smith', 'Correspondence', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 September 1867, p. 2.

[98] See 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 September 1867, p. 8 and 'Jacques', *Morning Star*, 26 September 1867, p. 3. Then, in 'Occasional Notes', Greenwood ridiculed Maxwell's foolish letter to the *Morning Star* defending advertisements for *Circe* which used a quotation from the *Edinburgh Review*. Maxwell claimed to have removed 'Daily' for space in the advertisement, a claim that Greenwood destroyed by revealing that Maxwell has instead added the word *Edinburgh*; 'the title is neither the *Edinburgh Review* nor the *Edinburgh Daily Review*, but the *Daily Review*'. See 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 September 1867, p. 8.

[99] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 211.

[100] See 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 September 1867, p. [1121], 'Opinion in the Weekly Reviews: The Romance of Babington White', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 September 1867, pp. [119–20], 'Opinions in the Weekly Reviews', *Spectator*, 28 September 1867, pp. 1083–1084, and 'The Romance of Babington White', *Saturday Review*, 28 September 1867, pp. 399–400, and 'Circe', *John Bull*, 5 October 1867, p. 692. Also, a controversial advert was reprinted in Dutch newspapers. The *Pall Mall Gazette* capitalized on being an evening paper in its speedy replies. Interestingly, at the end of the issue published on 28 September, the *Pall Mall Gazette*'s 'Advertisements' section contained one for 'Miss Braddon's New Illustrated Magazine. Now ready, Price 1s., Belgravia for October.' and 'The New Novel By the Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," &c., In 3 vols. At all libraries, Birds of Prey'. Braddon's name was contained, covertly perhaps, within the same pages but under her own terms. See 'Advertisements & Notices', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 September 1867, p. 1132. As Wolff argues, 'At this juncture, the *Saturday Review* and *Spectator* entered the lists'. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 212.

[101] 'Opinions in the Weekly Reviews', *Spectator*, 28 September 1867, pp. 1083–1084. The *Saturday Review* described Braddon and White as the twin deities Isis and Osiris, as she has already 'covered the name of Braddon with immortal glory'. See 'The Romance of Babington White', *Saturday Review*, 28 September 1867, pp. 399–400.

journals unmistakably intervened on MEB's side'.[102] The ruthless exchanges continued to revolve around forgery but with the *Spectator* gained a more political tenor on the nature of reviewing etiquette.[103] The *Spectator* forced the *Pall Mall* to admit forgery.[104] But Greenwood presented attacking reviews from the *Morning Star* on 8 October reminding Braddon that, as she wrote to Bulwer-Lytton, 'my enemies are many, and their arrows stick fast in me'.[105] However, and as Wolff identifies, '[Greenwood's] main point was both irrefutable and important. MEB had taken most of *Circe* from Feuillet and one episode from Balzac, and she had no real leg to stand on'.[106] 'A Remonstrance' epitomises Braddon's audacity as an editor. As Easley argues, 'Victorian women were not merely the objects of critical attacks; they meted out their own criticism as editor and reviewers'.[107] Braddon replied in *Belgravia*.

In Captain Shandon, Braddon adds a layer of metafictionality reinvoking Thackeray's fictional editor. *Pendennis*'s fictional incarnation of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, written 'by gentlemen for gentlemen', had formed the inspiration for the daily tabloid.[108] In 'A Remonstrance' Braddon brazenly reinvented 'Captain Shandon from the Marshalsea' to write to Greenwood as 'Your predecessor and humble servant'. As Phegley identifies, Braddon was mocking Greenwood and 'the shroud of anonymity that enabled such cut-throat critical practices by taking on the guise of Captain Shandon'.[109] The whole article has an exaggerated and verging on vicious tone contending with the criminalisation of *Circe* and Babington White for forgery; 'A Remonstrance' asserts blame and guilt upon Greenwood and the *Pall*

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[102] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 213. The *Saturday Review* was not consistently on Braddon's side and viciously criticised *Charlotte's Inheritance*, namely Valentine Hawkehurst. However, as Phegley discusses, 'On Braddon's behalf, Edward R. Russell dealt the ultimate blow to the *Saturday Review* by announcing that they were the founders of a kind of criticism that had become "as sensational in motive as the most sensational novel"'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 168 and Edward R, Russell, '"Thorough" in Criticism"', *Belgravia*, November 1868, p. 39.

[103] For the key examples see 'Opinion in the Weekly Reviews: The Romance of Babington White', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 September 1867, p. 1119–20 (p. 1120), 'Good-Natured Criticism', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 October 1867, p. 9, 'Opinions in the Weekly Reviews', *Spectator*, 5 October 1867, p. 9, and 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 October 1867, p. 5.

[104] The *Spectator* hoped that *Pall Mall* would "set about discovering the authorship of the forged letter" and Miss Braddon that "of the stolen novel". See 'Opinions in the Weekly Reviews', *Spectator*, 5 October 1867, p. 9 and 'Occasional Notes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 October 1867, p. 5.

[105] MEB to Bulwer, No. 29, 10 October 1867, *Harvard Library Bulletin* (April 1874), pp 129–161. The quotation and references are taken from Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*.

[106] Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 214. Wolff also considers the extent of the damage caused by Maxwell's role in the advertising setting out how 'no return that *Circe* may have brought her could compensate for the pain it cost her. And John Maxwell's fake claim and unsatisfactory explanation with regard to the *Edinburgh Review* had only made matters worse'. Ibid.

[107] Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*, p. 4.

[108] See William Makepeace Thackeray, *The History of Pendennis* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1850).

[109] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 166.

*Mall Gazette*.[110] Demonstrating the importance of reading the periodical articles and novels in dialogue with each other, the new dimension to Braddon's professional role and the scandal are interdependent; as Phegley identifies, '[t]he increased vitriol and personal attacks against Braddon reflect her growing visibility and power as editor of her own popular periodical'.[111] Braddon could be seen as hiding behind the figure of Captain Shandon to conclude the battle, but importantly it was emphatically *Belgravia* which had the final say in a reply prioritising her own readers over Greenwood's.

Reflecting the shifts in focus in the scandal 'A Remonstrance' contests the very nature of gentlemanliness and the moral ambitions of the *Pall Mall*. Captain Shandon asks, '[w]ould not the gentleman writing for gentlemen hasten to apologise for his unwitting furtherance of a malicious plot […] Go to school, Mr. Editor, and learn what it is to be a gentleman'.[112] The article's continually vivid language accuses Greenwood's misunderstanding of the concept of the gentleman, recounting Greenwood's supposed failures in the duties and responsibilities to his readers in his behaviour. Braddon places herself alongside Greenwood in professional status, yet perhaps above him in moral motivations, behaviour to literary colleagues, and loyalty to readers. Aligning with the *Spectator*'s question of why Braddon should be singled out for such vicious attacks, Captain Shandon proceeds to defend plagiarism offering examples of other authors who have 'helped [themselves] with a very free hand'.[113] The stated intention of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the nature of the professional gentleman author are questioned. Perhaps Braddon was cautious in her use of a male pseudonym to voice this defence, yet arguably by adopting a personage claiming to be the male editor of a gentlemanly periodical a direct comparison can be drawn between Captain Shandon and Greenwood.

The attack is brought to a close with praise of Braddon and, importantly, her readership. Captain Shandon speaks confrontationally, explicitly defending Miss Braddon and popular female novelists, using unashamedly gendered language to champion female authors' popularity. He writes,

> Miss Braddon, I imagine, has no higher inspiration than to please that novel-reading public which has hitherto applauded and encouraged her efforts to amuse its leisure hours; I am sure that her readers will not withdraw their support from her because she

[110] Wolff describes 'A Remonstrance' as 'Reviewing the entire controversy in fine Maginnian prose [and] blast[ing] the *Pall Mall Gazette* for its overblown attack on *Circe*'. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 215.
[111] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 165.
[112] Charles Shandon, 'A Remonstrance', *Belgravia*, November 1867, pp. 80–86 (p. 85 and p. 83). Hadjiafxendi explores the definitions and constructions of the gentleman reviewer in the mid-nineteenth century. See Hadjiafxendi, 'Negotiating Fame'.
[113] Shandon, 'A Remonstrance', p. 85.

> has been made the subject of a most unmanly attack […] you will do well in future to refrain from these noisy onslaughts upon popular female novelists; which are more characteristic of the disappointed author of two or three unappreciated novels than of the gentleman editor who writes for gentlemen readers.[114]

With 'A Remonstrance' Braddon defends *Circe* by casting Greenwood as a failed male novelist and by prioritising popularity and respect between writers. Braddon consciously allies herself with her readership to stand against Greenwood, using them as an army to defeat the scandal that surrounds her. Although the scandal can be read as exacerbating Braddon's vulnerability in the literary marketplace, seeing the alliances formed suggests that the notoriety helped to establish *Belgravia*. Braddon created and assumed the literary character of 'Captain Shandon', from *Pendennis*'s *Pall Mall Gazette*, a metafictional piece in its own right, to claim the final word in 'this Babington White question'.[115]

Just as 'A Remonstrance' was a direct reply to Greenwood and the scandal surrounding *Circe* and Babington White, Sala's 'Cant' was a fierce attack on Oliphant's '"undoing" of novels' in *Blackwood*'s *Magazine* published only two months earlier.[116] Although Sala was the most prolific of the Dickens's Young Men writing for *Belgravia*, one of the most overtly metafictional pieces in the periodical is his article 'Cant' replying on behalf of sensation fiction novels and novelists, *Belgravia*, and Braddon.[117] The article is in Sala's name, rather than printed anonymously or under a pseudonym, opening with 'I' and a personal story of himself as a child; however, 'Cant' is simultaneously written deliberately and openly from the stance of the periodical, constructing the self-conscious tension between the individual writer and the unified periodical integral to *Belgravia*'s identity.[118]

Although now known to be written by Oliphant, Braddon and Sala assumed that *Blackwood's* article was written by a man and, echoing Captain Shandon, Sala's most direct and cutting comments employ the term gentleman, here 'Scotch gentleman', distancing Braddon from critics characterised as morally corrupt and deceiving their readers. Also,

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[114] Ibid., p. 86.
[115] Ibid.
[116] See Margaret Oliphant, 'Novels', *Blackwood's*, September 1867, pp. 257–280. Carnell argues that Braddon 'clearly remained sensitive about this and other bad reviews for years, parodying them in *Hostages to Fortune* (1875) where Herman Westray gets terrible reviews from the *Censor*'. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, p. 178. Oliphant, 'Novels', *Blackwood's*. On Braddon's wider use of her editorial role as a campaign against reviewing see Solveig C. Robinson, 'Editing Belgravia: M. E. Braddon's Defense of "Light Literature"', *Victorian Periodical Review*, 28 (1995), 109–22.
[117] Costantini sees 'Cant' as part of the defence of sensation fiction and business-minded professional authorship in Braddon and *Belgravia*. See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*. For further discussion of Sala and his essay 'Cant', see Peter Blake, *George Augustus Sala and the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: The Personal Style of a Public Writer* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).
[118] Palmer describes Sala as 'a major figure in Braddon's bevy of sensational promotors'. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 159.

drawing together the *Spectator*'s comments and 'A Remonstrance' Sala casts the critic, and implicitly *Blackwood's*, as jealous and threatened by Braddon and *Belgravia*: 'I suppose it is because she rose so rapidly, by her own unassisted genius, pluck, and perseverance, that the candid gentleman in *Blackwood* abuses her so'.[119] In terms of the marketplace, the rivalry between writers as well as their dependence on the commercial workings of the profession is exaggerated perhaps but is inherent to both the content and the tone of Sala's article. Contributing to *Belgravia*'s campaign 'Cant' rips to pieces the review's definition of the sensational. Sala draws out all of the 'sensational' elements of the authors and novels celebrated in *Blackwood*, particularly Sir Walter Scott's novels, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Edward Bulwer Lytton's 'Lady Blessington and Mrs. Gore', and Mr Harrison Ainsworth's novels.[120] Sala's article unravels the canon established by *Blackwood's* and the realism it claims to celebrate.

Sala energetically, violently, and sensationally berates reviewers across the press for not reading the novels they declare their opinions upon, for being lazy, and not skilled enough for their role, powerfully reinforcing Shandon's confrontation of *Pall Mall*'s staff. Sala declares that he will tear apart *Blackwood's Magazine*'s 'Canting critics' and 'proceed to pick the sermon and critic to pieces; to rip him up and shake the bran and sawdust out of him, and to make of his text a stirrup-leather'.[121] Identifying *Blackwood's* conservative stance, Sala speaks in the most emotive language on the article's moral constructions, accusing the author of 'Novels' as writing 'prurient prudery [which] is a distinguishing characteristic of modern cant and modern criticism'.[122] Sala directs his voice to *Belgravia*'s readers establishing a shared perspective upon the article and thus on the sensational; as Braddon did in her metafictional novels, Sala appropriates the imagery of food uniting with his, Braddon's, and *Belgravia*'s readers in defending their shared desires, and interestingly he speaks to both male and female readers directly acknowledging the gender mix of *Belgravia*'s readers and defending women readers as well as women writers.

As well as emphasising his alliance with readers, Sala ends the article aligning himself with *Belgravia* and its editor Mary Elizabeth Braddon. However, there is also a palpable tension between Sala's defence of Braddon and sense of being outdone by her:

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[119] Sala, 'The Cant', p. 55.
[120] Ibid., pp. 48–52. Palmer sees 'Cant' as central to Braddon's, *Belgravia*'s, and her allies' defence and re-construction of the sensational. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, pp. 1–34.
[121] Sala, 'Cant', p. 48.
[122] Ibid., p. 53.

> to me there is a kind of pleasure, mingled with sadness, in assailing her detractors in a magazine which she conducts, remembering as I do that it was in a magazine which *I* conducted—in *Temple Bar*—that she first shouldered *me* out of the way.[123]

Sala exacerbates the sense of her power and authority in the literary marketplace consciously placing Braddon on an equal, or ever superior, footing with him. Sala's references to 'shouldering' and 'cudgels' can be seen as indicative of how Braddon's network of writers chimed with her fictional ones, with her aggressively upwardly mobile and violent heroines. Selecting the term 'conducted' to discuss Braddon's editorship, Sala aligns himself and Braddon with Dickens's literary prestige. Sala and Yates were, as Edwards suggests, 'irked by Maxwell's meddling incompetence and referred to him privately as "duffer" or "Don Duffero". Like other people, however, they were charmed by Braddon, who treated them, as she tended to treat all established male writers, with flattering deference'.[124] Between Braddon, Maxwell, Sala, and Yates was a constantly shifting dynamic of authority, loyalty, and friendship as all writers moved through the multi-faceted literary marketplace in their careers. Braddon's 'A Remonstrance' and Sala's 'The Cant of Modern Criticism' directly engaged in dialogue with specific events or publications, but also with *Belgravia*'s readers and the fiction in this period of *Belgravia*.[125] The argument Sala constructs is strengthened by viewing it within the periodical, supporting the value of considering the material context of articles rather than only reading the content in isolation.

In *Dead-Sea Fruit*, Laurence Desmond has the 'remorseless pen of the editor' (4: p. 7).[126] Laurence is her first fictional editor and Braddon's metafiction tempers the confrontational tone of both 'A Remonstrance' and 'The Cant of Modern Criticism' by creating a complex fictional author behind that 'remorseless pen'. As Costantini argues, 'the contradictory elements of his characterization raise some ethical and professional dilemmas with which Braddon was confronted when she came to play conflicting leading roles in the periodical marketplace'.[127] Comparable to Daniel, Laurence writes his own satirical pieces and, is 'pledged' to the publishers to write biased, often harsh reviews (4: p. 6). Echoed

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[123] Ibid., p. 55. Sala took on the role of editor of *Temple Bar* for Maxwell, an optimistic appointment but most fulfilled by him and valued by Maxwell; however, in Braddon, Maxwell found, as Edwards describes, 'a permanent cushion against adversity'. See Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*, p. 74.

[124] Edwards also suggests that Yates and Sala sensed that Braddon too 'probably had mixed feelings about Maxwell herself'. Ibid.

[125] Palmer links Sala's 'Cant' to the construction of readers in *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

[126] From this point in the chapter all references to *Dead-Sea Fruit* will be given only as the issue number and page number in brackets in the body of the writing, rather than also including *D-SF* as is given in the rest of the thesis.

[127] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 72.

throughout Braddon's novels, writers are poised between imagination and adhering to the requirements and identity of the publication. In *Dead-Sea Fruit* Braddon fictionalises the editor's experience, dramatising the constraints exerted by publishers, printers, and inflexible time patterns from the other side of the desk. Importantly, guilt at missing deadlines, hard-work, and his unfailing emphatic nature align Laurence with Braddon's and *Belgravia*'s defence of professional authorship founded on industry.

Although Laurence Desmond may be seen as Braddon's most overt alter ego, her voice is also heard in some of the more unexpected characters, lending a more subtle, multifaceted construction of authorship. As discussed in chapter two, Braddon was torn between what Shattock describes as the 'competing pulls' experienced by Victorian women writers, during this period of her career as Miss Braddon, 'The Conductor', and Mrs Maxwell.[128] The November installment sees the ambiguous relationship between public and private identities in Emily Jerningham's relationship with Laurence.[129] Distinctively echoing Sala's and Shandon's violent and exaggerated language, Emily's tone is often sensational with cutting barbs at critics, both de-glorifying the literary world and acknowledging the personal and financial investment in it. However, Braddon ultimately constructs Emily Jerningham as expressing desperation: 'In plain English, she was jealous […] "He has that odious *Pallas* to interest him [and] the excitement of earning his money. He has his social triumphs and his literary successes, the friendship of great men"' (4: p. 11). Emily is restrained by both social conventions of marriage as well as the lack of purpose and employment for wealthy women. If their relationship is regarded, as Costantini considers, as 'strongly evocative of the criticized affair that Braddon was having with Maxwell', Braddon's narrative voice is divided between the male author and the woman accused of adultery. The division between Braddon's professional and private lives can be seen in the tension between Laurence Desmond's voice as a committed yet worn-down editor and Emily Jerningham's voice expressing jealousy of his freedom and anger at the marriage laws.

*Dead-Sea Fruit*'s fourth instalment also speaks to Braddon's interest in the theatre as a creative space and marketplace, including a letter from Mr Alford introducing his daughter this aspiring actress Miss Lucy Alford (Miss St. Albans) and Laurence goes to the theatre to

[128] *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, p. 5.
[129] Costantini discuses Laurence's relationship with Lucy and Emily in terms of social class. Costantini identifies Emily as an upper class woman trapped by wealthy tedium and Lucy as a rising and ambitious middle-class woman: 'Unlike the upper-class couple [The Jerninghams], the high-flying editor and his chosen bride embody specific bourgeois values, the vitality of which is opposed aristocratic do-nothingness'. See Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, pp. 70–1 (p. 71).

watch her perform.[130] The illustration, positioned at the front of *Belgravia*, depicts Lucy sitting sewing a costume while Laurence and her father stand speaking, entitled 'Miss St. Albans'. Alongside Lucy talking of her own appearance as physical costuming for the role of Pauline in *Lady of Lyons*, there is a metaphorical donning of costume by Laurence and in the illustration we see 'a hot-house flower in the [buttonhole of the] fashionable editor's faultless overcoat' (4: p. 16). Both of their costumes are seen in an illustration used to greet readers and to be viewed whilst reading not simply this instalment of the novel but all of the other items within *Belgravia*'s pages, including 'Cant'. Professional performance implicitly chimes with the multiple identities assumed by Braddon in this installment of *Belgravia*, as *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s author, *Belgravia*'s editor, Babington White, and Captain Shandon.

Placing Sala's article in intimate proximity with 'A Remonstrance' and *Dead-Sea Fruit* sheds more light on their collaborative effect, drawing attention to their metafictional facets. Written under a pseudonym, a critic's name, and an author's name respectively the three epitomise the range of voices heard through each number of *Belgravia*. Bringing together 'The Cant of Modern Criticism' and 'A Remonstrance' the issue raises a fierce voice against Frederick Greenwood and Braddon's critics more broadly. These articles standing with the fictional incarnations of writers exacerbates the deliberate, self-conscious, and metatextual nature of *Belgravia*.

February 1868: 'On the "Sensational" in Literature and Art' and 'The Little Arcadian Comedy'[131]

After seeing the illustration 'Mrs. Jerningham Visits Lucy' the readers found the contents pages including the seventh instalment of *Dead-Sea Fruit* and George Augustus Sala's 'On

[130] Braddon's own voice perhaps can be heard in the recounting of the trials faced actors and the difficulty of acting itself: in *Dead-Sea Fruit* acting is described as an 'art which is perhaps amongst the most difficult and exacting of all arts, and which has no formulae whereby the student may arrive at some comprehension of its mysteries. It is an art that is rarely taught well, and very often taught badly; and art which demands from its professors a moral courage and an expenditure of physical energy, and emotional feeling demanded by no other art; and when a man happens to be endowed with those many gifts necessary to perfection in this art, he is spoken of in a patronising tone as "only an actor;" and it is somewhat a matter of wonder that he should be "received in society"' (IV: p. 26). Reviews of Braddon's performances include, 'Musical Intelligence', *Judy*, 1867, p. 99. ['Braddon singing in a concert – 'Grand Sensation Song ("She Murdered Both Her Husbands") Miss M. E. Braddon (Much Applauded)']. Carnell writes on the difference between Maxwell's attitude to her acting in amateur dramatic and that of some of the male characters. She also discuss how Braddon was influenced by her theatrical past when it came to translation and therefore arguably plagiarism arguing that 'What Braddon had at first failed to realise was that what was acceptable in the free and easy world of the theatre was altogether a different matter to literary critics'. See Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 220.

[131] *D-SF*, 7: p. 398.

the "Sensational" in Literature and Art'.[132] The February number also included Braddon's poem 'After the Battle'.[133] Sala's article echoes his defence in 'The Cant of Modern Criticism', although here Braddon and *Belgravia* are only mentioned amid an extensive list of sensationalists. Rather than a personal attack, Sala imbues 'On the "Sensational"' with a wider critique of the periodical press, fortifying Braddon's and *Belgravia*'s defence of the genre.[134] Sala justifies the emotive and dramatic in literature constructing the 'howl' as integral to human nature, rather than artificially created: 'Society must have a Cry'.[135] Just as in 'Cant', 'On the "Sensational"' undoes the authority of reviews providing an extensive exploration of scandals, arguments, and quarrels between writers and publications.[136] Creating a powerful sense of intimacy and alliance with *Belgravia*'s readers Sala asks, 'May I whisper in the reader's ear?' and 'What is Sensationalism, and who is Sensational?'.[137] Sala's secret is that sensationalism and 'the Cry' pervade literature and art far beyond the defined genre sensation fiction, determinedly undermining the canonisation of literature. Sala also expands the scope of his article by identifying sensationalism in professions beyond authorship distinctly engaging with the portrayals of the medical and legal professions in *The Lady's Mile*'s, *Birds of Prey*, and *Charlotte's Inheritance* examined in the previous chapter. Crafting the sensational as present within society rather than isolated in literature, Sala implicitly accuses those who disparage sensation fiction as demeaning swathes of Victorian society: 'On the "Sensational"' ends by telling how rejecting sensationalism would 'let Dulness reign triumphant, and Universal Darkness cover all'.[138]

Even more explicitly than in 'Cant', Sala uses his status as 'having all [his] life more or less intimately connected with what are called "literary circles"' to forge his right to

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[132] See George Augustus Sala, 'On the "Sensational" in Literature and Art', *Belgravia*, February 1868, pp. 449–458. Please note that the article will be referred to as 'On the "Sensational"' from here. The February issue of *Belgravia* also includes: T.H.S. Escott, 'Communicative Personas' [article]; 'Lying in Wait' [illustrated poem]; 'Noel d'Arcy, A.B., 'recollections of Her Majesty's Theatre' [article]; H. Savile Clarke, 'The Portrait's Warning' [short story]; S. N.E. 'Living Upon Paper' [article]; W.T., 'The Last Days of Pompeii' [illustrated poem]; Major H. Byng Hall, 'Bric-a-brac Hunting' [article?], Walter Thornbury, 'London Palaces' [article]; H. Savile Clarke, 'The Last of the Wreck' [illustrated poem]; J. Scoffer, M. B., 'Nitro-Glycerine and Other Explosives' [article]; 'by the author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," etc.' [Percy H. Fitzgerald], *Diana Gay/A Novel* [novel]; M.E. Braddon, 'After the Battle' [poem].

[133] M.E. Braddon, 'After the Battle'.

[134] See Sala, 'On the "Sensational"'. Running through *Belgravia* are articles directly tackling literary criticism including Edward R. Russell, '"Thorough" in Criticism"', *Belgravia*, November 1868, p. 39–48 and J. Campbell Smith, 'Literary Criticism', *Belgravia*, April 1867, pp. 225–34.

[135] Sala, 'On the "Sensational"', p. 451.

[136] Sala gives examples such as those between *Blackwood*'s, Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, and French Romanticists.

[137] Ibid., p. 453 and p. 456.

[138] Ibid., p. 458.

defend the sensational.[139] The article's self-consciousness echoes his other work, for instance the memoir of his time with Dickens, as discussed earlier in the chapter. 'On the "Sensational"' unashamedly capitalises on Sala's alliance with Dickens to strengthen his validity as the defendant placing them at the heart of lists and histories of sensationalism:

> The only wonder is that the charitable should have failed to discover that among modern "sensational" writers, Mr. Charles Dickens is perhaps the most thoroughly, and […] persistently, "sensational" writer of the age.[140]

By identifying himself as within Dickens's circle, *Belgravia* and Braddon are connected to Dickens's fame and success by extension.[141] Although 'On the "Sensational"' is not as vocally attacking a specific article, Joseph Charles Parkinson's article, 'What is Sensational?' published in *All the Year Round* asks the same question.[142] As Palmer discusses, articles running through *Belgravia*, embed the sensational within non-fiction articles: for instance, Hutton, 'like Sala, employs a digressive and imaginative style, which fits perfectly into the strategy of sewing sensational images into essays on non-sensational topics'.[143] As Braddon was used to typify sensation fiction, Sala employs Dickens to typify popularity and genius to champion and defend *Belgravia* and Braddon, bringing together the strands of his career to confront critics. Phegley draws attention to the need to consider these articles and novels in dialogue with each other arguing that,

> [u]nderstanding the magazine's progressive discourse helps explain how Sala was able to make the proclamation that "*Belgravia* is a sensational magazine, and Miss Braddon is a dreadfully sensational novelist" ring with victory rather than with defeat.[144]

Together, Sala, Braddon, and *Belgravia* determinedly defend sensationalism. 'On the "Sensational"' exemplifies the networks and collaborative nature of the literary profession.

In the same number of *Belgravia* in which Sala's article is berating reviewers, *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s miniature marketplace surrounds a burgeoning romance story and budding young

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[139] Ibid., p. 453.
[140] Ibid., pp. 453–4.
[141] Sala also narrates how, 'when Mr. Dickens started *Household Words*, and successively gathered round his contributors such young men as James Hannay, Blanchard Jerrold, Robert Brough, Walter Thornbury, and , later, John Hollingshead, the cry was raised against these gentlemen that they were each all "slavish imitators of Dickens"—mere clients and convenient men of the great patron. This Cry died out as these young gentlemen grew middle-aged, and found that they could do something for themselves. For a while there was rather a cessation in literary Cries'. Ibid., p. 455.
[142] Joseph Charles Parkinson, 'What is Sensational?', *All the Year Round*, 2 February 1867, pp. 221–224.
[143] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 64. For examples of his articles see James Hutton, 'A Norman Watering Place', *Belgravia*, September 1867 and 'Women of Ancient Rome', *Belgravia*, December 1868.
[144] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 161. As well as briefly examining Sala's article, Phegley looks at Mortimer Collins, '"Mrs. Harris"', *Belgravia*, December 1870, pp. 158–86.

actress's narrative. Just as the fourth part was introduced by an illustration of Miss St. Albans', the illustration greeting *Belgravia*'s readers in February 1686, is 'Mrs. Jerningham Visits Lucy'.[145] Laurence narrated to Emily the story of his tutor's daughter telling the 'simple little history very pleasantly, and not without a touch of pathos' (7: p. 388). Drawn to the narrative and after meeting the heroine, Emily's intrigue and jealousy brings Lucy the charitable and tactful social education central to her professional chances. Ultimately financially funded by Laurence, Lucy arguably fictionalises Braddon's reliance on Maxwell and education by role models in women writers. Braddon's metafiction dramatises the gender dynamics within the literary marketplace providing a more subtle response than the explicitly political campaigns in the non-fiction articles. *Dead-Sea Fruit* foreshadows the gender politics discussed in chapter two in *One Thing Needful* and *Vixen* in which, rather than it being a subplot, the heroines experience an inevitable reliance on a man funding their writing,.

In *Dead-Sea Fruit* the delusional and failed writers Theodore de Bergerac and Harold Jerningham watch the blooming romance between Eustace Thorburn and Helen de Bergerac. De Bergerac works on his hobby and naïvely watches his daughter and his secretary; 'The scholar was too unskilled in the study of youthful hearts to read the mysterious cipher in which the secret thoughts of lovers are written' (7: p. 398). Harold also watched tainted by his aspirations and failure; he had 'discovered that a handsome face, a manner eminently successful in feminine society, an intimate acquaintance with classic literature, a fine fortune, and some ambition for literary fame, do not make a Byron' (7: p. 399). Harold's envy sparks an examination of the definitions of gentlemanliness intimately associated with conceptions of the Victorian professional writer.[146] *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s fictional writers chime with the term gentleman in the plagiarism debate connected to *Circe*. Braddon's criticisms of Greenwood's concepts of gentlemanliness as Captain Shandon in 'A Remonstrance' are echoed in her depictions of Theodore de Bergerac and Harold Jerningham. Both men stepped away from the professional sphere, ungentlemanly in their personalities, but also impractical and lacking ambition. Delusions of grandeur are embodied in Harold's failures whereas the narrative sympathy is with Eustace whose 'ambitious hopes were never paraded' (7: p. 399). Eustace writes a long, romantic poem, but hard work and talent are brought together more

[145] Louis Huard, del. and W. L. Thomas, sc., 'Mrs Jerningham Visits Lucy', *Belgravia*, November 1868, p. 391.
[146] For work on conceptions of gentlemanliness and professionalism more generally see Hadjiafxendi, 'Negotiating Fame' and Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature* .

successfully in him, particularly when placed in opposition to the failures of Theodore de Bergerac and Harold Jerningham.

Eustace's and Helen's romantic love story is also watched, read by Sala's alter ego, Daniel Mayfield, and read alongside his article asking 'what is sensational?' Eustace's practical relationship with writing and publishing, his short poems sent to Daniel and published in magazines, is tied to the writer standing at the opposite end of the spectrum of Braddon's depiction of the literary marketplace. Daniel has the most practical view of '"this pretty little pastoral comedy"' warning Eustace to tell de Bergerac the truth (7: p. 407). Daniel's advice could also be read as acting as a plot device for making the novel more obviously sensational, directly echoing Sala's article and *Belgravia* defending its writers and attacking its critics. Daniel is an ambitious and hard-working professional, as well as a spend-thrift caught by a desire to consume and who writes unashamedly sensational reviews. Harold Jerningham and Theodore de Bergerac challenge the relationship between gentlemanliness and professional authorship alongside Daniel Mayfield who, as Costantini argues, 'both incarnates and defies the distinctive virtues of the Victorian bourgeoisie'.[147] Although, Daniel discourages Eustace from becoming as embroiled in the periodical press as he is himself:

> "take to heart this one precept throughout your literary career: you only have one master, and that master is the British public [and beware] when the false prophets assail you,—they who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves,—the critics who are no critics, but unsuccessful writers or trade rivals in disguise". (7: p. 406)

The contentious but vital relationships between writers, editors, reviewers, and the public are confronted, and ultimately celebrated in this installment. In *Dead-Sea Fruit*, Braddon traces the diverse characters that fill the Victorian literary sphere, revolving around the theatrical tale and the romantic love plot.

## April 1868: 'Glimpses of Foreign Literature' and a Sensational Subplot

Not all of the self-conscious articles published alongside *Dead-Sea Fruit* were written by Sala and in April 1868 one of Braddon's own non-fiction articles was published.[148] In the

[147] Costantini, *Sensation and Professionalism*, p. 73.

[148] Also in the April issue: 'The Dawn of Truth' [illustrated poem]; 'Babington White/author of "Circe," etc.', *The Mudie Classic* [short story – second of two parts]; George Augustus Sala, 'Paletteville/A Pilgrimage to the Country of "Art for Art" [article]; Walter Thornbury, 'London Palaces' [article]; T.H.S.E[scott]., 'Ill Tidings' [illustrated poem]; 'Léon Faucher, Statesman and Journalist' [article]; 'by the author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," etc.' [Percy H. Fitzgerald], *Diana Gay/A Novel* [novel]; W.T., 'Land in Sight! Home at Last!' [illustrated poem]; J. Scoffern, M.B., '"Beautiful For Ever"', [article]; 'Jane Eyre's School' [short story]; 'by the author of "Lady Audley's Secret," etc.', *Charlotte's Inheritance* [novel].

pages after *Dead-Sea Fruit*, stands Braddon's article, 'Glimpses of Foreign Literature', on George Sand, the pseudonym of Aurore, Baronne de Devant.[149] Importantly, the choice of writer echoes Braddon's, Sala's, and Yates' fascination and alliance with French literature.[150] The presence of France in *Belgravia* is echoed in Sala's article on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the anonymous article tracing the life of Léon Faucher the French politician and journalist 'who had long played a distinguished position in political life and literature'.[151] The number also includes an overtly metafictional piece entitled 'Jane Eyre's School' occupying an ambiguous position between fiction and article.[152] The main feature is written 'F. A. Garland', a former teacher defending the school attended by Charlotte Brontë against her representation of Lowood in *Jane Eyre* and Gaskell's biography *Life of Charlotte Brontë*; significantly, the 'Review' quoted by Garland reproduces extracts from a letter printed in the pamphlet *Vindication* also attacking *Jane Eyre*. Garland is followed by 'ED BELGRAVIA' introducing an anonymous letter also, although ambiguously, defending Brontë's school.[153] Although it is uncertain where 'Jane Eyre's School' lies between factual and fictional, historical and satirical there is an assumed shared knowledge between the writers, editors, and readers building a literary community. Importantly, there are distinct parallels between 'Jane Eyre's School' and the reincarnation of the *Pendennis* metafiction in 'A Remonstrance'.

April was also the month that *Charlotte's Inheritance* commenced its serialisation Braddon's 'Explanation' on the very first page tells readers that the Proprietor and the Conductor, Maxwell and Braddon are yielding to their readers' desires and, slightly grudgingly, including thirty-two extra pages for *Charlotte's Inheritance*. Braddon tells the tale of how, despite requests, she thought readers really needed a new novel, providing *Dead-*

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[149] For valuable research on George Sand see Elizabeth Harlan, *George Sand* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), David A. Powell, *While the Music Lasts: The Representation of Music in the Works of George Sand* (London: Associated University Presses, 2001), and Jane Jordan, '"Literature at Nurse": George Moore, Ouida, and *Fin-de-siècle* Literary Censorship', *George Moore: Influence and Collaboration*, ed. by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn (London, University of Delaware Press, 2014), pp. 69–82.

[150] Phegley suggests that, 'Braddon's endorsements of French fiction was ultimately used to market her novel', for example the *London Leader* on *Birds of Prey* quoted in the *Athenaeum*, 5 October 1867. Phegley argues that, 'Though the *Athenaeum* advertisement touted the novel as Braddon's best work, the *Athenaeum*'s own reviewers remained skeptical about her "purity" and "tact"'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 160. Edwards explores Sala's and Yates's depictions of France including fictional depictions of Balzac in their metafictional novels discussed earlier in the chapter. See Edwards, *Dickens's "Young Men"*.

[151] Léon Faucher was brought to attention by the biography written by his widow 'who has fulfilled her pious task […] with much skill, candour, and simplicity'. See 'Léon Faucher, Statesman and Journalist', *Belgravia*, April 1868. Sala mentions Madame George Sand and 'the authoress of *Dead-See Fruit*'. See George Augustus Sala, 'Paletteville/A Pilgrimage to the Country of "Art for Art"', *Belgravia*, April 1868.

[152] See 'Jane Eyre's School', *Belgravia*, pp. 237–243.

[153] Ibid., p. 243.

*Sea Fruit*; however, *Belgravia*'s decision has been made to take the profit loss and grant a sequel to *Birds of Prey*. Readers are reassured however that,

> At the same time, all the characteristics which have won for BELGRAVIA its recognition as "the best shilling Magazine that England possesses" are preserved in their fullest integrity. BELGRAVIA thus affords the greatest quality of printed matter ever offered in any Monthly Magazine, however high its price; and it is hoped that the quality of its literature will sustain the critical opinion.[154]

In 'Glimpses of Foreign Literature' Braddon portrays Sand, as 'the strange, wonderful woman [who] embraced the career of letters'.[155] Braddon writes of Sand's socially critical, political novels, particularly her unhappy marriage, likening Sand to a mirror on society. Braddon praises, even celebrates, the novels' condemnations of social strictures, particularly marriage conventions commending a 'thirst for retaliation which rankled in [Sand's] breast'.[156] The article, though, is not unmitigated praise and criticises the lack of plot, Sand's attempts to write dramas, and fading success. Braddon's article is prominent in *Belgravia*'s campaign defending sensational, female, prolific authors.

There are unmistakable parallels between Sand, Braddon, and their fiction. Both wrote novels at a voracious rate and Sand's were, as Braddon herself described, condemned as 'the most immoral and pernicious ever written [with] a vein of materialism and voluptuousness'.[157] However, just as Braddon defends women readers in her fictions, 'Glimpses' argues that Sand's style of writing protects her readers from infection; they are safe from harm.[158] The article ends with Braddon celebrating George Sand and her fiction: 'The spark of genius, if occasionally dimmed, blazes out ever and anon in bright dazzling flashes which dispel the darkness and light up, with a glory all their own, the name of George Sand'.[159] 'Glimpses' celebrates a female author who prolifically wrote controversial novels. Interestingly, Braddon predominantly refers to her as Madame Sand arguably indicating an empathic relationship with multiple name and identities; the article traces the journey from

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[154] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, 'Charlotte's Inheritance: Explanation', *Belgravia*, April 1868, p. 244.
[155] 'Glimpses at Foreign Literature', p. 156. Phegley identifies further articles in *Belgravia* and aspects of Braddon's metafiction which served her defence of French literature and endorsement of sensationalism. See T. H. S. Escott, 'Vagueness', *Belgravia*, May 1868, pp. 407–14, 'French Novels', *Belgravia*, July 1867, 'Baudelaire', *Belgravia*, October 1871, and 'the interpolated tale of Gustave Lenoble (apparently named after Flaubert), in *Charlotte's Inheritance*'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 159. On 'Vagueness' in more detail ibid., pp. 126–7.
[156] 'Glimpses', p. 156.
[157] Ibid., p. 157.
[158] Phegley discusses how Braddon used articles on French literature as a way to challenge the divide between realism and sensationalism in Britain and sensationalism in *Belgravia* in particular: 'By expanding the minds of the public beyond the narrow confines of British moralism and its limited definition of realism, Braddon hoped to create an atmosphere more amenable to sensation'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 158.
[159] 'Glimpses', p. 160.

Aurore Dupin, to Madame Aurore, Baronne du Devant, to Jules Sand, and finally George Sand but Braddon draws together those public and private names in Madame Sand. Just after the scandal over Braddon's pseudonyms, 'Glimpses at Foreign Literature' was read in the same pages as work presented as by 'M', Babington White, 'Author of "Lady Audley's Secret"', 'Ed. Belgravia', and 'Conductor'.[160]

Key to this installment of *Dead-Sea Fruit* is the subplot of Harold Jerningham's earlier life read in the form of his novel and which will turn out to be Eustace's history, upon discovery that the author and 'C' are his parents.[161] The other main character in this sensational narrative is professional actress Madame Carlitz who entices Harold away from his wife and manipulates him into giving money, a narrative expanded and greatly deepened in *Hostages to Fortune*. The illustration is entitled 'Madame Carlitz', arguably making her the heroine of the instalment, and depicts her gesturing to Harold, implicitly sending him over the cliff.[162] Carlitz deceives and exerts authority over the weaker English gentleman, but does not fulfill the stereotypical role of adulterous outsider. Indicative of Braddon's constant construction of the performativity of social, Carlitz seeks to appear on a '"grander stage, and in an entirely new character. She is going to marry Lord V."' (9: p. 148). Importantly, the deceptive actress is ultimately confined to the more conventional, autobiographical sensation fiction subplot written by a rich, unsuccessful, and morally-suspect gentleman. *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s intricately crafted overarching plot is brazenly sensational but imbued with detailed characterisation, less threatening women, and a hard-working, ethical editor as the most successful fictional writer.

The subplot also serves to dramatise acts of reading and reviewing turning Eustace into a reader and then him and Harold Jerningham into critics. Eustace launches into accusations that the '"writer strikes [him] as a consummate scoundrel"' (9: p. 152). Harold's exaggerated language powerfully echoes the tone of reviews attacking Braddon's morality: '"it is strange that a man can give his villainy to the world in a *poor* book—a book not containing one element of literary success"' (9: p. 153). At the heart of his entirely insincere diatribe is the assumption that the novel equates to the author, that reading the novel is reading the writer. Perhaps most obviously, Eustace and Harold's review reflects those

[160] Palmer argues that using these multiple names 'served to radiate [Braddon's] editorial authority throughout her production'. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 66.
[161] Palmer explores the plots within *Dead-Sea Fruit* arguing that 'Harold is too excessive and exciting a character to be contained by one plot, unless that plot is as capacious and complicated as those of the sensation genre'. Ibid., p. 67.
[162] Louis Huard, del. and W. L. Thomas, sc., 'Madame Carlitz', *Belgravia*, April 1868, p. 134.

written on Braddon's novels providing pedantic criticism of grammar or facts: '"I see a wrong tense here is Latin quotation"' (9: p. 153). Their conversation mirrors the incessant finicky comments on Braddon's writing, moral discourses on her personal life, and reviews on *Circe* filled with debates on the author's identity. Braddon has appropriated the language aimed at her throughout the scandal surrounding *Circe* and Babington White, but also that used against George Sand, which Braddon confronted in 'Glimpses'.

June 1868: 'Literature of the Line' and Mr and Mrs Jerningham Meet Again

In their review of *Birds of Prey*, the *Athenaeum* asked for a change, 'before the Author of "Lady Audley's Secret" palms off upon society this mass of crude and incomplete penny-a-lining, and calls it "a novel in three volumes"'.[163] As part of on-going accusations, the reviewer employs the well-known figure of the 'liner' to infer that Braddon's authorship is mechanical, unoriginal, and low-brow.[164] In 1860 Sala's self-portrait Zillah the Betrayed in *The Baddington Peerage* was called such a writer: "They call me" – he added in a hissing whisper – "a liner, a penny-a-liner".[165] In 1868 *Belgravia* commissioned Sidney L. Blanchard, another of Dickens's Young Men, to defend the 'penny-a-liner', journalism, and catering to the demands of the public. This instalment of *Dead-Sea Fruit*, is arguably the most overtly political, exemplifying Braddon's determined engagement with social issues, particularly regarding the Victorian marriage market, as discussed in chapter two.[166]

'On the "Sensational"' asked 'What is Sensationalism, and who is Sensational?'; 'Literature of the Line' asks, 'Do we never see signs of "the line" in the leading columns and

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[163] 'Birds of Prey', *Athenaeum*, 12 October 1867, p. 461.

[164] The word 'penny' was used in the title of at least thirty five periodicals in the nineteenth century. As discussed in the *DNCJ*, 'The often used "Penny" in magazine titles [at least 35] suggests that something more than cheapness was at stakes, and indeed the concept of the totemic penny formed a battleground between completing ideologies and commercial motives from the 1830s […] penny issue fiction, which gave rise to the term "Penny Dreadful", was similarly absorbed by the many but despised by the influential few, who delivered such cheap literary inflamed ill-educated emotions and wasted potentially social useful time […] The competing meanings implicit in the "penny" tag were never resolved in the Victorian period'. See *DNCJ*, p. 487.

[165] See George Augustus Sala, *The Baddington Peerage*, (London: John Maxwell, 1865).

[166] Also in the June issue: 'University Men in Town' [article]; Walter Thornbury, 'London Palaces' [article]; 'Tyro' [illustrated poem]; 'by the author of "Kiddle-a-Wink," "Mildred's Wedding," etc.', *Another Episode in the Life of Miss Tabitha Trenoodle* [short story]; George Augustus Sala, 'Fallen Among Flunkeys/A Recollection of the Arabian Nights' [article]; 'by the author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," etc.' [Percy H. Fitzgerald], *Diana Gay/A Novel* [novel]; H. Savile Clarke, 'Death Upon the Mountains' [illustrated poem]; 'French etiquette' [article]; R.H. Patterson, 'Sensationalism in Science: Our Coal Fields' [article]; E.M. Dermott, 'The Story of St. Thomas's Hospital' [article]; R. Hogarth, 'The Aloe' [illustrated poem]; 'by the author of "Lady Audley's Secret," etc.', *Charlotte's Inheritance* [novel]; George Augustus Sala, 'Insurance and Assurance'/An Essay' [article].

criticisms of the one, and in the hotpressed pages of the other?'[167] Blanchard reveals shared traits and techniques in multiple forms of authorship declaring that journalism, sermons, public speeches, novels, plays, and poems all contain 'the line': 'Among the mass of writers you find conventional plots, conventional characters, conventional language, and even the plagiarism is of a conventional kind'.[168] By suggesting that 'the line' is present within all forms of writing, Blanchard engaged with the contentious issues of plagiarism implicitly placing Braddon, White, and *Circe* within a broader context of plagiarism and questioning the validity of Greenwood's personal attack.

Sala carried out directed attacks on Braddon's enemies, whilst Blanchard provided a slightly broader angle focusing on the professional practice of writers within the periodical press. Blanchard exposes the selfishness and pettiness of the disparaging comments arguing for the necessity of 'liners'; 'the writers of the Line supply a demand which would not be met by the chosen few, who for the sake of distinction may be called the Guards of Literature'.[169] Blanchard deliberately recognises how the 'Liner' fulfilled a vital role in the periodical press, particularly newspapers, in delivering entertaining, accurate, and amplified news reports to their readers, a job which even Dickens could not achieve with their prowess.[170] Undermining the hierarchy in the periodical press, Blanchard sarcastically analyses the use of classical quotations, "the general reader", "the boy of ten", "the average Englishman", and the impossibility of avoiding Shakespeare's plays. As discussed in the previous chapter, Braddon's metafictional novels dramatised the practicalities of professional authorship; in 'Literature of the Line' Blanchard contributed to *Belgravia*'s strategic defence of sensationalism, readers, and financial demands.

Blanchard's construction of the literary sphere draws attention to Braddon's fictional depiction of a disparate but interconnected network of authors in *Dead-Sea Fruit*. In 'Literature of the Line' Blanchard challenges the stereotype imposed on 'liners' in the same instalment as *Dead-Sea Fruit* challenges the opposition between an artistic poet and a hack. In *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s eleventh part, Eustace is sent to Paris to research for de Bergerac's epic

[167] Sala, 'On the "Sensational"', p. 453 and Sidney L. Blanchard, 'Literature of the Line', *Belgravia*, June 1868, pp. 499–504 (p. 501).
[168] Blanchard, 'Literature of the Line', pp. 503–4. Echoing Sala, Blanchard uses Dickens, his novels, and implicitly 'Household Words' as representative of popularity. Sala's
[169] Blanchard, 'Literature of the Line', p. 504.
[170] Blanchard claims Dickens's name in a very similar way to Sala using his name and fame to both strengthen his argument and to represent a certain style of writing and authorship.

book.[171] On his way the ambitious poet is united with Daniel, the closest to a 'Liner', in reviewing Harold's book and going over the 'significant passages in the autobiographical romance together with much deliberation' (11: p. 464). Braddon's fictional journalist Daniel, was drawn towards the analytical and detective reading, but was never going to resign his excessive spending and lackadaisical way of life. In Paris, Eustace writes 'the great poem' and, to an extent, occupies the figure of a romantic, idealised young poet. Yet, Braddon tempers the stereotype through his published poems, his dedicated hard work for de Bergerac and desire to reach the hearts of his readers:

> The poem which was to make or unmake Mr. Thorburn was no metaphysical treatise done into rhyme—no ambitious epic, ponderous as Milton without Miltonic grandeur. It was a modern romance in verse—a love-story—passionate, tender, tragical, and the heart of the poet throbbed in every line. (11: pp. 465–6)

Eustace's poem refuses to comply with the epitome of classical poets, or the giant boys, and his writing is in keeping with modern literary fashions. In Daniel and Eustace, Braddon illustrates the spectrum of the literary world but undercuts the simplification created by terms such as 'penny-a-liners'.

June brings the last illustration to accompany *Dead-Sea Fruit*, 'Mr. and Mrs. Jerningham Meet Again', reflecting Emily as a heroine.[172] Arguably echoing Madame Carlitz, Emily exerts a degree of authority over Harold commanding him to read the letters which were at the root of Harold's mistaken mistrust and their separation. Speaking openly, almost bluntly on their marriage Emily says,

> "I have kept silence for years; I speak now […] a woman's heart has room for something more than gratitude. A man who marries as you married me is bound to complete his sacrifice. He must give his heart as well as his home and fortune". (11: p. 458–9)

Braddon grants Emily the chance to speak accusingly and find Harold guilty of failing in marriage. In her lengthy, impassioned speeches Emily accuses Victorian marriage conventions failing women throughout society asking for kindness, respect, and love, including the divorce laws trapping women within unhappy marriages. These private, impassioned, letters from Laurence to Emily come from the romantic, perhaps naïve, and poetic period of his writing. Emily is also intimately connected to his professional and public

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[171] Blanchard Jerrold's article, 'Father Prout in Paris', is published one month after Eustace is sent to France. Blanchard Jerrold, 'Father Prout in Paris', *Belgravia*, July 1868, pp. 121–130. While his novel *Diana Gay* is being serialised in *Belgravia*, Fitzgerald wrote a travel piece for *All the Year Round* which was published on 20 June 1868. See Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, 'Birds–Eye Paris', *All the Year Round*, 20 June 1868, p. 30.
[172] Louis Huard, del. and W. L. Thomas, sc., 'Mr. and Mrs. Jerningham Meet Again', *Belgravia*, June 1868, p. 461.

career speaking in a comedic tone of his editorial duties and the press more broadly: '"You may find yourself pledged to something appalling in the way of politics when you get back to London; or discover that one of your dearest friends has been flayed alive by your most savage operator"' (11: p. 467). However, Emily's tone is driven by Laurence's departure for London and jealousy for his independence and professional role closed to her as a high-class woman. Through Emily, Braddon expresses the gender imbalance within Victorian society, implicitly extending to the literary profession. Aided by the trio of Harold, Emily, and Laurence, Braddon forges the most stable balance between romanticism, artistry, and commerce among *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s fictional writers in the editor.

August 1868: 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy', a Declaration of Love, and a Cliff Hanger

In July 1868 Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novel *Robert Ainsleigh* began and *Dead-Sea Fruit* was stripped of the illustrations and consigned to the middle of the number.[173] In August, all three novels were published alongside Sala's, Thornbury's, Fitzgerald's, and Escott's trusted work.[174] *Belgravia* came into publication during a shift in the dominance of anonymity; although, as Brake argues, '[i]f anonymity gradually lost ground during this period, signature *per se* was not a form of personalising that newspapers would readily adopt'.[175] Many of the articles with an intimate relationship with *Dead-Sea Fruit* are overtly signed as by well-known writers; however, *Belgravia* also carried private and anonymous pieces typifying the tension running through the Victorian periodical press between the individual and the

[173] Interestingly the illustrations and the front pages were appointed to *Robert Ainsleigh*, rather than *Charlotte's Inheritance*. *Robert Ainsleigh* was the novel which Braddon wrote until November 1868, but was finished by another writer due to her breakdown. The July number also held an illustrated poem by Braddon. See M.E. Braddon, 'The Lady of the Land', *Belgravia*, July 1868, pp. 82–5.

[174] Also published alongside the thirteenth installment of *Dead-Sea Fruit*: [Mary Elizabeth Braddon] *Bound to John Company/or the Adventure and Misadventures of Robert Ainsleigh* [novel]; George Augustus Sala, 'Letters from Lilliput/Being Essays in the Extremely Little' [article]; T.H.S. Escott, 'Personalities of a Scotch Tour' [article]; William Stigand, 'Habet' [illustrated poem]; Walter Thornbury, 'London Clubs' [article]; J. Campbell Smith, 'A Summer Day-Dream' [article/short story?]; 'by the author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," etc.' *Diana Gay/A Novel* [novel]; R.H. Patterson, 'Sensationalism in Science: Our Coal Fields' [article]; 'Morning Dreams' [illustrated poem]; J.G. Bertram, 'The Whitebait Mystery' [article]; William Sawyer, 'The Trooper's Story' [illustrated poem]; Walter Thornbury, 'Horace in Pall Mall' [poem]; 'Pins' [article]; 'by the author of "Lady Audley's Secret," etc.', *Charlotte's Inheritance* [novel]; Mortimer Collins, 'Under the Limes' [poem]. Escott also wrote 'Literary Bagmanship' which, as Phegley argues, 'a seasoned Belgravian veteran, portrays critic as mere quacks as travelling salesmen of sorts who have unskillfully imitated "the cant jargon of the craft" of literary criticism and are full of "inflated ignorance and arrogant ability"'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 167 and T. H. S. Escott, 'Literary Bagmanship', *Belgravia*, February 1871, pp. 508–12.

[175] Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*, p. 89.

collective.[176] In this issue only 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy', a gendered social commentary, and 'Pins', speaking of the manufacturing and commerce of pins, are anonymous. Only two months after Emily fictionally voices the personal pain or costs of Victorian marriage conventions, 'Marriage' speaks in a non-fictional tone on the social structures, financial demands, and household management.

Like all the articles considered through this chapter, 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy' enters a conversation in the periodical press, in this case on correspondence in newspapers namely the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Times*. The article's distinct tone of superiority claims to offer an improved and superior discussion of marriage than can be provided in the newspapers. Superiority is combined with a conversational tone bringing intimacy and implicitly placing *Belgravia*'s readers above the *Daily Telegraph*'s and the *Times*'s; 'Marriage' can be read as a kind of advertorial. The majority of criticism, most notably Carnell's and Wolff's biographies and Gabriele's *Reading Popular Culture*, does not identify 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy' as Braddon's work.[177] However, in a footnote Palmer lists the article among Braddon's non-fiction oeuvre raising the question as to which anonymous articles in *Belgravia* might be attributed to her.[178] If 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy' had been penned by Sala, Thornbury, or Blanchard their name would in all likelihood be attributed, leaving open the possibility that Braddon penned the article. I suggest that a strong case can be made for Braddon's authorship due to the article's direct challenge to other publications, the attention to marriage conventions, and the intimate relationship with the metafictional novel *Dead-Sea Fruit*.

Supporting the attribution to Braddon and lending a metafictional facet 'Marriage' opens with a dramatised account of the daily life of an editor for whom 'probably his greatest troubles are those which arise from his correspondence'.[179] Describing readers as having a favourite publication and editor endows 'correspondence' columns with an emotional charge; 'Marriage' suggests that their inclusion and the labour involved in collating letters is important among an editor's duties. 'Marriage' also touches on sensation fiction as infectious in a light-hearted tone and, rather than the young woman being corrupted by her reading, the

[176] The question of authorship pervades Victorian periodical criticism, including Braddon and *Belgravia* studies. On anonymity see Easley, *First-Person Anonymous*.
[177] Carnell, *Literary Lives*, Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, and Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*.
[178] In Palmer's list are 'French Literature', July 1868; 'Periodical Literature', July–August 1868; 'A Remonstrance', November 1868; 'Glimpses at Foreign Literature: I George Sand', April 1868. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 9 and p. 30.
[179] 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy', p. 290.

father is deluded by his reading of sensational novels agreeing to a foolish, love-stricken action.[180] Just as Braddon is known for undermining the accusations levelled at supposedly overly impressionable young women readers in her fiction, articles in *Belgravia* also challenge the gendered constructions of sensation fiction readers. Bachelors are characterised as free to enjoy 'selfish excesses'; but 'poor Brown' returns to his wife 'clad in spectral white, shawled, night-capped, and ghastly'.[181] The exaggerated illustrations of bachelors and the flawed marriages potentially awaiting them lends a hint of comedic drama to the article. 'Marriage' charts the impact of social class, the financial, upbringing and, most influentially, parents. Despite the slightly comedic tone, the practicalities of marriage are unflinchingly examined. In the way that Sala's 'Cant' characterises them all as sensational, 'Marriage' firmly establishes professional authorship among other occupations, such as medicine and law, regarding the financial demands at the centre of the Victorian marriage market.

Reflecting Braddon's novels, arguably most overtly foreshadowing *Hostages to Fortune*, 'Marriage' explores the duties and responsibilities exerted upon young women when they enter into marriage, implicitly including to professional writers. Indeed, the article asks, '[w]hy should she change her state? […] Unmarried, a girl has all the freedom she could desire'.[182] As discussed in chapter two, women writers, including Braddon, were caught between the 'competing pulls' of domestic responsibility and the financial demands of their profession. There is a patronising tone in passages of 'Marriage', particularly on lower-class women, which verges on a Patmorian recommendation of the angelic wife. Yet *Belgravia*'s article simultaneously contributes to gender debates by exposing a 'want of proper training'; as a result,

> every girl is of necessity compelled to begin immediately upon her marriage the study of economical sciences as applied to the management of a small household—a business in which success is naturally at first impossible.[183]

The scientific and economical language prevents the 'proper training' from being tied to conventionally feminine abilities, and the article aligns household management with a masculine education. *Belgravia*'s article contributes to the gendered debates, including education, domestic responsibility, and marriage, more fully examined in the next chapter,

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[180] 'Marriage' tells readers that, 'If his father be wise, he will peremptorily forbid anything like matrimony; but if he be weak, sentimental, and a reader of sensational leading–articles, he possibly consents'. Ibid., p. 293. On representations of readers in *Belgravia* and the periodical press more widely see Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 111.
[181] 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy', p. 291.
[182] Ibid., p. 292.
[183] Ibid., p. 295.

centred around the New Woman and Braddon's *The Infidel*. 'Marriage' is written with a complex mixture of the conversational and satirical, and is politically charged; the *Belgravia* article contains a confrontational commentary on the Victorian social conventions surrounding marriage.

The thirteenth instalment of *Dead-Sea Fruit* published alongside 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy' is the penultimate part of the novel. This installment focuses on plot to draw together the narrative lines and step closer to a conclusion. Eustace declares his love for Helen de Bergerac but is denied permission by her father leading to discussions of a lack of security in the 'world of letters'. Eustace is trapped by the conventions of marriage and money; as 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy' says, 'the great obstacle to marriage is the pecuniary one'.[184] Eustace is not financially successful at this stage in the novel, separating him and Helen. Her father forbids Eustace's proposal: '"If you could give my daughter a secure position—a safe and certain home, however unpretending—I would be the last to oppose your suit. But you cannot do this"' (13: p. 270). De Bergerac's words chime with the article expounding upon the need for money to safely commence marriage and draw attention to Eustace's vulnerable social and financial circumstances.

Dramatising the personal cost to the rules of marriage, Eustace still clings to the hope of romance and literary success, despite being restricted by his lack of money. Authority and professionalism are attributed to ability and hard work rather than a nebulous and romanticised vision of genius, drawing attention to the gulf between Eustace's romantic streak and Daniel's frittered-away success:

> [I]f his poem should win recognition, the pathway of literary success would be opened to him, and on his industry and perseverance alone would depend his speedy achievement of a secure position in the world of letters. Such an income as his uncle Daniel earned with ease, and squandered with even greater facility, would support a home which M. de Bergerac's simple taste would not despise. (13: p. 272)

Braddon dramatises the brutal nature of the literary profession, exposing the barriers placed upon authors as well as, arguably, the necessity for financial motivation to writing in order to fulfil social respectability, adhere to established conventions, and achieve personal happiness. The economics of the literary marketplace are a very personal, intimate concern but one that governs how those involved in the periodical press may organise their lives, their relationships, and their businesses; there is perhaps little wonder that the conflict is present within both *Belgravia*'s fiction and journalism.

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[184] Ibid., p. 294.

In *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s final instalments, in which the serial is moved to later in the issue, the sensationalism notably increases. Interestingly, while the four other fictional writers are drawn into the sensationalism, Laurence, Braddon's most balanced author, is absent from the unfolding narrative in Scotland. The chapters fulfill many of the sensation fiction tropes, the coincidental meeting, dramatic setting, discoveries of identities, declarations of romantic love, and risks to life. There is a surprise meeting of Eustace with the de Bergeracs facilitating Eustace's expression of love and Helen's true discovery of passion. Harold, finally, guesses that Eustace is his son. The setting returns to the scenes of Harold, Madame Carltiz, and Eustace's mother on a cliff in the wilds of Scotland. But, most importantly, Eustace makes the mistake of walking on the beach, foolishly thinking he can get to the other side in time, and being presumed drowned despite dramatic scenes of attempted rescue missions. There is also by far the biggest cliff hanger, almost painfully ironic, in which Eustace's life is feared lost at the bottom of the cliff:

> And then to Mr. Jerningham also there came the thought that had come to Daniel Mayfield. That face in life he was never more to see. Should he even look upon it in death—changed, disfigured by the fierce destruction of the waves? Even to see it thus was almost too much to hope. (13: p. 287)

The heightening emotion of these closing installments draws *Dead-Sea Fruit* into the sensationalism expected from the Queen of Sensation Fiction.

## September 1868: Four novels and *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s Characters' Futures

As *Dead-Sea Fruit* draws to a close the final installment ends the series of three issues containing three novels by Braddon herself, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, and *Robert Ainsleigh*, and *Diana Gay* by Fitzgerald.[185] *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s shortest installment concludes the plot lines and offers readers the futures of the characters whose lives they have been reading for a year. *Charlotte's Inheritance*'s plot is already fully established and with the third installment readers are gaining familiarity with *Robert Ainsleigh*. Consequently,

[185] Also published with *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s final installment: *Bound to John Company/or the Adventure and Misadventures of Robert Ainsleigh* [novel]; 'In the Common Room/an Oxford Sketch' [article/short story?]; W. Stigand, 'The Mummy' [article]; Henry S. Leigh, 'Out of the Stream' [illustrated poem]; Walter Thornbury, 'London Clubs' [article]; T.L. Phipson, Ph D., F.C.S., 'Will-O'-The Wisp' [article] W.S., 'In Carnival Time' [illustrated poem]; 'by the author of "Hester Kirton," "Wild as a Hank," etc.', *The Great Kermesse of Antwerp* [short story]; 'by the author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," etc.' *Diana Gay/A Novel* [novel]; T.H.S.E[scott]., 'Landing' [illustrated poem]; George Augustus Sala, 'How Should We Dine—If We Could/An Essay on Cookery' [article]; *Charlotte's Inheritance* [novel]; Evelyn Forest, 'All for Nothing' [poem].

attention has been drawn from *Dead-Sea Fruit* and the focus can turn to the plot and entertainment, rather than bearing the same degree of political and strategic responsibility.

Laurence Desmond receives a happy ending as a financially successful writer marrying the woman he loves, Lucy Alford. Although many reviews see Daniel Mayfield as Braddon's alter ego, Laurence's literary position as *Areopagus*'s editor correlates with Braddon's position as *Belgravia*'s 'Conductor'.[186] Laurence's success as a professional editor is founded on responsibility, industriousness, and entrepreneurial spirit. Nevertheless, he is guilty of satire, a 'remorseless pen' and hints of neglecting a desire to write romantic poetry. Similarly, Laurence's ambiguous relationship with Emily is poised between platonic and immoral, and his generosity and care for Lucy is slightly at odds with his presence at glamorous social occasions.[187] Laurence's inherent contradictions and subtleties are exacerbated when considered within the pages of *Belgravia* alongside the fiercely political articles not only combating definitions of professionalism and defending the sensational, but also tackling marriage conventions.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Eustace is found by Helen in a seemingly impossible cave: it turns out that Eustace '"was distinguished as a gymnast in Belgium"' (13: p. 382). He is nursed back to health by his uncle who will '"fight Death hand to hand beside his bed"' and by Harold who has declared his parentage (14: p. 385). Harold is tainted by his immorality in the past and the high-class gentleman who has spectacularly failed as an author is 'the man who has plucked the Dead-Sea apples that hang ripe and red above the path of life' (14: p. 391).

Echoing the depictions of high-class men in *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*, Eustace uses the 'fruit' from his literary success to enter a socially established profession, rather than living his father's political ambitions. Eustace and Helen marry, while 'his literary career had opened brightly, and the fruits of his poem enabled him to enter himself at the Temple as a student of the law' (14: p. 390). *Dead-Sea Fruit* does not shy away from the reality of needing allies to enter the literary marketplace arguably fictionalising Braddon's and Maxwell's working relationship, bringing together financial security and publicity:

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[186] Costantini explores how the 'violence of his self-division is symbolically rendered by his savage destruction of the pen he is using, a writing tool which tropes his professional duties and interest. On a socio-historical plane, this scene reflects the nineteenth-century redefinition of professional ethics'. Ibid., p. 67.

[187] Costantini identifies how Laurence has more excessive moments yet his commitment to his work and 'tireless industry' bring his professional success and envious looks from the Bohemians of the press. Ibid., p. 65 and p. 70.

> [Eustace's] great poem appeared, and won from the press such speedy recognition and kindly appreciation as would scarcely have been accorded to the work of an unknown poet, if Daniel Mayfield and Mr. Jerningham had not both exerted their utmost influence in its behalf. Daniel did, indeed, with his own hand, write more than one of the notices which elevated his nephew to a high rank among the younger poets. (14: p. 389)

Echoing 'Cant' and 'On the "Sensational"', Sala's alter ego Daniel's work can be read as vocalising the realities of the periodical press. Eustace is granted literary success in artistic terms but he is dependent on Daniel the business-minded journalist and editor.

Reading *Dead-Sea Fruit* in its serialised form increases the sense that these characters are not straightforwardly biographical or alter egos but manifestations of the diversity of writers surrounding Braddon. *Dead-Sea Fruit* is not an isolated novel and its characters, depicted both narratively and visually, stand alongside Braddon, Maxwell, Sala, Fitzgerald, Thornbury, 'The Cant of Modern Criticism', 'The "Sensational" in Literature and Art', 'Literature of the Line, 'Marriage *Versus* Celibacy', and all the other contributors and contributions written for *Belgravia*'s readers during the year. Phegley also argues that, '*Belgravia*'s nonfiction articles, then, built a foundation for the magazine's literary criticism, which encouraged the rejection of literary authorities due to their own sensationalized assessment of the genre'.[188] As Brake describes, 'writers pass through an editorial gateway for publication'.[189] In *Belgravia*, Braddon and Maxwell controlled the gateway for these writers. Some of Dickens's Young Men were, at times at least, Braddon's Young Men or *Belgravia*'s Young Men, employed by Maxwell and edited by Braddon. Their names and their works were 'Conducted' by both Braddon and Dickens.[190] The fictional characters in *Dead-Sea Fruit* bridge the divisions between Braddon's voice as a novelist, her voice as editor and her voice as a Victorian woman; *Dead-Sea Fruit* is integral to Braddon's fiction and is a strand of *Belgravia*'s campaign for popularity and the commercial value of authorship.

**Reviews and Adverts: Their Interrelation**

This section of the chapter explores the perspective that the paratextual provides on the politics and rivalries between periodicals. The interrelation between the reviews and adverts

[188] Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 164. In her argument Phegley uses some of *Belgravia*'s scientific, medical, health, beauty, and natural articles, such as 'An Investigative Adventure', *Belgravia*, November 1866, pp. 55–72.
[189] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 50.
[190] Significant to the interaction between novel and periodical, author and editor, *Vixen* is published shortly after Braddon stopped editing her husband Maxwell's periodical, *Belgravia*.

of *Dead-Sea Fruit* and *Belgravia* is essential to placing Braddon within the practical and economic processes behind the Victorian literary world.[191] Sutherland champions understanding 'the composition, publication, distribution, and consumption of novels. This, it seems to me, constitutes their '"life"'.[192] This materialist approach to the 'life' of a novel proceeds in a different direction to work predicated on the death of the author. Many shilling monthlies like *Belgravia* such as Ellen Wood's *Argosy* and James Virtue's *St. Paul's* were mainly vehicles for the work of their popular editors. Alongside the dynamic between author and editor, is that of the periodical serialising the novel, and the publishing house producing the volume edition(s). Both Brake and Law discuss the concept of a 'house periodical' as one run by the publisher and principally serialising their regular author's novels.[193] As Law argues, these periodicals, 'even if not entirely self-financing, served to provide valuable advertising for the novels when published in volume'.[194] Examples of such periodicals are the *Fortnightly* for Chapman and Hall, *Tinsley's Magazine* for Bentley, and *Broadway* for Routledge. Publishing a fiction in a self-owned periodical provided the profit from the serialised version and the subsequent profits from the novel's sales in volume form; additionally, the advertisement pages can be used to promote forthcoming issues and volumes for free. As well as a forum for self-promotion, periodicals served as mechanism for undermining competing periodicals and publishing houses, most overtly in the reviews. Importantly, quotations from reviews often form the bulk of an advertisement.

Succeeding *St. James's Magazine* and *Temple Bar*, *Belgravia* was owned and published by Maxwell's publishing company located at Warwick House, Paternoster Row, London. Costing one shilling, monthly numbers of *Belgravia* reached peak circulation at over 18,000 copies in 1868; the *Belgravia Annual*, accompanied by the weighty *Belgravia Annual Advertiser*, reached high circulation figures, at times thirty thousand copies.[195] Both editions

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[191] As the *DNJC* identifies, wrappers 'can give us a valuable insight into the interrelation between different publications [and] these materials provide an important reminder of the thoroughly commercial nature of print in the nineteenth century'. See 'Paratexts', *DNCJ*, p. 480. Weedon provides an economically-focused perspective on publishers, authorship, and publications. See Weedon, *Victorian Publishing*.
[192] Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction*, p. xxv.
[193] See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* and Brake, 'The "Trepidation of the Spheres"'.
[194] Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* , p. 25. Law also argues that in the 1860s there was both a 'brief boom in new shilling month literary magazines in the 1860s' and that 'the dominant position of the monthly serial underwent a serious and finally successful challenge from the weekly serial'. Ibid., p. 24.
[195] The Annual was released in December and August. Digitised copies of a few years of the *Belgravia Annual Advertiser* can be found in libraries, including the British Library. On some of the costs, publication figures, and distribution see Gabriele, *Reading Popular Culture in Victorian Print*. The lack of advertisements included in digitised copies of periodicals is a problem facing all researchers on the periodical press. It restricts the understanding of the relationship between the periodical itself and the pages of advertisements, the understanding of publisher's work, and impacts on considering the reader's experience of receiving the number.

acted as a powerful vehicle for Braddon's writing, particularly her novels, and Maxwell's publishing house would receive full profits from the serialised editions.[196] However, Ward, Lock & Tyler published the majority of Braddon's *Belgravia* novels in volume form, and as set out by Carnell, 'most of [Maxwell's] ventures were in some way connected with Ward, Lock & Tyler' at the beginning of his and Braddon's careers.[197] Although, Maxwell's publishing company would not have received full profits, their connection with Ward, Lock & Tyler maintained a good degree of control over the sales, advertisements, and profits from the novels' volume editions.[198] Braddon and Maxwell established a secure working relationship with their publisher and *Belgravia* provided an invaluable space in which to serialise her novels, exert authority, and develop her fame. Participating in scholarship on the interrelation between periodicals, this section will use specific examples to narrow the focus and consider the intense relationship between Braddon's serialised metafiction, reviews, and advertisements. Examining the ways in which *Belgravia*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and Braddon are constructed by critics in reviews and how they are portrayed in their own adverts provides an insight into her and Maxwell's interaction with the network of writers constituting the periodical press. In this concluding section I attend to the patterns of reviews and advertisements in conjunction with the patterns of serialisation.

Reviews: Rarely Impartial Opinions

Scholarship has considered the diversity of reviews on Braddon's novels, personal life, and position as the Queen of Sensation Fiction.[199] Braddon's Belgravian novels overlapped in their serialisation and volume editions; in this case, three of her metafictional novels, *Birds of Prey*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and *Charlotte's Inheritance*, crossed paths. As the majority of reviews were of the volume form, which were also published during this period of overlapping

[196] The circulation figures fell to 15,000 by the time *Belgravia* was sold to Chatto and Windus in 1876. Law also argues that in the 1860s there was both a 'brief boom in new shilling month literary magazines in the 1860s' and that 'the dominant position of the monthly serial underwent a serious and finally successful challenge from the weekly serial'. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, p. 24.
[197] Carnell, *Literary Lives*, p. 143. The ventures included starting *Halfpenny Journal* which Braddon was main contributor to and her mother was editor, 'writing most of the replies to its readers' problems and queries, and choosing poetry to print from unsolicited manuscripts'. Ibid., p. 145.
[198] Ward, Lock & Tyler published Braddon's novels from *The Lady's Mile* (1866) to *Fenton's Quest* (1871). Before *The Lady's Mile*, Braddon's novels were published by either Ward & Lock, Tinsley, or Maxwell. Of the Belgravian novels I have included in my thesis only *Hostages to Fortune* was not published by Ward, Lock & Tyler, and was instead published by Maxwell. After *Fenton's Quest*, other than *Lost For Love* (1874) by Chatto & Windus, Braddon's novels were published by Maxwell's publishing company until *Mohawks* (1886).
[199] Most notably see *Beyond Sensation*, Golden, 'Censoring Her Sensationalism', and Beller and MacDonald, 'Introduction', *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers.*

serialisation, many discuss multiple Braddon novels.[200] Similarly, periodicals review *Belgravia* and a novel in separate items, often on the same page, demonstrating the importance of reading reviews in their wider context rather than in isolation. Another prominent trait in Victorian periodicals was comparatively reviewing multiple authors' works.[201] Emma Liggins and Daniel Duffy identify the significance of considering reviews as 'helpful because they point to actual reading practices, and show the power of the marketplace to make or break a writer's reputation'.[202] Just as *Dead-Sea Fruit* was read in the same pages as a spectrum of material, the reviews were positioned in a periodical's pages. Fictions and reviews cohabited in periodicals participating in a press fuelled by and dependent on serialisation.

As discussed throughout the chapters, extensive critical work on the structures, developments, and politics in the periodical press through the nineteenth century is influential in Victorian scholarship.[203] Important in the history of the periodical press is the balance and interaction between weekly, monthly, and daily publication, which had a powerful effect on the literary marketplace in which Braddon worked and which she influenced. Monthly publications have been discussed through the thesis, including *Blackwood's*, and the *Fortnightly Review* and daily newspapers, including the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *The Times*. However, in this section I will focus on weekly periodicals which reflect a key dimension to the periodical press.[204] Widening the focus of the previous section in the chapter from within the pages of *Belgravia*, I have selected reviews in the *Sporting Gazette*, *John Bull*, the

[200] One of the most collective reviews of Braddon's novels, on *Aurora Floyd*, *The Doctor's Wife*, *The Lady's Mile*, *Henry Dunbar*, and *Birds of Prey*, is ''II. Miss Braddon: The Illuminated Newgate Calendar', *Eclectic Review*, January 1868, pp. 22–40.
[201] For instance, a review in the *London Review* discussed Braddon's *Birds of Prey*, Sheridan Le Fanu's *The Tenants of Malory*, and Grace Ramsey's *A Woman's Trials*. See 'New Novels', *London Review*, 21 September 1867, pp. 329–30. Also see one on Braddon, *One Thing Needful*, Mary Cecil Hay, *A Wicked Girl, and Other Stories*, Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, E. Marlitt, *The Lady with the Garnets*, Brander Matthews, *A Secret of the Sea*, James Siree, *Saved by a Smile*, *A House of Tears* in 'New Novels', *Academy*.
[202] *Feminist Readings of Victorian Popular Texts: Divergent Femininities*, ed. by Emma Liggins and Daniel Duffy (University of Michigan: Ashgate, 2001), p. xx.
[203] As discussed in the introduction see *Serials and Their Readers, 1620–1914*, ed. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris (University of Michigan: St. Paul's Bibliographies 1993), pp. 83–102 and *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900*.
[204] Law charts the developments of the weekly periodical identifying how, 'it is difficult to underestimate the importance of Dickens's family journals in establishing the acceptability of the weekly miscellany in the bosom of the middle class'. The influence can be linked to Dickens as a role model and forerunner for editors including Braddon and periodicals including *Belgravia*. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*, p. 27.

*London Review*, the *Athenaeum*, and the *Examiner*, publications which inhabit a range of political stances, readerships, and writers.[205]

August 1867: *Dead-Sea Fruit* 'promises to be of the "sensation school"'[206]

The 3d *Sporting Gazette* regularly included *Belgravia* in their monthly column on magazines for the month. Bridging the gap between the city and country on Sundays the London-based, weekly magazine was dispatched, as described by the *DNCJ*, on 'early morning trains to be distributed countrywide by the afternoon […] its opening address promised the readers a "class" journal established by a group of "Noblemen and Gentlemen" […] Fair play and independence would be its editorial watchword'.[207] In July 1867, *Belgravia* appeared alongside the *Cornhill*, *Temple Bar*, and *Macmillan* and readers were told that, '*Belgravia* is not only full of variety this month, but all the prose contents are both full readable and interesting'.[208] The prose elements are *Birds of Prey* and *Circe* and the variety includes Thornbury's last 'London Squares' to be succeeded by 'London Parks', Sala's 'Letters from Lilliput', and Georgina C. Clark's, 'Before the Mirror'; significantly, we are told that *Dead-Sea Fruit* will begin in August, acting in itself as a form of advertisement. The next month, at the very start of *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation, the *Sporting Review*'s column includes a review of *Belgravia* within which *Dead-Sea Fruit* is considered.[209] *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s physical location on *Belgravia*'s first pages, superseding *Birds of Prey*, implicitly prioritises serial or long readers.[210] Just as *Dead-Sea Fruit* opens the issue, so it opens the review:

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[205] Theses reviews are 'Literature: Magazines for August', *Sporting Gazette*, 17 August 1867, p. 657. [on *Belgravia* and *Dead-Sea Fruit, Birds of Prey, Circe*]; 'Literary Review', *John Bull*, 11 July 1868, p. 473. [on *Dead-Sea Fruit*]; 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *London Review*, 11 July 1868, pp. 53–4. [on *Dead-Sea Fruit*]; 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Athenaeum*, 13 July 1868, pp. 837–8. [on *Dead-Sea Fruit*].

[206] 'Literature: Magazines for July', *Sporting Gazette*, 20 July 1867, p. 567.

[207] *DNCJ*, p. 592.

[208] 'Magazines for July', *Sporting Gazette*, p. 567.

[209] While it was second in line in July, in August *Belgravia* moves to first place in the column ahead of the *Cornhill* and *Macmillan*, and with a much longer review. See 'Magazines for August', *Sporting Gazette*, p. 657. On 24 August 1867 the *Sporting Gazette* carried a review of *Circe* in volume form, but which explicitly speaks of two groups of readers: *Circe* is 'a sensational love story which has been running through the numbers of Miss Braddon's magazine, *Belgravia*, for several months past, and is now just published in two neat volumes. Having already noticed the tale during its periodical progress, it is sufficient now to say that it is powerfully written [and] it is a story of such sustained interest that it is fully deserving of being reproduced in its present form for the benefit of those who may not have perused it in *Belgravia*'. The other work of 'Literature' in the column is Louis Blanc, 'Letters of England', Second series, translated by James Hutton and L. J. Trotter (London: Sampson Low & co.), 1867). See 'Literature: Circe by Babington White', *Sporting Gazette*, 24 August 1867, p. 677.

[210] *Dead-Sea Fruit* was positioned on the front page from its very first instalment and *Birds of Prey* was relegated to later in the issue for the final three instalments. Although *Circe* ran at the same time as both, it was never given the front page. *Charlotte's Inheritance* took over from *Dead-Sea Fruit* which also had its last three instalments later in the issue.

> *Belgravia* (Conducted by Miss Braddon) opens with a new novel "Dead-Sea Fruit," to which Miss Braddon gracefully yields the place of honour, and which, to judge by the first four chapters here given, promises to be of the "sensation school".[211]

Importantly, just as Braddon's name is first seen as 'Conductor' on the front page of *Belgravia*, so the review opens constructing Braddon as conducting as editor rather than writing as novelist. The shifts in layout within the pages of *Belgravia* is immediately acknowledged before the review locates the new novel, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, within Braddon's oeuvre and the wider literary context. Judgements of the novel are emphatically placed within the materiality of the issue and followed by reviews on how *Birds of Prey* and *Circe* continue, before stating that '[t]he other contents of this number are all excellent'.[212] Apart from the poems, all the items within the issue are briefly mentioned and appraised. The physical prioritisation of her novels within each number of *Belgravia* is reflected in the tone of the review which sees Braddon's fiction as fundamental to the periodical's identity. The *Sporting Gazette* ends by writing that, 'Mr. Percy Fitzgerald will commence a new novel, entitled "Diana Gay," in the October number of *Belgravia*'.[213] As one of Dickens's Young Men, Fitzgerald's presence in the periodical is clearly important in reviews, and thus presumably a deliberate draw employed by Braddon and Maxwell to bring a new set of readers to *Belgravia* who may have a loyalty to *Household Words*, and Dickens himself. Braddon claimed Fitzgerald as a Belgravian writer.

July 1868: 'the correctness of the Scottish Dialect'[214]

The *Sporting Gazette*'s attention to the complete *Belgravia* issue in August 1867 is indicative of serial reading, and constructs 'the book' as a serialised entity rather than an isolated volume.[215] However, the other chosen reviews were published a year later towards the end of the serialisation when *Dead-Sea Fruit* was released in volume form. *John Bull*, a 'Conservative, anti-Catholic weekly', openly acknowledges and participates in the disparity, even gulf, between reviews of Braddon; the review stands against the 'most carping critic'

[211] 'Magazines for August', *Sporting Gazette*, p. 657.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] M. E. Braddon, 'Correspondence: "Dead-Sea Fruit"', *London Review*, 18 July 1868, p. 79.
[215] For the discussions on the definition of a book and the importance of considering serialisation in Victorian literary studies see the section of the introduction on the question, 'What is a Book?'

and *Dead-Sea Fruit* is 'a book on which we warmly congratulate Miss Braddon'.[216] *John Bull* does not overtly identify that the characters are literary ones but deems them as realistic and practical depictions, particularly Laurence and Lucy as an actress and her life with Emily.[217] Reflecting its Protestant affiliation and controversial defence of George IV and Queen Caroline's divorce, *John Bull* supports Emily Jerningham's fight against the divorce laws, for whom they have a 'sneaking affection'.[218] Editor Theodore Hook adopted the familiar caricature personae 'John Bull', an assertive, anti-establishment, and ale-drinking man, wearing a union jack waistcoat and often accompanied by a dull dog; a persona which ultimately failed.[219]

The very same number of *John Bull* contains the article 'Little Women', including the phrase 'Miss Braddon's School'.[220] The article is directly aimed at the *Saturday Review* setting out to undo their disparaging comments on sensation fiction's depiction of blonde and short women as criminal; however, 'of course to impugn ever so delicately one syllable of that journal […] would be high treason'.[221] In the *Saturday Review*'s article 'Little Women' (25 April), Eliza Lynn Linton argued that the appearance of criminal women in fiction has been over turned, laying the majority of the responsibility on sensation novelists:

> given "heavy braids of golden hair," "bewildering blue eyes," "a small lithe frame," […] we are booked for the companionship, through three volumes, of a young person to whom Messalina or Lucretia Borgia was a mere novice [and] who can say that Jezebel was not a small, freckled, auburn-haired Lady Audley of her time, full of the concentrated fire, the electric force, the passionate recklessness of her type?[222]

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[216] 'Literary Review', *John Bull*, 11 July 1868, p. 473. Six months earlier on *Mynchin*, *John Bull* uses Braddon to condemn the *Standard*'s reviewing: 'the *Standard*, which is so unnecessarily hard on Miss Braddon, who certainly cannot be accused of tameness, thinks this is a book to read. We think it is one to avoid'. 'Literary Review', *John Bull*, 9 November 1867, p. 776.

[217] See 'Literary Review', *John Bull*, 11 July 1868.

[218] Ibid. *John Bull* controversially backed the George IV in his divorce of Queen Caroline, before 'smearing prominent Whigs and Radicals', particularly Hume and Hazlitt. See *DNCJ*, p. 321.

[219] Ibid. Stanley Jones discusses Hunt and Hazlitt and a letter published by Theodore Hook in *John Bull*, 22 June 1823: Jones argues that, 'It seems as though both Hunt and Hazlitt were victims of a naïve and inexplicable optimism. They were speedily disabused: within a few weeks the whole story was splashed across the columns of that remarkable forerunner of the modern Sunday press, the scurrilous *John Bull*'. See Stanley Jones, 'Hazlitt and *John Bull*: A Neglect Letter', *The Review of English Studies*, 17.66 (1966), 163–170 (p. 163). The first in a series of satires by John Arbuthnot in 1762 was used by James Gillray and other eighteenth-century caricature engravers, and later as a cartoon by Sir John Tenniel in *Punch* at the end of the nineteenth century. On the figure of John Bull see https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/John-Bull/.

[220] See 'Little Women', *John Bull*, 11 July 1868, p. 473–4.

[221] Ibid., p. 473.

[222] [Eliza Lynn Linton], 'Little Women', *Saturday Review*, 25 April 1868, pp. 545–546 (p. 545 and p. 546). A few pages away were advertisements for *Dead-Sea Fruit*. See 'Advertisement', *Saturday Review*, 25 April 1868, p. 571. On Linton, including this article, see Ofek, *Representations of Hair* and Andrea L. Broomfield, 'Much More than an Antifeminist: Eliza Lynn Linton's Contribution to the Rise of Victorian Popular Journalism', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 29.2 (2001), 267–83.

Hamilton looks at Linton's anonymous writing for the *Saturday Review*, which includes the article mentioned in chapter two, 'Girl of the Period', the first in a successful series of pieces in the more controversial section of the *Saturday Review*.[223] Easley, Gill, and Roger, describe 'Girl of the Period' as an essay which, 'describes, in inflammatory terms, the ostensible moral degeneration of the character of the 'Girl of the Period'.[224] In their reply *John Bull* supports, 'writers of the Miss Braddon school [and] our sensation novelists, who, poor people, we do not accuse of attempting to law down any law, but who vary their stock of heroines, as the milliner her modes—to render them by novelty attractive to the public'.[225] *John Bull* can be read as reflective of how some reviews utilised, even capitalised on, Braddon's position as 'Queen of Sensation Fiction' and prominence as editor to enter the politics of the periodical press.

As discussed in chapter one, both the *Examiner* and the *Athenaeum* aim to distance their own writers from Braddon and their publications from *Belgravia*. Despite no direct mention of *Belgravia* or its 'Conductor', the *Examiner* closely aligns Braddon's voice with her fictional hack, Daniel, unlike reviews of *The Doctor's Wife* which emphatically cast the fictional sensation fiction writer as Braddon's alter ego. Daniel advises his nephew to write for his master, for the British public, and be suspicious of false critics, 'ravening wolves […] in sheep's clothing'; although, he also argues that an author is safe from 'all the king's men and all the king's horses in the way of criticism' if the public are with the book (7: p. 406). However, the *Examiner* declares that '[n]otoriously the experience of the authoress of "Dead-Sea Fruit" is a practical refutation of this theory', implicitly undermining Braddon as both 'Conductor' and author.[226] The *Examiner* grants authority to the press equal to or exceeding the public, rather than allowing readers to be an author's sole master. Despite its 'second glory period, with contributions from Mill, Forster, Dickens, Thackeray and money from Bulwer Lytton', Brake characterises the *Examiner* as one of the 'brilliant but short-lived' publications.[227] The power of critics is championed with popularity and 'literary distinction' constructed as incompatible by the *Examiner*.

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[223] See [Linton], 'The Girl of the Period', *Saturday Review*. The *Saturday Review* was Linton's primary employer at this time.
[224] Easley, Gill, Rogers, 'Constructing Modern girls and Young Women: Introduction', p. 99.
[225] 'Little Women', *John Bull*, p. 474.
[226] 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Examiner*, p. 485.
[227] Brake groups the *Examiner* with the *Northern Star*, in opposition to more long-standing periodicals giving the *Athenaeum*, *Blackwood's*, and *The Times* as examples; Brake places these publications within the 'phenomenon of serials [whose range] was flexible and politically and culturally powerful'. See Brake, 'The "Trepidation of the Spheres"', pp. 86–7. As set out by the *DNCJ* 1830–1847 saw a 'second glory period';

Typifying their intentions, although the *Sporting Gazette* chose the image of a 'sensation school', the *Examiner* and the *Athenaeum* go a step further and present images of the "Braddonian" school and an 'army' of followers to condemn Braddon as industrial and commercial.[228] References to a 'Miss Braddon School' in one form or another filled reviews; however, Beller and MacDonald identify that 'very few ever clarify which writers they perceive to be implicated in this group'.[229] Participating in, even leading, this literary trend is one of the most famous reviews; in *Blackwood's* Oliphant writes that, 'Miss Braddon is the leader of her school, and to her the first honours ought naturally to be given, but her disciples are many'.[230] The *Examiner* offers readers a lengthy review written with violent and impassioned language, whilst openly acknowledging Braddon's abilities; but, the periodical concludes that in *Dead-Sea Fruit* 'the pure metal still remains encased in the old dross'.[231] Prevalent among reviews of Braddon's fiction is the merging of vehement criticism with almost admiring praise, a pattern into which the *Examiner* falls.

Similarly, to *John Bull*, the *London Review* praises the characters of Laurence Desmond and Emily Jerningham as the most interesting and believable. However, the inconsistency in tone created in the *Examiner*'s review, is also present in the *London Review*'s on 11 July 1868. Lists of Braddon's faults and failings are interspersed with recognition of her abilities, skills, and achievements:

> While we consider the style and tone of "Dead-Sea Fruit" as being, on the whole, preferable to that of Miss Braddon's previous novels, we are included to rank the plot as being the least artistic and interesting of those she has recently given us […] She has undoubtedly the true gift of the storyteller: whatever any one may think of the intellectual qualities of her writing, no one will deny that it is eminently readable.[232]

The painfully patronising tone praises Braddon for improving her style in the last words. The review participates in the wider approach of assessing new work in comparison with a writer's complete oeuvre rather than in isolation, arguably heightening the need for scholarship to consider how fiction was constructed and received in the nineteenth-century. Petty comments crop up again and again in reviews. Possibly the most comedic is by the

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however, from 1859–67 Henry Morley was editor of *Household Words* and from 1865 its 'fortunes waned, it passed through many hand, and although the quality of the writers and editors remained high, the weekly was no long profitable […] In its later years, the paper succumbed to new competition from the *Spectator* and the *Saturday Review*'. See *DNCJ*, p. 211.

[228] See 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Examiner*, p. 485 and 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Athenaeum*, p. 837.

[229] Beller and MacDonald, 'Introduction', *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers*, p. 3. Beller and MacDonald see this trait as central to Braddon constructed as a 'byword' for sensationalism and popularity. See Beller and MacDonald, 'Introduction', *Rediscovering Victorian Women Sensation Writers*.

[230] Oliphant, 'Novels', *Blackwood's*, p. 260.

[231] 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Examiner*, p. 485.

[232] 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *London Review*, 11 July 1868, pp. 53–4 (p. 53).

*Athenaeum* in October 1866; 'In her first paragraph [of *Birds of Prey*] there is a slip. Children cannot play 'hop-scotch on "doorsteps," in Bloomsbury or elsewhere'.[233] Braddon fictionalised such an incident in the ninth part of *Dead-Sea Fruit*, April 1868; in order to distract Eustace from suspicions as to the author's identity, Harold gives an exaggerated, even comedic, review of his own saying, '"A very feeble book! I see a wrong tense here in Latin quotation. The man did not even know his Catullus"' (*D-SF*, 9: p. 153). Harold enacts the role of a patronising critic, typifying Braddon's confidence in ridiculing critics. Such direct connections support the importance of reading Braddon's fictional writers in dialogue with contextual aspects such as reviews of her novels.[234]

The (re)echo in the *London Review* a few months later, July 1868, reinforces Braddon's playful dramatisation of the world of letters. One of the primary failings in Braddon's writing conceived by the *London Review* is her 'unwise hurry [and] careless inaccuracy'.[235] The *London Review* accuses her of travelling to 'a region into which Miss Braddon should not have ventured without more reliable information about the language and geography of the country'.[236] The apparent mistakes are unashamedly listed for the reader: '"Giggy" is not Scotch for "gig," nor "cavey" for "cave"'.[237] However, Braddon and Maxwell often directly replied to reviewers' barbed comments in letters rather than solely through her fiction and articles. The *London Review*'s criticism of the use of Scottish dialect triggers a response from Braddon herself. Braddon is not content with replying to her critics solely in her fiction however and writes a letter to the editor of the *London Review* arguing for her authority in writing the Scottish dialect. As discussed earlier in the chapter, Braddon wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette* as Captain Shandon, but, in this case, spoke under her own name.[238] Published a week after the review, Braddon wrote to the *London Review*'s editor, adopting a polite but cutting tone;

Correspondence.

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[233] 'Our Weekly Gossip', *Athenaeum*, 20 October 1866, pp. 501–2 (p. 501).
[234] As discussed in the introduction, on the necessity of examining the relationship between texts and their contexts see Kenneth M. Sroka, 'Dickens's Metafiction: Readers and Writers, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, and *Our Mutual Friend*', *Dickens Studies Annual*, 22 (1993), 35–65, Shattock, *Politics and Reviews*, and *Metafiction and Metahistory in Contemporary Women's Writing*, ed. by Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
[235] 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *London Review*, p. 53.
[236] Ibid., p. 54.
[237] Ibid.
[238] As considered earlier, for more on the letters pages in periodicals as a 'pivotal publishing fomat', particularly on giving women writers a voice, see Fionnula Dillane, 'Avatars, Psydonyms, and the Regulation of Affect: Performing and Occluding Gender in the *Pall Mall Gazette*', *Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 336–350 (p. 337).

"Dead-Sea Fruit."

To the editor of the "London Review."

SIR,—In your notice of the above work in the last number of the LONDON REVIEW, you impugn the correctness of the Scottish dialect which I have used in "Dead-Sea Fruit." Permit me to say that I have written from actual experience obtained during a residence of many months at Aberdeen. I trust you will kindly allow this correction of your critic's error to appear. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Warwick-house, Paternoster-row. M. E. BRADDON.[239]

Braddon writes confrontationally to the editor defending her own work as well as, perhaps more importantly, asking for the critic to do as she asks; Braddon aims to regain authority and influence over both the critic and the editor and exert power in the literary marketplace, refusing to be a passive figure in the world of letters. As both novelist of *Dead-Sea Fruit* and editor of *Belgravia* Braddon confronts her reviewers and the Victorian literary marketplace. In letters Braddon stepped beyond her fiction and *Belgravia* to write as 'M. E. Braddon' in another publication. Braddon did not passively accept her reviewers' attacks.

Advertisements: Speaking Directly to Readers and Consumers

Advertising gives an insight into the readers that author(s) and publishers were catering to, aiming for, and constructing. Brake argues, 'In a framework of material culture, I want to treat the wrappers and advertisers that, with the letter press and illustration, make up part-issues and periodicals, as part of what we designate the "text" to be studied'.[240] Advertising was key to financial revenue for the periodical press.[241] Selling advertising space brought in significant proportions of the income for a publication. Additionally, the periodical offered free publicity for the publishing house's own book lists.[242] The language advertisements employ and the patterns of placement typify the complex and fascinating dynamic between

[239] Braddon, 'Correspondence', *London Review*, p. 79

[240] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 27. Wicke goes as far as to 'examine advertising as a language and a literature in its own right'. See Jennifer Wicke, *Advertising Fictions: Literature, Advertisement, and Social Reading* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 1.

[241] Brown's work includes a detailed analysis of the costs and sizes of advertisements through the nineteenth century. See Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 15–25. Also on advertising see Sharon Marcus, 'The Profession of the Author' and Emily Steinlight, "'Anti-Bleak House": Advertising and the Victorian Novel', *Narrative*, 14 (2006), 132–62.

[242] Brake explores how, 'house periodicals supplied free publicity for house book lists through their advertisements, and helped pay for themselves by the sale of advertisements to outside firms, some of which purchased and circulated house books, such as the circulating libraries'. See Brake, 'The "Trepidation of the Spheres"', p. 89.

authors, editors, reviewers, and readers in the Victorian periodical press. Braddon replied to her critics in her fiction and in her letters to editors, but also combated her critics in the arguably strategic placement of advertisements.[243] In advertisements Braddon can be seen to strategically counteract a periodical's own review by using quotations to allow other publications to speak of her 'peculiar talent', celebrate 'pre-eminence', celebrity, and see the novels as dedicated to a public who 'love and long' for her next.[244] Reflecting the dates of serialisation and publication in volumes during the period *Dead-Sea Fruit* was serialised, adverts' priority shifted between *Birds of Prey*, *Charlotte's Inheritance*, *Dead-Sea Fruit*, and *Belgravia*. Braddon and Maxwell capitalized on the commercial side to authorship to undermine Braddon's critics and exert a degree of control over her public identity.

A Pair of Periodicals: The *Saturday Review* and the *Athenaeum*

The *Athenaeum* and the *Saturday Review* contained among the most extensive, and regular advertisements for *Belgravia*, through the year in which *Dead-Sea Fruit* was serialised.[245] In light of the paratext as a 'threshold' for the reader, it is interesting to consider the other periodicals and authors' names read next to Braddon's and *Belgravia*'s. In both instances, prominent names alongside *Belgravia* are *Macmillan's*, *Cornhill*, *Blackwood's*, the *Art Journal*, the *Fortnightly Review*, and *London Society*.[246] In the *Athenaeum*, the distinguishing names are the *Saturday Review* itself, Dickens's *Household Words*, and the *Contemporary Review*. In the *Saturday Review* Ellen Wood's the *Argosy* was regularly placed next to *Belgravia* holding their own alongside established names in their periodical press. Braddon's name was used in the advertisements, often at the very top, as opposed to the majority of others such as *Blackwood's* which maintained their collective identity. Notably, those contradicting the trend were *Household Words*, the *Argosy*, and *Saint Pauls*, or 'Mr. Dickens's Household Words', 'Mrs. Henry Wood's Magazine', and 'Anthony Trollope's

[243] Marcus argues that, '[i]f *Jane Eyre* and Charlotte Brontë retain a place in a post humanist and postcolonial feminist canon, it is because they reveal the lures as well as the limits, the profits as well as the costs to themselves and to others, of a woman's alienation into the capitalist marketplace and its advertisements'. See Sharon Marcus, 'The Profession of the Author', p. 217.
[244] See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 12 October 1867, p. 480.
[245] Frychstedt looks at the role of Mudie's' advertisements as a viewpoint on the status of fiction in the 1850s, focusing on the ones in the *Athenaeum*, including Braddon's place in terms of discussing the place of sensation fiction and domestic fiction in literary commerce. See Monica Correa Fryckstedt, 'Defining the Domestic Genre: English Women Novelists of the 1850s', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 6.1 (Spring 1987), 9–25.
[246] A cautionary word is that this applied to only the specific pages on which Braddon and *Belgravia* are advertised rather than complete sets of pages advertising periodicals and author's novels.

New Magazine'.[247] The harsh criticism and often patronising tone of reviews must be read in association with advertisements.[248]

The consistent presence of Braddon, *Belgravia*, and her novels in the *Saturday Review*, in a periodical in which 'the bulk of the advertising space was taken by publishers' is indicative of strategic advertising.[249] On 5 October 1867 the *Saturday Review*'s advertisements pages carried a full column championing *Birds of Prey*, *Circe*, *Captain of the Vulture*, *Belgravia*, and *The Lady's Mile*.[250] *Belgravia*'s and the *Argosy*'s advertisements are both topped by capitalised claims of Braddon's and Wood's ownership, regularly neighbouring each other.[251] The *Saturday Review* stands in contrast to *Belgravia* in its stance on signature lending a more unified voice, arguably contributing to a confidence in attacking reviewing.[252] During this period the *Saturday Review* fired accusations of plagiarism at Valentine Hawkehurst, and implicitly Braddon herself.[253] Similarly to how Braddon replied to Greenwood in 'A Remonstrance' and Sala's 'The Cant of Modern Criticism', *Belgravia* replied to the vicious attack in Edward R. Russell's article '"Thorough" in Criticism' in November, which, as Phegley describes it, 'dealt the ultimate Belgravian blow to the *Saturday*'s reviewers' arguing that their criticism was as sensational as sensation fiction itself.[254] Braddon confounded her critics in her fiction, the articles commissioned from other writers and in advertisements.

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[247] Also advertised was *Hanover Square: A Magazine of Pianoforte and Vocal Music*, ed. by Lindsay Sloper, a musical periodical run by the pianist and composer Edmund Hugh Lindsay Sloper. These were much more regularly on the same pages as *Belgravia* in the *Saturday Review* than the *Athenaeum*.

[248] As discussed in the introduction my work draws on research surrounding the material composition of periodicals and the act of reading. For example see Brake, *Subjugated Knowledges*.

[249] *DNJC* also identifies how, 'There seemed room for a weekly, alongside the *Athenaeum* and the *Spectator*, that would keep pace with a rapidly expanding readership interested in debating critical issues of the day – political, social and cultural […] The editorial line of cautiously liberal, mindful of class privilege and conscious of its own authority The robust, at times rambunctious nature of its prejudices and reviews led to its nickname, the *Saturday Reviler*. […] Not surprisingly, the bulk of the advertising space was taken by publishers […] Circulation grew steadily, so that […] 1868 circulation was in excess of 10,000'. See *DNCJ*, p. 558.

[250] See 'Advertisements', *Saturday Review*, 5 October 1867, p. 458.

[251] These pages seem to appear on a roughly monthly basis during *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s serialisation, such as 22 February, 28 March, 25 April 1868 coinciding with *Charlotte's Inheritance* beginning and Eliza Linton's articles 'Little Women' and 'The Girl of the Period' in the *Saturday Review*. See 'Advertisements', *Saturday Review*, 22 February 1868, p. 261, 'Advertisements', *Saturday Review*, 28 March 1868, p. 439 and 'Advertisements', *Saturday Review*, 25 April 1868, p. 571.

[252] Hamilton looks at how Linton and the *Saturday Review*'s tactics united: 'Linton's press signature or voice uses the strategies of popular journalism – from extreme rhetoric and ad hominem attacks to sensationalism, assertion and a kind of zealous reductionism – to create scandal, and gain an audience'. See Hamilton, 'Women's voices and public debate'.

[253] See 'Charlotte's Inheritance', *Saturday Review*. Phegley examines the dialogue between the *Saturday Review*, and *Belgravia* arguing that it is, 'A supreme example of the bitter, vengeful, arrogant, and unskilled criticism described in *Belgravia* was displayed in the *Saturday Review*'s scathing analysis of Braddon's *Belgravia* serial *Charlotte's Inheritance*, which inspired its own counterattack within Braddon's magazine'. See Phegley, *Educating the Proper Woman Reader*, p. 124.

[254] Ibid., p. 125. See Russell, '"Thorough" in Criticism"', *Belgravia*.

The *Athenaeum* can be seen among those long-running publications, alongside the *Blackwood's*, *The Times*, and *Punch*, challenged by arrivals such as the *Saturday Review*. Hamilton sees the *Athenaeum* as establishing an influential stance in the periodical press arguing that, '[t]he weekly arrangements of pressing topicality (the engagement with news on a regular basis) and reflection (a kind of urgent thoughtfulness that a week's distance from events might enable) was enormously successful'.[255] In January 1868, a few months before serialisation began, the impending release of *Charlotte's Inheritance* in three volumes was emblazoned in the *Athenaeum* as 'A New Novel, Never Before Published'.[256] Although it was not yet being read within its pages, the novel was advertised in tandem with *Belgravia* and Braddon's readers were promised *Charlotte's Inheritance* in an issue containing the following 'Special Attractions', namely Braddon's *Dead-Sea Fruit*; Sala's 'Letters from Lilliput'; Walter Thornbury's 'Palaces and Clubs of London'; Percy Fitzgerald's *Diana Gay*; 'Essays, Criticism, and Novelettes by Celebrated Authors', and 'The Mudie Classics by Babington White'.[257] Within this advertisement Braddon's multiple identities were brought together; on this page is Braddon as author, as the editor of *Belgravia*, and as Babington White. Importantly, her name is written more prominently than Sala's, Fitzgerald's, and Thornbury's in these advertisements, implicitly giving Braddon authority over these men. *Belgravia* overtly presented Dickens's Young Men as commissioned to produce material for Braddon's and Maxwell's periodical.

Perhaps most interestingly, Ward, Lock & Tyler bring together Braddon's, Dickens's, and Mrs Beeton's names in a full-page advertisement in the *Athenaeum*. On 25 April 1868 across the top of a page reads, 'S. O. Beeton's Periodicals. Miss Braddon. Mr. Dickens's Household Words' and stretched across the bottom, 'London: Ward, Lock & Tyler, Warwick House, Paternoster-row, E.C.'.[258] The May issue of 'Miss Braddon's New Illustrated Magazine' *Belgravia* is advertised giving the contents, which includes *Dead-Sea Fruit*, 'London Palaces', and 'Cosmetics for the Hair' in a similar manner to others for the

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[255] Hamilton, 'Women's voices and public debate', p. 94. Hamilton examines Anna Jameson's article 'The Milliners' detailing the report of the Children's Employment Commission in the *Athenaeum* in 1843. The government needed papers like the *Athenaeum* to 'circulate findings from its enquires, even though they were available for purchase'. Ibid., pp. 94–95.

[256] See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 4 January 1868, p. 27.

[257] Ibid.

[258] 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 25 April 1868, p. 608. The page of adverts also includes, 'New Works and New Editions' and 'Atlases, for School and Home Use'. Ibid. This may of course occur in multiple periodicals but it is this example which I will use as a key example. Although in different forms of layout, Ward, Lock & Tyler also take a whole page spread on 11 and 25 July 1868. See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 11 July 1868, p. 64 and 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 25 July 1868. On 6 June 1868, Braddon's novels, Parlour editions, and *Belgravia* occupy a full page. See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 6 June 1868, p. 812.

magazine.[259] However, here *Belgravia* is merged with the 'Parlour Edition of Miss Braddon's Novels'. Typifying the idea of a double profit discussed earlier, the phrasing for the Parlour Editions is strikingly marketing a very different commodity to a new novel appearing in *Belgravia*. The advertisement uses the language of industry, commodities, and the book trade to justify and celebrate the new editions of Braddon's novels:

> The popularity and success of Miss Braddon's Novels are facts well known to every Bookseller in the kingdom. The Book Trade is, however, well aware of the desire frequently expressed by customers for an Edition less expensive than the Library, and more legible than the Cheap, edition of their favourite author. To meet this requirement, the Publishers beg to announce a Parlour Edition of Miss Braddon's Novels, each Work to be got up in excellent style, serviceably bound in cloth, gilt back, lettered, forming not merely an intermediate issue, so far as price is concerned, but also about the most substantial, the neatest, and the handiest series of books that the most fastidious of economists can procure. The New Edition will be issued Monthly, each volume containing an entire Novel. The following Volumes will be ready with the Magazines for May:— Lady Audley's Secret and Aurora Floyd.[260]

Problematising the question 'What is a Book?', the advertisement bridges the gap between serialisation and individual entities; there is still a monthly pattern but volumes rather than instalments.[261] Braddon and Maxwell are still aiming to attract loyal readers. Standing at the end of the column, a 'Completion' notice announces that *Dead-Sea Fruit* was to be published on 20 May 1868 'In all libraries, in 3 vols', 'thoroughly revised' to attract serial (re-)readers and new volume readers.[262] However, as discussed in earlier chapters, Braddon often barely revised her novels limiting it to adjusting the positions of the chapter breaks to ensure the best positioning of the cliff hangers.[263]

Reflecting her connection to Dickens's success in the periodical press, the advertisements for Braddon's fiction and periodical lie next to a column for *Household Words*: 'Truth to say, HOUSEHOLD WORDS is the richest Treasury existing of Modern Literature'.[264] The advertisement bestows an almost regal status to Dickens, describes *Household Word*'s 'sustained glories', and names many of the contributors '"Household Words" themselves'.[265] On *Belgravia*'s other side, *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household*

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[259] See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 25 April 1868.
[260] Ibid.
[261] As set out in the introduction, on the question of 'What is a Book?' see Patten, 'When Is a Book Not a Book?'.
[262] See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 25 April 1868. *Dead-Sea Fruit* stands alongside the May issue of *Belgravia* and 'Parlour Edition of Miss Braddon's Novels'. For a larger advert solely on *Dead-Sea Fruit* see 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 23 May 1868, p. 742.
[263] On Braddon's revisions of her novels for volume editions see Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'.
[264] 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 25 April 1868.
[265] Ibid.

*Management* and the *Englishwomen's Domestic Magazine* are advertised focusing on 'some of the Special Contents', including fashion plates, engravings of flowers, clothes patterns, and needlework designs.[266] Each advertisement is written for a slightly different reader, and customer. Braddon's and Dickens's names stand next to each other in the same number of the *Athenaeum* and in direct competition for readers, yet under the same publisher who gains from both authors' success and fame.

11 July 1868: Two Days Before the *Athenaeum*'s Diatribe

The majority of the reviews examined in both the *Athenaeum* and *Saturday Review* were published on 11 July 1868, including the one which triggered Braddon's letter to the *Examiner* and *John Bull*'s duo of articles. On 11 July 1868, two days before the *Athenaeum* contained a diatribe on *Dead-Sea Fruit*, both the *Saturday Review* and the *Athenaeum* enclosed an extensive advertisement for the third edition of *Dead-Sea Fruit* and 'Miss Braddon's Novels'.[267] These advertisements contain twenty quotations pervaded by superlatives and extolling Braddon's talents and *Dead-Sea Fruit*'s prowess, including ones from the *Sunday Times*, *Morning Post*, and *Edinburgh Evening Courant*.[268] Just as on the 25 April, Ward, Lock & Tyler claimed a page of the *Athenaeum* on 11 July, but in this instance Braddon dominates over *Household Words*, *Beeton's Dictionary of Geography*, and *Dower's* 'Atlases, for School and Home Use'.[269] In the *Saturday Review*, Braddon occupies the right-hand column next to large adverts including 'New Books to Ask for at the Libraries', 'New Work for Students', and 'New Work for Practical Illustration'.[270]

The quotations from reviews used in both advertisements exemplify the use of superlatives and constant declarations that this is Braddon's best novel as yet, surpassing even *The Doctor's Wife*:

> "'Dead-Sea Fruit' is unquestionably the most powerfully-written story of the most powerful novel-writer of the third quarter of the nineteenth-century…… 'Dead-Sea

[266] Even if not on a full page spread for Ward, Lock & Tyler, Braddon's and Beeton's names are regularly advertised on the same page in the *Athenaeum*.
[267] See 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Athenaeum* and 'Notice', *Saturday Review*, 11 July 1868.
[268] For example, *Dead-Sea Fruit* was declared as Braddon's best novel to-date; it 'surpasses' *The Doctor's Wife* and is 'eclipsing' both *Birds of Prey* and *Charlotte's Inheritance*". See '*Sunday Times*, June 14', '*Morning Star*, June 16', and '*Court Circular*, June 30' in 'Notice', *Saturday Review*, 11 July 1868. Only a few months previously, the disparity in tone and response between the advertisement and the review of Braddon's work had been present a few pages apart in the *Athenaeum* but this time on *Birds of Prey*. See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 12 October 1867 and 'Birds of Prey: a novel', *Athenaeum*, 12 October 1867, p. 461.
[269] See 'Advertisement', *Athenaeum*, 11 July 1868, p. 64. In the *Athenaeum* there is also an entry entitled 'New Features in "Belgravia' promoting the arrival of Braddon's *Bound to John Company; or, the Adventures of Robert Ainsleigh*.
[270] See 'Notice', *Saturday Review*, 11 July 1868, p. 75.

> Fruit' will greatly enhance Miss Braddon's world-wide reputation." —*Morning Advertiser*, June 2' […] '"A Fresh Novel from the indefatigable pen of Miss Braddon, and decidedly the best she has yet written."—*Observer*, June 28'.[271]

In advertisements these quotations presented a fiercely celebratory view of Braddon's novels to the *Saturday Review*'s and the *Athenaeum*'s readers. The reviews from which quotations were garnered offered vehement celebrations of Braddon's talent and saw her novels as deservedly famous. Importantly, the chosen view of genre and the style of *Dead-Sea Fruit* is of a 'higher order', Braddon's 'best literary production', and 'its style is higher than in any of her previous novels'.[272] The language contributed to the impression that Braddon's adoption of new styles and new trends in the literary marketplace was key to the impression fostered about her work.[273] The review opening the advertisement in the *Saturday Review* most directly engaged with the dynamics within the periodical press: 'Let no one be deterred from reading by anything they may have heard or may know of some of Miss Braddon's other tales, for we can scarcely imagine the sort of person that would not enjoy it. The incidents are the simplest of the simple, but there is not a dull page between cover and cover."–*Daily Telegraph,* June 25'.[274] The advocacy of the morality and 'highest style' of *Dead-Sea Fruit* was championed throughout the reviews used in the advertisements.

One week later on 13 June 1868 the *Athenaeum* published their own review of *Dead-Sea Fruit*.[275] At this point the conflict between the review written by the periodical itself and those within the advertisements came to the fore. The condemning tone of the review would jar with readers who were familiar with the advertisements for *Belgravia* and *Dead-Sea Fruit,* or even those who read them on the same day. In the reviews chosen for advertisements the entertainment and the compelling nature of Braddon's novels was never apologised for, rather championed, in active defences of those aspects of fiction as able to coexist in an author's work. Significantly even in the disparaging reviews, the powerful experience of Braddon's readers and her ability to write potent and popular fiction was recognised if not celebrated. Throughout Braddon's career her novels have characters caught between limits and liberation, restrictions, and the chance of freedom of expression. Just as these arguments are voiced in Braddon's own novels and *Belgravia* itself, they are also present in the form of advertisements within the pages of the periodicals that regularly

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[271] Ibid.
[272] Ibid.
[273] The *DNCJ* identifies Braddon as one of 'those who can be identified who had earlier or later successes' with novelettes. See *DNCJ*, p. 462.
[274] 'Notice', *Saturday Review*, 11 July 1868.
[275] See 'Dead-Sea Fruit', *Athenaeum*.

disparaged her work. I argue that Brake's construction of readers having choices and 'rival text to hand and view' is particularly pertinent in terms of the rivalry between the reviews and the advertisements within magazines and newspapers.[276] The advertisements gave Braddon, Maxwell, and *Belgravia* a voice in periodicals which contended with the derogatory portrayals in reviews and articles, as well as placing them on an equal footing with prominent figures and publications, such as *All the Year Round*.

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Braddon responded to her critics in her letters, her articles, the articles which she commissioned as an editor, her advertisements and in her novels. Phegley argues that at the heart of Braddon's campaign is the desire to change the practice of criticism and to question how sensationalism is defined.[277] Braddon and Maxwell were strategically involved in the publishing business, a practice which continued throughout her career, perhaps epitomised by her position at the forefront of Tillotson's Newspaper Syndicate after leaving *Belgravia*. As Palmer describes, '[b]y the 1870s, Braddon was firmly established as an editor and writer, and the cultural authority she wielded in these capacities was much more difficult to assail than when she first took up the post'.[278] The multiple facets of Braddon's work as a professional author are encapsulated in the pivotal period of Braddon's career as she established herself as not only an author but an editor as well. Braddon asserted authority and aimed to undermine the conventions and barriers within the press hampering sensationalism, popularity, and female authors. This case study offers a snapshot into Braddon's contentious and active place in the world of letters.

[276] Brake, *Print in Transition*, p. 50.
[277] Phegley argues that, 'Though it failed to transform Braddon's reputation as a sensation novelist, *Belgravia Magazine* at least achieved its goal of blurring the critical boundaries that were just beginning to be imagined by professional critics'. See Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"', p. 168.
[278] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 80.

# Chapter Four

## Women of Genius and Women of Grub Street: Challenging the Division between Braddon and Grand

Mary Elizabeth Braddon is typically presented as the Queen of Sensation Fiction and Sarah Grand as the writer who named New Women; accordingly Grand's *The Beth Book* (1897) is seen as an exemplary New Woman novel and Braddon's *The Infidel* (1900) an anti-feminist historical novel, Grand's Beth the Woman of Genius and Braddon's Antonia the Woman of Grub Street. I argue that none of these associations are as straightforward as these oppositions suggest. In criticism, Braddon and Grand are repeatedly used to stand for sensation fiction and New Woman fiction, for distinct genres and time frames. However, as my thesis explores, Braddon's career stretched far beyond both sensation fiction and the mid-nineteenth century. Braddon's popularity and status as a controversial author, established as a sensation fiction author in the mid-nineteenth century, and her influence, established as *Belgravia*'s editor, slightly diminished, however her fiction maintained a prominent place in the public mind. Similarly, Grand's New Woman novels contain powerful elements of sensationalism. I do not propose that Braddon was a definitively New Woman or feminist writer, but I suggest that the gender politics of her later novels should not be dismissed, either by New Woman or Braddon critics.

At the *fin de siècle*, which saw the rise of the New Woman, there was, as Boumelha defines it, an opposition and interdependence between 'the Woman of Genius and the Woman of Grub Street', continuing the earlier nineteenth-century divisions between aesthetic and commercial writing, which were particularly pronounced in reviewers' gendered treatment of women novelists as explored in the previous chapters of this thesis.[1]

[1] Penny Boumelha examines the theorists, theories, and (re)definitions of genius through the second half of the nineteenth century identifying Francis Galton's *Hereditary Genius* (1869), Goncourt's claim that 'There are no women of genius: the women of genius are men', Cesare Lombroso's *Man of Genius* (1891), Havelock Ellis's *Man and Woman* (1904), Winifred Ashton's *The Women's Wide* (1926), George Drinka's medical ideas of 'the degenerate myth' and the 'genius myth', and the feminist pacifist Anna Garlin Spencer's *Woman's Share in Social Culture* (1912). This work was generally fueled by the rising scientific ideas on Darwinism and eugenics giving genius a genetic, or hereditary quality, and therefore the associated concepts of degeneration and congenital deviation. Innate to all these definitions of genius is a gender opposition, not new to concepts of a creative genius and the muse, but at the *fin de siècle* it is tied to claims of empirical research, social programmes, and medical knowledge. See Penny Boumelha, 'The Woman of Genius and the Woman of Grub Street: Figure of the Female Writer in British *Fin-de-Siècle* fiction', *English Literature in Transition*, 40 (1997),

Associations between genius, failure, finance, and popularity in the 1880s and 90s echo the divisions made throughout Braddon's career between the artistic and the mechanical. Contradictions such as the opposition between Genius and Grub Street pervaded the nineteenth-century literary marketplace. As much scholarship has considered, New Woman writing and sensation fiction were in intimate dialogue with their social context and therefore that social and literary context should be read alongside the fictions. Grand and Braddon dramatise and consciously enter debates on female authorship. In *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* Braddon and Grand employed fictional writers to lend self-conscious, metatextual, and biographical facets to their novels. These fictional authors offer a view into the gendered dimensions of Braddon's and Grand's novels, and, more broadly, into women's writing in the 1880s and 90s. There is a cross-over chronologically in their careers but also a thematic dialogue as the fictional constructions of the woman writer and the woman questions also coincide.

Heilmann identifies 'Grand's conception of the New Woman. Adepts must possess three qualities: Intelligence, Conscience and Will […] The only characters in Grand's work to boast all three virtues, Ideala and Beth emerge as successful New Women'.[2] More widely Heilmann argues, '[o]ne of the defining characteristics of New Woman fiction was its challenge to and subversion of the conventional dichotomies between literature and political writing, art and popular culture'.[3] Similarly crossing genre boundaries, and sharing a specific interest with Grand in writing the supernatural, Braddon parallels New Woman writings in terms of mixed form and political concerns.[4] In light of the instability of the definitions of New Woman writers and the woman questions, the echoes between Grand and Braddon and their novels should be recognised and examined. Heilmann and Sanders argue for the instability of the divide between feminism and anti-feminism looking at Oliphant, Wood,

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164–80 (pp. 167–170 and p. 178). Tomaiuolo reads Colonel Rannock as a 'disquieting example of degeneration'. See Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*, p. 127.

[2] Ann Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires: Theosophy, Auto-Eroticism and the Seventh-Wave Artist in Sarah Grand's *The Beth Book*, *Nineteenth Century Contexts*, 26.1 (2004), 29–46 (p. 37). Heilmann's article considers *The Beth Book*'s links to multiple genres, which were in different ways contributing to social and political reforms, such as the Gothic and spiritualism. She argues that, the 'supernatural theme links *The Beth Book* to earlier literary traditions, notably the female Gothic, and in particular to feminist precursors like Charlotte Brontë'. Ibid., pp. 31–2.

[3] Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 1. In part, Heilmann aims 'to reclaim New Woman fiction from the Woolfian category of moralist, stuffy, sensually repressive and intellectually regressive Victorianism which continues to haunt modern criticism'. Ibid., pp. 2–3.

[4] Although not directly covering historicism, Tomaiuolo, discusses the diversity of genres that Braddon's novels occupy, particularly the Gothic, realism and 'Darwinian Detections', including *His Darling Sin*. See Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*. Braddon's supernaturalism appears most overtly in her short stories which are explored in most detail by Hatter and Lynch. See Hatter, 'Brief Sensations' and Lynch, 'Spectral Politics'.

Grand, Linton, Robins: two generations of writers.[5] Predominantly seen as from different generations, this chapter examines the instability of the divides between Braddon and Grand.

Central to my thesis are the questions 'What is a Book?' and 'What is an Author?' The end of the nineteenth century is a significant period within publishing history, charting the renegotiation of women authors' professional roles in the advent of modernism.[6] Central to research on the *fin de siècle* is the shift to predominantly one-volume novels, hence towards an arguably more defined concept of a book.[7] However, as the term New Journalism indicates, late-nineteenth century fiction was nevertheless written, published, and read in conjunction with the periodical press; even in this late-nineteenth century context the novel was not predominantly perceived as an isolated entity.[8]

Gender scholarship on those who have been regarded as the earlier generation of women writers, including Oliphant, Wood, and Braddon, is centred on facets such as how sensational the female characters are, the presence of adultery, and violence.[9] There is a large body of work on New Woman writers and fiction, which makes a significant contribution to breaking the canon and broadening the woman writers included in scholarship.[10] Sanders offers a gendered reading of the literary marketplace in the 1880s and 90s investigating how '[w]omen novelists, who had begun the century in apologetic mode, ended it to a considerable extent, calling the shots. Yet the emergence of these conditions was uneven and complex'.[11] As critics including Lyn Pykett and Sally Ledger explore, part of the reason why

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[5] Heilmann and Sanders argue that Oliphant 'is hard to pigeonhole. It is not even clear whether she can be categorized as an anti-feminist at all […] When her voice is distinctive female, Oliphant performs her femininity by means of coy, even flirtatious games with the reader'. See Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"', p. 291.

[6] Valuable examples of work on this period in publishing history are Christopher Hilliard, 'The Provincial Press and the Imperial Traffic in Fiction, 1870s-1930s', *Journal of British Studies*, 48.3 (July 2009), 653–673 and Salmon, 'Signs of Intimacy'. As set out in the introduction, Hammond uses Bourdieu as a theoretical framework to explore book history through the *fin de siècle*. See Hammond, *Formation of Literary Taste*.

[7] For extensive research on the change in modes of publication see Weedon, *Victorian Publishing* and Brake, *Print in Transition*.

[8] On the term New Journalism see Laurel Brake, 'The Old Journalism and the New: Forms of Cultural Production in London in the 1880s', *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1994), pp. 83–103. Law considers the parallels between reading a series of short stories and reading a serialised novel. See Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*.

[9] For key work in gender studies on women writers in the mid-nineteenth century see *A Companion to Sensation Fiction*.

[10] For particular relevance to Braddon and Grand studies see Schaffer, *The Forgotten Female Aesthetes*, Tuchman and Fortin, *Edging Women Out*, and *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of Change*. Malcolm's work on Braddon's *Sons of Fire* and *A Lost Eden* is particularly valuable. See Malcolm, '*Sons of Fire* and *A Lost Eden*'.

[11] Sanders, 'Women, Fiction and the Marketplace', pp. 142–3.

the New Woman is hard to define is the blurring between genres.[12] As Ledger argues, '[l]ate twentieth-century literary criticism may well favour the modernist aesthetic; but the same was not true of the New Woman writers' mass readership at the *fin de siècle*'.[13] The instability of the divide between feminism and anti-feminism connects to work on what is often termed the Woman Question(s) and Nicola Diane Thompson, whose book also considers multiple generations of writers, argues for pluralising the *questions*.[14]

Pervading scholarship on New Woman fiction is the difficultly of defining the New Woman herself. Sarah Grand coined the term New Woman, yet both at the end of the nineteenth century and in today's research it is considered unstable.[15] As my chapter will explore, despite the instability integral to New Woman novels, self-consciousness about the role of the author and literary status united the fiction's style, subject matter, and narrative tropes. Metafictional facets pervaded the narratives, including the figure of the fictional woman writer in novels stretching from Charlotte Riddell's *A Struggle for Fame* (1883) to Mary Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage* (1899).[16] Peterson traces how the myths and practicalities of professional authorship interacted as the figure of the Woman of Letters evolved.[17] Critics choose different perspectives such as Richard Menke who interrogates fictional writers, feminism, and modern technology and Law examining New Woman novels in newspapers.[18]

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[12] See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*. In *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* Ledger offers an extensive exploration of the modern facets of sensation fiction and the sensational elements of New Woman fiction, such as melodrama, adultery, and vivisection. See Ledger, *The New Woman*.

[13] Ledger, *The New Woman*, p. 194. Similarly the collection *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact* argues that it is 'important not to impose late twentieth-century feminist agendas upon considerations of the nineteenth-century Woman Question. Victorian feminism is not a simple story of a radical break with tradition'. See *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact*: Fin-de-Siècle *Feminisms*, ed. by Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 9.

[14] See Nicola Diane Thompson, *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[15] For Grand's first use the of the term see Sarah Grand, 'The New Aspect of the Woman Question', *North American Review*, March 1894, pp. 270–276.

[16] Interestingly, in the 1840s Eliza Meteyard wrote an article entitled, 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress', based on her novel *Struggles for Fame*. See [Eliza Meteyard], 'Scenes in the Life of an Authoress', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1843, pp. 765–775, January 1844, pp. 36–42, and April 1844, pp. 245–254, and Eliza Meteyard, *Struggles for Fame* (London: T. C. Newby, 1845). For more on Meteyard's journalism see Shattock, 'Women Journalists and Periodical Spaces', pp. 310–13.

[17] See Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters.*

[18] Law focuses on Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895). See Law, 'New Women Novels in Newspapers'. Menke considers works such as Charlie Mears in Rudyard Kipling, 'The Finest Story in the World', *Contemporary Review* (1891), Mary Erle in Ella Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* (1894), and Cosmina Chudleigh in Emily Morse Symonds's *A Writer of Books* (1898). See Richard Menke, *Literature, Print Culture, and Media Technologies, 1880–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), Richard Menke, 'The Medium of the Media: Fictions of the Telephone in the 1890s', *Victorian Studies*, 55.2 (2013), 212–221, and Law, 'New Women Novels in Newspapers'. Similarly, Rooney discusses Ethel F. Heddle's *Three Girls in a Flat* and Gissing's *In the Year of Jubilee* and Gissing's painting of the girl's reading as a 'recreational, convalescent, and functional character'. But the Gissing also characterises 'conceited young men' with

Liggins discusses the figure of the fictional writer in New Woman fiction more exclusively, concentrating on Gissing and placing his novels within the trend of female authors as the heroines.[19] Among others, Erin Williams considers late-nineteenth century metafiction from a political angle, arguing that these New Women fictional authors were used to fight against the restraints of Victorian marriage conventions reading celibacy as a 'silent strike'.[20]

As Beller points out there is a wealth of research on Braddon's representations of women in her sensation fiction and the rise of the female author through the mid-nineteenth century.[21] As discussed in chapter one, the majority of gender studies on Braddon continue to focus on *Lady Audley's Secret* and her construction of the sensational woman, although later novels including *Thou Art the Man* are used to consider Braddon's political stance and her feminism.[22] Mattacks argues that in *His Darling Sin* Braddon 'explores the nature of a reputation based upon a series of images'.[23] Tomaiuolo connects *His Darling Sin* with *fin de siècle* methods of policing.[24] As explored in chapter two, the financial dimensions to Braddon's working (and personal) life were influential in the multiple genres and readerships her work occupied; as the century progressed Braddon's work for the *Strand*, children's literature, and Gothic and ghost short stories were central to establishing a new facet to her authorship.[25] Braddon's evolutions in her writing can also be found in her unpublished

'pretensions to culturedness'. Heddle's fictional writer Lil, in *Three Girls in a Flat*, sees her readership as bourgeois middle class of shop-girls and school-girls; she is frustrated at having to employ formulas and devices to keep to the serialised fiction demands. See Paul Raphael Rooney, *Railway Reading and Late-Victorian Literary Series* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. 34–5.

[19] See Emma Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

[20] Williams suggests that, 'As both *The Odd Women* and *The Story of a Modern Woman* show, the inability of the New Woman figures to determine their own desire in any specific terms—that is, to negotiate between sexual desire and a desire for self-determination—renders impossible any conceivably positive outcome […] The New Woman heroines of Gissing's and Dixon's novels, eager to break free from the confines of suburban domesticity, certainly sacrifice sexuality in a claim to the public sphere'. See Erin Williams, 'Female Celibacy in the Fiction of Gissing and Dixon: The Silent Strike of the Suburbanites', *English Literature in Translation, 1880–1920*, 45.3 (2002), 259–80 (pp. 276–7).

[21] See Beller, '"The Fashions of the Current Season"'. Although discussed in terms of their respective contributions to the publishing process in chapter three, Carnell and Law's criticism on the gender balance between Braddon, Maxwell, and the Tillotsons is relevant to this chapter when considering the gendered dynamics within the literary marketplace. See Carnell and Law, '"Our Author"'.

[22] For examples of work on Braddon's later novels and career see Cox, 'Blurring Boundaries: The Fiction of M.E. Braddon', Casey, '"Other people's Prudery": Mary Elizabeth Braddon', and Schroeder, 'Feminine Sensationalism, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion'.

[23] Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', p. 217.

[24] Tomaiuolo, *In Lady Audley's Shadow*.

[25] Heilmann and Sanders argue that, 'the conflicting messages […] indicate the importance of taking note of the entire *oeuvre* of a writer, not just her journalism or work of a particular period'. See Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"', p. 298.

autobiography, 'Before the Knowledge of Evil'.[26] Despite the recent expansion in Braddon criticism, her later novels, including *The Infidel*, still offer further relatively under-considered dimensions to Braddon's constructions of gender in the final decades of the Victorian era amidst the rise of the New Woman writer.

As the woman who named the New Woman, Sarah Grand is, of course, at the heart of research on both the figure of the New Woman and New Woman novels.[27] Grand is more straight-forwardly defined as feminist in gender studies than Braddon. However, Grand's portrayal of women is contradictory in many facets, as Heilmann, Sanders, and Teresa Magnum have shown.[28] Although not as extensively examined as *The Heavenly Twins*, *The Beth Book* is prominent in Grand research and significant work is found in the introductions to various editions.[29] Heilmann examines the constructions of creativity and desire in the figure of Beth which are significant when considering Beth as a fictional writer.[30]

There are critical works which contain research on both Braddon and Grand. Pykett draws many parallels between the New Woman and sensation genres arguing for an interdependence between their writers.[31] Pykett's exploration of the instabilities and contradictions surrounding women writers in both of these genres opens with Braddon and closes with Grand providing valuable connections between them, especially their interaction with their social context; there is however a lack of direct comparison which this chapter

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[26] Part of Hatter's work considers Braddon's reasons for writing leading up to 'Before the Knowledge of Evil' and the importance of the fact that Braddon did not disclose her autobiography unlike many writers of similar memoirs. Hatter suggests that Braddon 'felt no need to apologise for her life, or that she was self-assured than her sister writers', but her privacy could also reflect the idea that it was only intended for her children rather than a public readership: 'Braddon may have been writing her autobiography for many different reasons: as a memoir for herself and her children; as a means of breaking into a new genre; as a justification for her earlier sensational writing and to publicly defend her reputation by shaping and controlling her self-image; or to cement her popularity and construct her self-image'. See Hatter, 'Childhood Disrupted', p. 12 and p. 17.

[27] As a result, Grand is central to collections such as *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of Change* and *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact:* Fin-de-Siècle *Feminisms*. Beller's article on Grand's short stories valuably moves the focus beyond only her non-fiction and novels. See Anne-Marie Beller, 'Sarah Grand's "When the Door Opened__": Latchkeys, Liberty, and Liminality', *Victorian Review*, 44.2 (2019), pp. 192–196.

[28] See Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"', Ann Heilmann, 'Feminist Resistance, the Artist and "A Room of one's Own" in New Woman Fiction', *Women's Writing*, 2.3 (1995), 291–308, Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, and Teresa Magnum, *Married, Middlebrow and Militant: Sarah Grand and the New Woman Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

[29] For examples of these editions see Jenny Bourne Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets, 2013), pp. 5–15 and Elaine Showalter, 'Introduction', Sarah Grand, *The Beth Book* (1897; London: Virago, 1879).

[30] See Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires'. Simek looks at the whole trilogy but her focus is on *The Beth Book* seeing Beth as a development from *Ideala* and *The Heavenly Twins* in terms of an autobiographical voice, therefore the ideas of narration and self-consciousness. See Lauren Simek, 'Feminist "Cant" and Narrative Selflessness in Sarah Grand's New Woman Trilogy', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 67.3 (2012), 337–365.

[31] See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*.

intends to offer.[32] Colleen Denney looks at how both Grand and Braddon 'moved from the private sphere of female influence to the masculinized public stage'.[33] Like Pykett, Denney places Braddon and Grand at opposite ends of the book making relatively little direct comparison between them and concentrating on Braddon's fiction from the 1860s.[34] Palmer challenges how the 'distain and hostility displayed […] by writers like Gissing and Egerton have occluded the rich and complex relationships between the "new woman" novel and press publication' from criticism until recently and examines 'significant continuities' from mid-century periodicals, such as Braddon's *Belgravia*, to those edited and contributed to by New Woman writers, including Grand and the *Lady's Pictorial*.[35] Greta Depledge briefly considers Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) in comparison with Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Thou Art The Man*: 'I am not arguing that writers of sensation fiction become New Woman writers [but both were] tackling issues central to the social purity campaigns of the late nineteenth century such were as marriage'.[36] By looking at Grand's trilogy in dialogue with a writer who is not so clearly defined as New Woman I build upon these previous gestural comparisons to offer a nuanced view of the context and literary marketplace in which Grand was publishing. Similarly, by placing Braddon's perhaps anti-feminist novel(s) alongside a declared New Woman writer and seeing the resonances between their metafictional authors, the chapter can offer a new approach to these authors. Reading these two famous writers in dialogue breaks the genre and generational divides that can interrupt Victorian scholarship and hamper the critical work done in isolation on such authors as Grand and Braddon.

## Braddon and Grand; *The Infidel* and *The Beth Book*; Antonia and Beth

Published only three years apart, *The Infidel* and *The Beth Book* self-consciously tackle the confrontation between femininity and professionalism, particularly being an economically-independent woman, which was at the heart of New Woman fiction. Beth's and Antonia's presence as fictional authors in *The Beth Book* (1897) and *The Infidel* (1900) help Grand and Braddon to confront these dichotomies. It is important to consider how and why these novels work to confront, and perhaps reconcile, the conflict between femininity and the independent

[32] Pykett briefly mentions *Red Pottage* and *The Story of a Modern Woman*. See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*.
[33] Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England*, p. 3.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 165.
[36] Depledge, 'Sensation Fiction and the New Woman', p. 196.

working-woman. These two fictional writers move through different spheres of Victorian society and I argue that these novels present a valuable insight into Braddon's and Grand's careers. Looking at the dynamic between *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* offers a new angle from which to consider the literary marketplace at this point in the century.

The mode of publication is substantially different as Grand published *The Beth Book* herself but *The Infidel* was published within much more established publishing systems. Grand had to fight against the literary marketplace to be able to publish her novels, eventually publishing them herself. Conversely, particularly in the first few decades of her career, Braddon was subject to the literary marketplace's relentless demands for her novels. *The Beth Book* was the second in a trilogy and Beth was following on from *Ideala* and Antonia is only a year after Arthur Haldane in *His Darling Sin*, Braddon's first one-volume novel. Interestingly, both Braddon's *The Doctor's Wife* and Grand's *The Beth Book* were re-writings of *Madame Bovary* and *The Beth Book* includes a direct reference to the novel.[37] The full title of Grand's novel is *The Beth Book, Being a Study of the Life of Elizabeth Caldwell Maclure, A Woman of Genius*.[38] Grand's use of 'Genius' is a dramatic display of her self-conscious confrontation of contemporary discourse.[39] Heilmann considers Grand's fiercely political decision to employ a female artist, specifically an author, in her novel: 'Grand, aiming to strike a blow at malestream attempts to invalidate women's achievements, asserted in no uncertain terms the authority and even "genius" of female cultural, socio-political and philosophical activity'.[40] Indicative of the overlapping aspects of sensation fiction and New

[37] The direct reference to *Madame Bovary* in *The Beth Book* reads: '"Flaubert wrote 'Madame Bovary' six times," [Alfred Caley Pounce] assured her impressively. "I wonder how much it lost each time," said Beth. "But wyou know what Flaubert himself said about style before he had done—just what I am saying!" "I cannot understand your being insensible to the charms of style," he said, evading the thrust. "I am not. I only say that it is not of the most vital importance. Thackeray was a Titan—well look at his slipshod style in places, his careless grammar, his constant tautology. He knew better, and he could have done better, and it would have been well if he had, I don't deny it; but his work would not have been a scarp more vital, nor he himself the greater"' (*BB*, pp. 491–2). Ironically, Beth's words on Thackeray sound a little like Braddon's reviewers. Marcus reads *The Beth Book* as a rewriting of *Madame Bovary* proposing that Grand 'constructs a moral chart of good and bad fantasizing'. See Laura Marcus, 'Staging the "Private Theatre": Gender and the Auto-Erotics of Reverie', *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact:* Fin-de-Siècle *Feminisms*, ed. by Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 136–149 (p. 147).

[38] Taylor examines the subtitle's significance arguing that, 'Grand's title does convey the double sense of 'Beth's Book' and 'The Book of Beth' with its Biblical connotations, and this ambiguity allows its heroine to be read as both psychological case study and desiring subject'. See Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*, p. 9.

[39] Boumelha identifies further direct uses of 'genius' in New Woman novels to describe heroines, including Hester Gresley in *Red Pottage*, Hadria Fullerton in *The Daughters of Danaus*, Miss A. Crief in 'Miss Grief', and Gloriana in the eponymous novel showing the 'glowing signs of genius' aged twelve. Due to the debates, even controversy, surrounding the term 'genius', especially 'Woman of Genius', Boumelha argues that these authors were 'engaging in a risky man manoeuvre'. See Boumelha, 'The Woman of Genius and the Woman of Grub Street', p. 167 and p. 172.

[40] Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires', p. 42.

Woman fiction, Grand uses the melodramatic and the narrative technique of cliff hanger, particularly associated with serial fiction.[41] Braddon is arguably more conservative and cautious in the full title of her novel, *The Infidel: A Story of the Great Revival*. Instead of positioning her narrative in the immediately contemporary society Braddon's metafiction is an openly historical novel. Being set in the mid-eighteenth century aligns Braddon with a well-established genre and writers, including Walter Scott who was a major inspiration for her; however, its status as a historical fiction also distances *The Infidel* from the sensational and therefore the 1860s.[42] Despite the setting's distance from the current political issues, I argue that *The Infidel* nevertheless confronts the prevalent social concerns of 1900 employing many of the elements of New Woman fiction, including melodrama, interrogation of marriage, and questioning definitions of femininity.[43]

There are many autobiographical elements to both *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* accentuating the self-conscious questioning of a professional writer's career in the literary marketplace. *The Beth Book*, an overtly autobiographical and political novel, sees a writer move from her childhood, through rocky marriage, to publishing her writing, and becoming a political public speaker.[44] *The Infidel* contains the social political issues of class, financial independence, and religion through the fictional narrative of Antonia Thornton. Both novels contain aspects of multiple genres both in the writing that the fictional authors carry out and those that Braddon and Grand employ. Grand's writer Beth declares that, '"I am determined, if I ever do try and to write [a novel], to avoid all that is conventional [such as] a faultlessly beautiful heroine […] I would not write plotty-plotty books"' (*BB*, p. 391). Antonia is a

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[41] Beth's friend finds her on the floor and screams that Beth is dead; the heroine's survival is not revealed to the reader for an entire chapter.

[42] Braddon released abridged versions of the *Waverley Novels* sold as, 'Miss Braddon's Penny Editions of Sir Walter Scott's Novels', beginning with *Rob Roy* in 1880. An advert inside Braddon's *Flower and Weed and Other Tales* (1884) reads, 'Whatever scruple may have been felt hitherto by the Cleric and the Layman to placing fiction before children of tender years, it is hoped that the New Penny Editions of Sir Walter Scott will be found to satisfy every scruple and to realise every requirement'. For further details on Braddon's diary entries and sales see Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 493. As mentioned in chapter two, the editions instigated an exchange involving the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Saturday Review* leading to Braddon's defensive letter reading, 'so far from the production of these little books being a catchpenny enterprise, it is a work which never will and never can remunerate me for the labour I have given to it. I have devoted just six months of my life to the preparation of these thirteen stories—exactly the time it took me to write my novel *Vixen*: and if my critic had any familiarity with the book trade he would understand the loss involved in this fact'. See 'Improvements on Scott', *Saturday Review*, p. 387.

[43] Wolff writes that, 'In its commentary—never explicit—about faith, sex, money, and charity, *The Infidel* transcended the boundaries of historical romance and became a novel. MEB wrote to her old friend W. P. Frith, who had praised it, "I like the book myself—I don't often like my books—so that such unstinted praise from so good a judge…is very sweet"'. The letter is dated 10 November 1900 and held in the Wolff Collection. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 382.

[44] On the autobiographical elements to Grand's novel more extensively see Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*.

journalist, a 'Hack Writer', echoing the fictional authors in many New Woman novels who are also professional journalists. Although on a radically smaller scale, Braddon continued as editor after *Belgravia* taking on the role for the *Mistletoe Bough Christmas Annual* until 1892.[45]

As explored in chapter two, Braddon's metafictions confronted conflict between the professional and domestic spheres, between a woman's literary ambitions and her responsibilities as a wife and mother running throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1880s and 90s New Woman fiction was pervaded by illustrations of sacrifice and failure in conjunction with triumph and independence. In many metafictional novels, the endings were centred on the reconciliation, or irreconciliation, between artistic expression or genius and marriage or domestic responsibility.[46] Neither Grand nor Braddon choose the career of professional writing as culminating closure for their heroines, entering the conversations central to New Woman novels and tackling the contentions surrounding romantic plots, professionalism, financial freedom, and domestic security.

**'One Thing Needful': Gendered Virtue in Braddon and Grand**

Neither Grand nor Braddon make direct references to each other, or their work. However, *The Beth Book* uses the phrase 'one thing needful', which is possibly a reference to Braddon's novel of the same name. There are a range of uses of the phrase 'one thing needful' through the nineteenth century, and continuing until the present day in blogs by churches including Joseph Prince Ministries and even a rock song.[47] Predominantly it is associated with the biblical lines,

> Martha received [Jesus] into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

[45] Details on *Mistletoe Bough* can be read in W. B. Maxwell's autobiography who was its editor for several years. See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*.
[46] In many cases the novels construct the figure of a failed genius and Pykett identifies how 'New Woman fiction is littered with would-be artists, painters, and musicians who break down or give in under the pressure of the various circumstances which conspire against them'. See Lyn Pykett, 'Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman: Representations of the Female Artist in the New Woman Fiction of the 1890s', *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, ed. by Nicola Diane Thompson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 135–150 (p. 136). Peterson also discusses narratives ending with lost ambitions. See Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*.
[47] See 'Daily Grace: One Thing Is Needful', Joseph Prince Ministries (2008–2019) and Anaal Nathrakh, 'The One Thing Needful', *Album Desideratum* (2014).

> And Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary [of Bethany] has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.[48]

The two women can be read as two forms of Christianity, the active and the contemplative. Martha chooses the values of generosity, whilst Mary demonstrates the acts of stillness, worship, and prayer. However, the 'one thing needful' and therefore ultimately female virtue is cast as only pure love and faith. This figure of a women in Mary runs counter to that of a dutiful member of society, arguably even the Patmorian ideal of the Angel in the House whose role was to sanctify the home as a wife and mother.[49] 'One thing needful' rejects acts of servitude as the temptations of the material, corruptible, and un-Christian social fashions. There is a Hymn 'One Thing's Needful; Lord, This Treasure', by Johann H. Schroeder in 1697, which was translated by Frances E. Cox in 1841 and composer Friedrich Layriz wrote the tune 'Eins ist not' in 1849.[50] In the nineteenth century the phrase was repeatedly used in prayers and sermons in religious periodicals, such as the poem 'One Thing' and 'The One Thing Needful: A Sermon Preached in Behalf of the London City Mission By the Rev/ G.' in the *Sunday at Home*.[51] Reflecting the biblical tone of teaching, in many cases the tone is unashamedly didactic for both adults, 'The Forces of Temperance', *National Review* (1896), and children, usually young girls, J.S., 'One Thing Needful', *Child's Companion or Sunday Scholar's Reward* (1937).[52] The illustrated tale in *The Child's Companion* aims, in an intensely patronising tone, to teach 'innocent' little girls who like clothes the true meaning of Luke 10.[53]

Despite these overtly Christian, usually didactic, and often gendered uses of the phrase, 'one thing needful' was also used in more political nineteenth-century periodical

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[48] Luke 10; 38–42, The Bible.

[49] Critics such as Brereton examine how the verse was used from the end of the nineteenth century; she argues that women's 'new relationship characterize their new relationship to God or Christ once conversion had taken place […] Quoting Luke 10:42, they labelled divine grace as "the one thing needful"'. See Virginia Leison Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation: Stories of Women's Conversions, 1880 to the Present* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 21. Givens also discusses Mormons' use in America in the nineteenth century to justify plural marriage as the 'one thing needful' for cleansing of the soul and a higher form of love. See Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestle the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God Humanity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[50] See Hymn: 'One Thing's Needful; Lord, This Treasure', by Johann H. Schroeder (1667–1699) 1697, trans. by Frances E. Cox (1812–1897) 1841, composer Friedrich Layriz, 1849, Tune 'Eins ist not'.

[51] See E M T., 'One Thing', *Sunday at Home*, 30 September 1871, p. 62 and 'The One Thing Needful: A Sermon Preached in Behalf of the London City Mission By the Rev/ G. Despard, M.A., of Trinity Church, Kilburn', *Sunday at Home*, 10 June 1871, pp. 361–65. For an example of the prayers see 'Daily Texts and Prayers', *Sunday at Home*, 27 October 1886, p. 685.

[52] Shadwell's article is centred around the morality of alcohol. See Arthur Shadwell, 'The Forces of Temperance', *National Review*, April 1896, pp. 262–76. See J.S., 'One Thing Needful', *Child's Companion or Sunday Scholar's Reward*, 1 September 1837, p. 257.

[53] See J.S., 'One Thing Needful', p. 257.

articles, for example ‘Labour The One Thing Needful’ in the *Examiner* (1860) on university education and the *Contemporary Review*’s ‘Things Needful to the Improvement of the Condition of the Working Classes’ (1871).[54] These articles often employ the phrase when speaking of charity and improvement to refer to the most important element of social politics or human development, lending a didactic quality to many. Although in a more secular tone in political periodicals, ‘one thing needful’ is still tied to morality and what values and behaviours should be prioritised in daily life. Arguably challenging the didactic and moral superiority, the 1880s and 90s saw a move toward comedic uses, most notably as the title for illustrations in periodicals including *Judy*, *Funny Folks*, and *Punch*.[55] These publications used ‘one thing needful’ in an explicitly gendered dimension to distinguish between romance and true love, and often employed the phrase to characterise sexual liberty rather than contemplative worship. These periodicals can be seen as bringing together a traditional phrase and the modern constructions of femininity. Across the spectrum of Victorian periodicals, ‘one thing needful’ appeared in the title or opening lines of the piece presumably as a short-cut to evoke ideas of biblical morality, female virtue, and social commentary.

Contributing to the prominence of ‘one thing needful’ in public knowledge is arguably Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy*; his work’s fifth chapter is entitled ‘Porro Unum Est Necessarium’, the Latin for ‘One Thing Needful’.[56] Arnold explicitly discusses the Bible verse using it to challenge Hebrasism, Hellenism, Puritanism, knowledge, human nature, and rules. As well as Braddon and Grand, Dickens used ‘one thing needful’ in fiction, as the first chapter title of *Hard Times* (1854). Dickens had also used it earlier in a speech in Birmingham in 1844: ‘If you would reward honesty, if you would give encouragement to good, if you would stimulate the idle, eradicate evil, or correct what is bad, education –

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[54] See ‘Labour The One Thing Needful’, *Examine*r, 7 July 1860, pp. 417–8 and Thomas Wright, ‘Things Needful to the Improvement of the Condition of the Working Classes’, *Contemporary Review*, December 1871, pp. 82–96.

[55] For examples of these comedic sketches see, ‘One Thing Needful’, *Judy*, 18 June 1890, p. 290, ‘The One Thing Needful’, *Punch*, 10 April 1880, 157, and ‘One Thing Needful’, *Fun*, September 1895, p. 119. For examples of illustrations see ‘The One Thing Needful’, *Funny Folks*, 4 August 1883 [Gentleman, Amateur actress and maid. ‘The gloves worn by Sarah Barnhardt in *Fedora* were four and a half feet long. *Aristocratic Lady Amateur*.—Well, Mr. Spangles, I may not be so good and actress as Sarah Bernhardt, but—my gloves are six inches longer!”’], ‘The One Thing Needful’, *Punch*, 26 June 1875, p. 269 [Mother talking to daughter: ‘*May*. “Mamma, *do* let us have another wedding soon!”. *Mamma (who does not like parting with her daughters)*. “Don’t talk of such a thing, my darling!” *May*. “I meant let’s have another wedding, and leave out all but the *cake*, you know!”’], and ‘The One Thing Needful’, *Punch*, 10 April 1880, p. 157 [Two women talking (in the garden?). ‘*Fashionable London Cousin (surveying Country ditto, a Cornish Vicar’s Wife, who has been capa[?]pitating on the ROCKS, THE Waves, the Sunsets, the Seals, and other beauties of the Cornish Coast)*. “And are there any *Dressmakers* in Cornwall?”’].

[56] See Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). In 1907 the *Saturday Review* carried an article on Arnold using the Latin. See ‘Porro Unum Est Necessarium’, *Saturday Review*, 13 July 1907, pp. 39–40.

comprehensive liberal education – is the one thing needful, and the one effective end'.[57] As such, Dickens explicitly and influentially associated the biblical phrase with education, an alliance which reverberated through the second half of the century.

In light of this context, in using 'one thing needful' as the title for a metafictional novel Braddon was employing a well-known phrase employed by prominent male writers for their pronouncements on culture and education and manipulating it for her own use. Grand, perhaps more traditionally, in one instance uses 'one thing needful' to champion kindness as a means to live rightly which forms the path to happiness. Beth, in conversation with her husband Dr Daniel Maclure and Sir George on authorship as a profession and on what makes good literature, says, '"our smartest modern writers […] are vain, hollow, cynical, dyspeptic; they appeal to the head, but the heart goes away empty. Few of them know or show the one thing needful—that happiness is the end of life; and that by trying to live rightly we help each other to happiness"' (*BB*, p. 392).[58] The morality and discourse of prioritisation fits with the idea of duty and essence of life inherent to the biblical interpretation and applies this directly to authorship as a moral as well as intellectual pursuit; *The Beth Book* also chimes with the more political aspects of the phrase in reference to education and social improvement present in the press. The words 'one thing needful' close Braddon's novel of the same name voiced by the narrator and spoken to women.[59] Both Braddon and Grand use the phrase 'one thing needful' within discussions of marriage as an expression of the generous and abstract love which is desired but absent from conventional marriages. 'One thing needful' is a remarkably interdisciplinary term appearing in a broad range of social and literary spheres; sermons, periodical articles, fictions, speeches, prayers, illustrations, and political narratives. As discussed in the introduction, placing these novels in their literary and social contexts, exposes the extent of interconnections in the Victorian periodical press, and in Braddon's and Grand's metafictional novels. Braddon's and Grand's parallel use of the term in relation to

[57] See Charles Dickens, 'Speech', Birmingham (1844). As Thompson discusses, Lewes uses it in a literary capacity speaking on Leopardi, the tradition of Dante, Italy, 'national regeneration', and the 'Revival of Letters'. In a letter Lewes wrote, '"Nothing can be more natural than that a poet and scholar should look to literature as the regenerator of his country; and, consequently, to a second Revival of Letters as the one thing needful"'. See A. Thompson, *George Eliot and Italy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 163.

[58] Grand also used 'one thing needful' in *The Beth Book* when Beth and Alfred Cayley Pounce speak on marriage, on beauty and love: Beth, '"And then you married your ideal […] You should be very happy" "But [Alfred sighed] "I was very young, and youth has its illusions. As we grow older, mere beauty does not satisfy, mere cleverness and accomplishments do not satisfy, nor wealth, nor rank. A man may have all that, and yet may yearn for a certain something which is not there—and that something is the one thing needful"' (*BB*, p. 474).

[59] Mattacks reads these lines as a complex voice which deflects from a sense of community with readers. See Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret'.

their fictional authors shows how they each used these figures to comment on shared concerns, particularly as regards women's independence, work, and marriage.

## *Fin de Siècle* Fictional Authors: the Strong-Minded Woman, the Glorified Spinster, and the New Woman

From the 1880s into the twentieth century was a period when women were breaking into the workplace across a wide range of professions including nursing, journalism, and typewriting.[60] Several contemporary studies presented journalism as the optimum profession, including M. Mostyn Bird's *A Study of the Different Ways of Earning a Living open to Women* which decided that the job offered the most 'freedom and independence […] for the well-educated girl of shrewd intelligence'.[61] Similarly, Lady Jeune's *Papers on Paid Employment for Ladies by Experts in the Several Branches* declared authorship as 'a potentially lucrative form of genteel home-work, linked to purity and morality'.[62] Interestingly, each was arguably aimed at a slightly different audience, for *Women at Work* and *Ladies at Work* respectively. While many spoke vehemently against the periodical press, New Women often recognised, capitalised, and powerfully employed the opportunities offered. Just as Braddon used *Belgravia* in tandem with her novels, New Women writers used the periodical press to confront their critics: as Palmer argues, 'the magazine market offered a flexible form of publishing, in which ideas could be refused, debated, and modified rather than set in less easily alterable volume form […] to shift their responses as the parameters of the censure shifted'.[63] Grand, among many New Woman writers, wrote many political articles, but several also took on editorial roles, including Ella Hepworth Dixon editing the

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[60] On this period see Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*. Mitchell explores popular fiction, advice books, and periodical literature, including career fiction from the 1880s and 90s aimed at girls in their late childhood and adolescence arguing that 'middle-class girls, who would probably become typists and teachers, were fantasizing about medicine, art and journalism'. See Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girl's Culture in England, 1880-1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 32.

[61] M. Mostyn Bird, *Women at Work: A Study of the Different Ways of Earning a Living open to Women* (London: Chapman Hall, 1896), pp. 222 and p. 225.

[62] *Ladies at Work: Papers on Paid Employment for Ladies by Experts in the Several Branches*, ed. by Lady Jeune (London: A. D. Innes, 1893), pp. 8–13. Liggins considers both studies and argues that a 'career in journalism for the 1890s heroine allowed for more extensive discussions of women's competition with men in the labour market around an equally realistic but more glamorous role model for the aspiring professional reader'. See Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 78.

[63] Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 165. Palmer continues, 'Without disavowing the difficulties they faced as women in the press they navigated and worked them through the figure of the "new woman" in her various guises'. Ibid., p. 166

*Women's World* and the *Englishwoman*.[64] Women writer's journalistic and editorial work took place across a remarkable spectrum of publications, including those with arguably conservative constructions of femininity.[65] However, in interviews, many experienced authors such as Charlotte Yonge strongly discouraged young, naïve readers from professional journalism and Grand herself cautioned against the 'infinite costs' simultaneous housekeeping and journalism has on health.[66] The professionalisation of women writers had, as this thesis explores, begun much earlier in the century; however, integral to New Woman writing was the provision of a platform for female authors' voices in advocating political and social change, particularly regarding social constructions of femininity and the working woman.

Also utilised as a platform for women's voices was the trend of metafiction extending through the 1880s and 90s. The narrative ploy became closely associated with New Woman fiction and a remarkable number of New Woman writers wrote novels with fictional authors in them. As Ledger explores, 'one of the striking features of the New Woman novels is that they are peopled with female writers of feminist fiction'.[67] These characters and metafictional novels were being used to undermine and contradict definitions of femininity and challenge the literary sphere in which New Women writers worked.[68] Heilmann and Sanders argue that,

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[64] Dixon edited the *Women's World* for Oscar Wilde from 1888 followed by editing the *Englishwoman* from March to August 1895. The *Englishwoman* was an illustrated magazine containing short stories, articles on fashion, society, and the home, interviews with celebrities, and monthly prize competitions. Dixon also wrote for the *Yellow Book*, the *Humanitarian*, *London Society*, the *Lady's Pictorial*, the *Sketch*, the *Idler*, the *Westminster Gazette*, the *St. James's Gazette*, and the *Lady's Field*. For example see Ella Hepworth Dixon, 'Why Women are Ceasing to Marry', *Humanitarian*, 1899, pp. 391–6. For detailed discussions of Dixon's editorship see Palmer, 'Ella Hepworth Dixon and Editorship'.

[65] For work on women writing for periodicals in the late-nineteenth century both on a broad scale and looking at detailed instances see *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900s*.

[66] These interviews include Charlotte Yonge, 'Authorship', *Ladies at Work: Papers on Paid: Employment for Ladies by Experts in the Several Branches*, ed. by Lady Jeune (London: A. D. Innes, 1893), pp. 53–55 and Sarah Grand, 'Should Married Women follow Professions?', *Young Woman*, 1899, pp. 257–9 (p. 258). Liggins looks at the spectrum of views in the periodical press including an interview with Emily Crawford, contributor to the *Daily News* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who was 'bolstering the "superwoman" image of the lady journalist "exceptional health and powers of physical endurance"'. Liggins considers Yonge's support of the newly formed Authors' Society and argues that '1890s fiction also ambiguously reproduces anti-feminist medical arguments about the effects of journalism [as well as medical careers] on women's health. Strangely, these seem to have been perpetuated by female journalists themselves, perhaps in order to preserve the idea of female professional exceptionality'. See Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 92 and pp. 163–4 and 'A Famous Lady Journalist: A Chat with Mrs. Emily Crawford', *Young Woman*, 1894, pp. 183–5 (p. 183).

[67] Ledger, *The New Woman*, p. 27.

[68] Considering the trajectory through the second half of the nineteenth century, Pykett argues that, 'If women's sensation novels had proclaimed themselves women's texts by focusing on women's sensations, adopting a woman-to-woman address and working within what was perceived to be a feminine genre, many New Woman novels situated themselves as women's texts by making women and women's writing their subjects. By foregrounding the figure of the woman writers, such novels foreground the problems of their own production'. See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, p. 177.

'[a]t the very same time at which anti-feminist writers projected their uncertainties into flawed, frail, and failing feminine characters, feminist writers embraced the concept of femininity for their own strategic purposes'.[69] As these decades progressed, Braddon published *One Thing Needful* in 1886 and Grand published *Ideala* in 1888. Then towards the end of the century Grand published *The Beth Book* in 1897 and Braddon *His Darling Sin* in 1899 and *The Infidel* in 1900.[70] These novels featuring fictional writers were published alongside other writing heroines such as Hester Gresley in Mary Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage* (1899), Mary Erle in Ella Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* (1894), and Cosmina Chudleigh in Emily Morse Symonds's *A Writer of Books* (1898).[71] I argue that, just as Grand and Braddon themselves are not straightforwardly feminist and anti-feminist, this collection of women authors and their fictional writers were not either. These metatextual figures are prominent constructions of the intense dialogue with society at the heart of New Woman fiction.

As discussed earlier, Braddon's and Maxwell's homes welcomed their friends and colleagues. *Time Gathered* provides the names of guests at their homes in London and the New Forest, as well as a similarly extensive list of what Maxwell calls 'residents'.[72] This extensive network of writers, politicians, and nobility from an array of social spheres supports Braddon's intimate knowledge of literary trends and movements.[73] But it also indicates an in-depth knowledge of social debates and political change. The list includes author Wilkie Collins, publisher Nicholas Trübner, theatre critic Joseph Knight, writer Jerome K. Jerome, Bishop of Gloucester and Mrs. Ellicott, painter Frith, historian Fitzgerald

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[69] Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"', p. 294.

[70] Considering the sequence of Braddon's later metafictional novels we can see that the sequence from 3 vol. to 1 vol. moves with the general transition in the Victorian publishing business. *Vixen* was a 3 vol novel serialised, *One Thing Needful* was only 2 vol but still serialised, and *The Infidel* was an unserialised 1 vol novel, although was in volumes in later editions.

[71] Mary Cholmondeley, *Red Pottage* (London: Edward Arnold, 1899), Ella Hepworth Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman* (London: Heinemann, 1894), and Emily Morse Symonds [George Paston], *A Writer of Books* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1898). Metafictional short stories also appeared at the *fin de siècle*. For instance Edgerton published 'The Spell of the White Elf', 'Wedlock', and A Psychological Moment'. Also Annie Holdsworth wrote a short serial fiction, 'A Cloistered Bohemian' in the *Woman's Signal* featuring the friends and flatmates in London Jean, a struggling journalist, and Jan, a medical student. Also, Holdsworth was co-editor of the *Women's Signal* with Lady Henry Somerset. See Annie Holdsworth, 'A Cloistered Bohemian', *Woman's Signal*, 4 January 1894.

[72] See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*.

[73] Camilla Crossland's memoir *Landmarks of a Literary Life* chronicles her own literary career, including networks and friendships. Shattock describes how Crossland 'recounts the literary parties and receptions to which she was invited, the most enjoyable of which were the "at homes" of the novelist and editor Anna Maria Hall'. See Shattock, 'Women Journalists and Periodical Spaces', p. 306 and Mrs Newton [Camilla] Crossland, *Landmarks of a Literary Life 1820–1892* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1989). Interestingly, Anna Maria Hall was *St. James's Magazine*'s first editor.

Molloy, baritone Mr. Charles Braham, lawyer and Master of Trinity Sir/Lord Fletcher Moutlon, Colonial Secretary Lord Howth, 'wealthy diamond merchant' Mr. Costa, actor Henry Irving, and, as expected, many of the Dickens's Young Men discussed in chapter three.[74] The literary circle does not automatically make Braddon a New Woman, but counters the idea that her gaze is directed to the mid-century and her fiction and politics are entirely nostalgic, conservative, and restricted to the past.

Indicative of the networks amid writers, practical as well as conceptual interdependence and overlaps can be found between these writers and their metafictional depictions of the literary marketplace. Rhoda Broughton was a frequent 'resident' at the Maxwells' home.[75] In 1880, Rhoda Broughton published a metafictional novel *Second Thoughts* containing a parodic character distinctly resembling her enemy Oscar Wilde, who wrote a vicious review in retaliation.[76] On the other side, Braddon was good friends with Wilde's parents and Wilde himself who regularly visited her house.[77] Ana Markovic argues that at the end of her career, in *The Rose of Life* (1905), Braddon was also participating in 'a complex Wildean nexus' and literary constructions of homosexuality.[78] Tackling the continued moral debates on young women writing romantic, or erotic fiction, Broughton published *A Beginner* in 1894 containing a fictional writer who secretly publishes her poorly received work.[79] Broughton, a sensational novelist, was mentor to the New Woman writer Cholmondeley whose metafiction novel, *Red Pottage*, can be seen as borrowing a book-burning scene from *A Beginner*.[80] Although not a guest or a 'resident' necessarily, Charlotte

[74] See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*.
[75] Ibid., p. 185. For more on the interactions between Braddon and Broughton see Alysia Kolentsis, 'Home Invasions' and Krueger, *British Women Writers and the Short Story, 1850–1903*.
[76] *Second Thoughts* was her first 2 vol novel. See Rhoda Broughton, *Second Thoughts* (London: R. Bentley, 1880). Julia Constance Fletcher also wrote *Mirage* (1878), almost identical in plot. S. I. Salamenski describes Broughton and Wilde as 'rivals in wit'. See S. I. Salamensky, 'Sexing Speech: Wilde Talk in Julia Constance Fletcher's "Mirage" & Rhoda Broughton's '"Second Thoughts"', *The Wildean*, 34 (2009), 86–100 (p. 86).
[77] For accounts of their visits see Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 22 and pp. 141–2.
[78] Markovic, 'Entirely Fresh Influences in Edwardian Wildeana', p. 2. Markovic argues that they can be read as more anti-feminist than anti-queer: 'In *The Rose of Life*, Braddon does not examine queerness in homosocial contexts. The novel focuses instead on the influence a domestic woman can exert over her queer husband'. Ibid., p. 4. Mattacks suggests that the court scene in *His Darling Sin* may also be a veiled reference of Wilde's trial. She also makes connections between *The Rose of Life* and Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1875). Mattacks, 'Sensationalism On Trial', p. 225.
[79] Rhoda Broughton, *A Beginner* (Leipzig: B. Tauchnitz, 1894). *A Beginner* was one of her first one volume novels; however, I am unable to find the name of the fictional writer. Braddon and Broughton both worked with the publisher B. Tauchnitz.
[80] Palmer suggests that the fatal train accident, after the revelation of a secret affair, in the subplot to *Red Pottage* is a reference to Ellen Wood's blatantly sensation fiction novel, *East Lynne* (1861). She also notes plot references between Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1892) and Florence Marryat's *Love Conflict* (1865), and both Mona Caird's *The Wing of Azrael* (1889) and Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883) with *Lady Audley's Secret*. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 160.

Riddell, who wrote the metafictional novel *A Struggle for Fame* (1883), succeeded Anna Maria Hall as editor of *St. James's Magazine* and was a colleague of Braddon's at the Tinsley Brothers publishing company. *A Struggle for Fame* ends with Glenarva Westray a widow but refusing a marriage proposal; Peterson considers the autobiographical resonances in what she describes as 'Riddell's rejection of marriage and domestic life as incompatible with a literary career'.[81] Peterson draws connections between Riddell, Braddon, and Oliphant, all experiencing constraints from their husbands' debts or financial failings; she argues that *A Struggle for Fame* demonstrates Riddell's consciousness of a shared struggle to reconcile the domestic sphere with sustained literary achievement.[82] As chapter two discussed, Braddon's negotiation of the practical, particularly financial, facets to professional authorship are present in her earlier work. Similarly, *Red Pottage*, *A Beginner*, and *A Struggle for Fame* offer a fictional manifestation of the dialogue in which Braddon, her publishing, and her home in the New Forest were actively involved as the century progressed.

A novel of manners serialised in *All the Year Round* in 1879, *Vixen* arguably holds the first New Woman elements in Braddon's novels with acts of suffrage, rebellious fashion, and women at university in its pages. As discussed in chapter two, *Vixen* constructs the duality of Vixen and Mabel and is able to place contrasting definitions of femininity in dialogue with each other. Also, and autobiographically for Braddon who was an accomplished equestrian, Vixen rides, giving the sense of physical freedom often associated with the cycling new woman.[83] As discussed in previous chapters *One Thing Needful* is one of Braddon's most overtly political novels. Although ambiguous in its feminist stance, the novel confronts the Victorian marriage market, education, and social politics through the eyes of a female writer. Braddon's novel is not necessarily a typical New Woman fiction in its publication and position in the literary marketplace, yet there are aspects of the novel and its heroine which can be seen as preceding *The Beth Book*. Sarah Grand's first fictional writer and the first book in her famous trilogy, *Ideala*, was published in 1888, only two years after Braddon's *One Thing Needful*. *Ideala* begins the trilogy formed of *Ideala*, *The Heavenly Twins*, and *The Beth Book*. *Ideala* is a writer and reappears as a minor character in *The Beth Book*. Ideala's writing, predominantly poetry, is not described in as detailed a way as Beth's and she is used more as a voice on Victorian marriage than for charting a career as an author. When she

[81] Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, p. 169.
[82] Ibid.
[83] On Braddon and riding see Maxwell, *Time Gathered* and Sears, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the "Combination Novel"'. On *Vixen* more broadly see Beller, 'Popularity and Proliferation'.

returns in *The Beth Book,* Ideala notices Beth's ability and is part of the community of women associated with suffrage, or at least more political positions.

Also published in 1888, Amy Levy's novel *The Romance of a Shop* follows the Lorimer sisters' decision to open their own photography business after the death of their father which leaves them in poverty. A few years later George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891) incorporated a large number of fictional writers constructing a literary network, paralleling the multi-layered literary marketplace already detailed in Braddon's *Dead-Sea Fruit*. Although not a New Woman novel, *New Grub Street* depicts a number of female writers and participated in controversies about barriers surrounding young women living outside the traditional domestic sphere and earning money. Liggins draws parallels between Gissing's and Levy's metafictional novels, arguing that, '[b]y demythologising the dangers of the public sphere for women, Gissing's emphasis on middle-class women's right to freedom of movement in the city without male supervision or chaperons aligns his work with female-authored New Woman novels'.[84] Extending into the 1890s, George Mandeville wrote a self-conscious, semi-biographical novel at a crisis point in her personal life and her professional career: as Heilmann and Sanders argue, '*George Mandeville's Husband* marks her entry into the fiction market at the heyday of the New Woman'.[85] The heroine of *George Mandeville's Husband* (1894) is a fictional writer and a representation of a 'consummately monstrous' femininity.

Not all fictional writers in the New Woman novels are novelists; as Liggins argues, 'A career in journalism for the 1890s heroine allowed for more extensive discussions of women's competition with men in the labour market around an equally realistic but more glamorous role model for the aspiring professional reader'.[86] In 1894 Ella Hepworth Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* confronts new journalism rather than containing novelists.[87] Indicative of many New Woman novels, the heroine Mary Erle writes to earn enough money for herself and her brother portraying the battle between hack writing and femininity.[88] *The*

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[84] Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 142.
[85] Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"', p. 296. Heilmann and Sanders continue, 'A social purity before taking up her writing career, George systematically usurps her husband Wilbraham's living and working space […] The profound ambivalence about femininity and feminism that speaks from her first novel may be an indirect response to the major crises in her life, all associated with women's failings in some way or another'. Ibid.
[86] Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 78. Mitchell discusses the idea of role models for young women in fiction. See Mitchell, *The New Girl*.
[87] *Story of a Modern Woman* was first serialised in the *Lady's Pictorial* in 1894.
[88] On Mary Erle see Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, pp. 187–8. Pykett argues that 'The relationship between female suffering and literary production, and the conflict between the demands of writer's vocation and those of

*Story of a Modern Woman* is a realistic portrayal of the financial hardship and political choices faced by female writers aiming to achieve a professional literary career. Indicative of Dixon's sense of campaigning, Williams places *The Story of a Modern Woman* within the *fin de siècle* discourses on celibacy, or a 'silent strike', both in the periodical press and many New Woman novels.[89] Crossing journalism and fiction, Mona Caird, 'Is Marriage a Failure?' (1888), George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne), and Cicely Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade* (1909), all constructed strikes within the analogies of marriage and factory work.[90] The silent strike of celibacy was an act of collective resistance to the social expectations for marriage imposed on women and desire for autonomy in the professional world. As Williams considers, Hugh Stutfield, 'Celibacy and the Struggle to Get On', was prominent berating in 'not only feminists but also the "lady novelists" of the day for choosing celibacy as an act of female solidarity'.[91] In response, Dixon declared that *The Story of a Modern Woman* was '"a plea for a kind of moral and social trades-unionism among women"'.[92] The silent strike is tied to social purists with many seeing celibacy as giving authority over male impurity or sexual incontinence, in contrast to feminists advocating a didactic path to sexual equality. Her novels and her articles, particularly those explicitly on marriage, reflect Grand's conflicted but largely conservative approach to social purity feminism.[93] With Antonia's promise of celibacy to her dying husband, Braddon's *The Infidel* depicts a silent strike; Antonia accepts Lord Kilrush's plea but assumes authority in her rejection of men's advances.

At the very end of the nineteenth century, a cluster of fictional writers appeared in novels including *The Beth Book* (1897) and *The Infidel* (1900), as well as *His Darling Sin* (1899). Arthur Haldane is not faced by the financial fears many of the *fin de siècle* fictional women writers suffer and in *His Darling Sin* the impact of financial hardship is shown in

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the woman's vocation (as defined by the regime of the proper feminine) are also examined (admittedly more obliquely) in George Egerton's "Wedlock"'. Ibid.

[89] Williams argues that, 'The "silent strike" of celibacy of these women amounts to a claim for specific liberties: namely, their desire for mobility toward the center of London's metropolis as well as their desire to succeed professionality within the economy. Such women demand both physical and economic freedom because of the perceived enclosure, uniformity, and stasis of the suburb'. See Williams, 'Female Celibacy in the Fiction of Gissing and Dixon', p. 261.

[90] Williams argues that 'Tellingly, Stutfield berates not only feminists but also the "lady novelists" of the day for choosing celibacy as an act of female solidarity'. Williams also identifies Mona Caird, 'Is Marriage a Failure?' (1888), George Egerton (Mary Chavelita Dunne), and Cicely Hamilton, *Marriage as a Trade* (1909) in terms of the ideas of strike working with the analogies of marriage and factory work in the 1890s. See Williams, 'Female Celibacy in the Fiction of Gissing and Dixon', p. 260.

[91] Hugh Stutfield, 'Celibacy and the Struggle to Get On', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1894, p. 780.

[92] See Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy, Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), p. 64.

[93] For discussion of social purity feminism and Grand's journalism on marriage see Heilmann

Kate Dalmaine's body, clothes, and home: 'there was the pinch of poverty in her aspect, in her tawdry morning wrapper, and in the shabbily-furnished sitting-room' (*HDS*, p. 76). Importantly, it is the husband's mistreatment and her guilt at being associated with Rannock's murder that most keenly causes Kate's suffering, rather than her career as an actress. In conjunction, snubbed by society, Lady Perivale illustrates the loneliness and powerlessness of upper-class women. As her friend Susan Rodney declares, '"[s]ociety is disgustingly fickle"' (*HDS*, p. 5). Haldane stands at the centre of the romance narrative; Braddon's attention to the dialogue between the writer and romance extended until the very end of her career as one of her very last novels *Miranda* (1913) features an author imbricated in a dramatic marriage plot.[94]

Also published between *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* stands Mary Cholmondeley's first New Woman novel, *Red Pottage* (1899). Unlike many other New Women works, Cholmondeley's successful novel, as Peterson argues, joined 'popular success with artistic achievement'.[95] Cholmondeley is one of those writers who visited the Maxwells in the New Forest regularly and was a firm friend of the family. *Red Pottage*'s lead fictional author Hester Gresley stands in stark contrast to Braddon's Antonia in her style of writing and, as Peterson argues,

> In creating Hester Gresley, a "woman of genius" with no trace of the Grub Street hack, Cholmondeley devises a strategy to protest against her devaluation in the market after the collapse of the triple-decker novel and reinvents herself as an "advanced" writer in an emerging modern(ist) field of elite art—to great critical acclaim.[96]

Hester's rejection of typewriting and journalism is made within fluctuating constructions of what work was considered feminine and what was deemed appropriate for middle-class women.[97] Cholmondeley's choice of profession and treatment of marriage can be read in dialogue with, even as a direct response to, Grant Allen's fictions; Peterson suggests that Cholmondeley began writing her metafiction after reading *The Woman Who Did* (1895) and Liggins ties *Red Pottage* with *The Type-Writer Girl* (1897).[98] Braddon's and Cholmondeley's fictional writers are connected by the constricting pressure of domestic and familial

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[94] Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Miranda* (London: Hutchinson, 1913).
[95] Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, p. 209.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 115. On fictional typewriters more broadly see Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*.
[98] Peterson argues that it *Red Pottage* 'was most likely triggered by' Grant Allen's Hermina Barton deciding to avoid marriage and extends her own novel *Diana Tempest*. See Grant Allen, *The Woman Who Did* (London: John Lane, 1895) and Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, p. 211. See Olive Pratt Rayner [Grant Allen], *The Type-Writer Girl* (1897) and Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture* , p. 115.

responsibilities placed upon them. The tension between the professional and the domestic is echoed in Caird's *The Daughters of Danaus* which explores 'the erosion of female creativity' by household management.[99] The melodramatic tone of *Red Pottage* can be seen as aligned with *The Beth Book* more than *The Infidel*. While Antonia may suffer from the physical demands of Grub Street and necessity of financial success, Hester's emotional breakdown is close to Beth's psychological suffering. Pykett argues that Caird and Cholmondeley 'represent "hysteria" (or breakdown) as produced by artistic effort in adverse circumstances, or by the lack of an outlet for creative desire. *Red Pottage* stages this process particularly melodramatically'.[100] Ledger reads *The Beth Book*, *Red Pottage*, and *The Daughters of Danaus* in dialogue drawing attention to the consciously political voices behind Beth, Hester, and Valeria de Prel.[101] I argue that although Braddon and Grand speak to their readerships in differing styles, their fictional constructions of the decisions and barriers faced by women writers in the 1880s and 90s markedly overlap.

**'Before the Knowledge of Evil': Beth's and Antonia's Childhoods and Early Writing**

An extended exploration of the heroine's childhood was a pervading and controversial characteristic of New Woman fiction, both practical in terms of education and psychological in terms of the formation of consciousness. The presentation of a girl's childhood as a formative educational stage reflected women's increasing physical presence in educational institutions, epitomised by nine women's colleges in universities by 1897.[102] These changes in the education systems provoked criticism of New Women as invading a male-dominated sphere by those who Ledger describes as the 'many enemies of the New Woman of her supposed masculinisation'.[103] As considered in chapter three, *Belgravia* included a diverse range of what contemporary society deemed distinct disciplines. Later in the century, New Women writers' fictional depictions of childhood were written and read alongside scientific

[99] Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, pp. 180–2.
[100] Ibid. Pykett suggests that there is an autobiographical facet to the Evangelical faith of her brother as Grand was the daughter of a vicar and may be fighting against the restrictions he had on her own career as a writer. Ibid.
[101] Ledger argues that 'The women novelists who feature in New Woman fiction are notable not only for their sex but also for being avowedly feminist writers. There is a close association in this fiction between novel-writing and feminist activism: writing itself is seen as a liberatory activity […] *The Daughters of Danaus* is presenting itself as a kind of meta-fiction, or least as an extreme form of social realism'. See Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the* Fin de Siècle, pp. 27–8.
[102] Arlene Young considers education as also integral to the creation of the working woman at the fin de siècle. See Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*.
[103] Ledger, *The New Woman*, p. 17.

developments, especially in post-Darwinian psychology and psychiatry.[104] Importantly, although much of this material was published in scientific periodicals, including Darwin's article 'A Biographical Sketch of an Infant' in *Mind,* prominent scientific articles regularly appeared in literary publications, such as James Sully's article 'The Dream as a Revelation' read in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1893.[105] Arguably indicative of the unstable division between the scientific and the literary, the well-known novelist Robert Louis Stevenson's article 'Child's Play' was published in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1878.[106] As Sally Shuttleworth accounts, fictional depictions of childhood were not exclusive to New Woman writers and were central to Romanticism and mid-century novels; however, as the nineteenth century progressed there was a distinct shift from a focus on concepts of the self and of insanity and morality, to attention on the psychological, consciousness, and creativity.[107] The intense fascination with child psychology can also be seen in the burgeoning genre of children's literature.[108]

Braddon and Grand participated in evolving fictional depictions of childhood in their metafiction. In *The Beth Story,* Grand draws together the New Woman tropes of portraying childhood and education. The dramatic tale of Beth's physical and metaphorical 'birth', childhood, and education are intimately portrayed by Grand.[109] Heilmann identifies how Grand also 'implicitly located herself within the contemporary cultures of spiritualism and Madame Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, both increasingly feminized arenas of cultural

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[104] An important Darwinian publication in sparking a trend in scientific research and articles was Charles Darwin, 'A Biographical Sketch of an Infant', *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, 7 July 1877, pp. 285–294. Among those subsequent scientific texts are H. Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal* (London: Walter Scott, 1890) and James Crichton-Brown, 'Education and the Nervous System', *Book of Health*, ed. by Malcolm Morris (1883).

[105] James Sully, 'The Dream as a Revelation', *Fortnightly Review*, March 1893, pp. 354–69. It was repeated in *Embodied Selves*. Sully was prolific in his articles also publishing, 'Genius and Insanity', *Nineteenth Century* 1881, pp. 573-87, *The Human Mind* (New York: Appleton, 1893), and 'Self-Esteem and Self-Estimation', *Cornhill Magazine*, 1876, pp. 159–71. Interestingly and indicative of the blurred division between the literary and the scientific, Sully had worked as a journalist in the 1870s and knew George Eliot, Henry Lewes, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Sully's position in the literary and scientific spheres is considered by Shuttleworth and Bourne Taylor. See Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine 18040-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*, pp. 12–14, and Taylor, *In the Secret Theatre of Home*.

[106] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Child's Play', *Cornhill Magazine*, September 1878, pp. 352–9.

[107] For an extended exploration of the interaction between Victorian literature and the science surrounding child development, including both scientific and literary texts, see Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child*.

[108] Taylor gives the examples Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The One I Knew Best of All* (1893), J. M. Barrie's *Sentimental Tommy* (1896), and Alice Meynall's *The Children* (1897). See Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*, p. 12. For an extensive range of work on Victorian Children's Literature including the constructions of identity, the self, and consciousness see Ruth Y. Jenkins, *Victorian Children's Literature: Experiencing Abjection, Empathy, and the Power of Love* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[109] On Beth's birth, genius, and imagination see Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*, and Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"'.

activity'.[110] Grand's fascination with consciousness, physic mystery, and multiple personalities are intertwined with Beth becoming a writer. The formation of a child's mind and her education are integral to Grand's conceptions of genius.

Braddon does not participate in the spiritualist community like Grand; however, as I have argued throughout my thesis, texts should be read in conversation with their literary context, the paratext, and a writer's oeuvre, perhaps particularly in the Victorian period. Braddon's fictionalised portrayals of childhood stood beside her vampiric, horror, and ghost stories published alongside renowned writers such as Conan Doyle in the *Strand*.[111] Braddon took a more realistic approach to telling her own childhood and, only a few years after *The Infidel*, began an autobiography entitled 'Before the Knowledge of Evil' in 1914, but only got as far as age nine. Hatter argues that Braddon's writing constructs a child's inner psychological viewpoint and,

> defends a child's right to a childhood like the idyllic and peaceful one she had. As an avid fundraiser for children's charities and an author of children's literature, Braddon presents childhood as a formative period that should be kept sacred.[112]

Braddon explored childhood psychology within a closely observed context of environment. What can be seen as Braddon's first story for children, *The Christmas Hirelings*, was published in the Christmas edition of the *Lady's Pictorial* in 1893.[113] An advertisement tells how the idea was born 'while discussing with friends the cares, anxieties, and tradesmen's bills' of Christmas, while

> living models for the three children were dear to the author and close at hand when she penned the narrative. Little Moppet's long words and quaint mannerisms, we are

[110] Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires', pp. 31–2.
[111] On Braddon's horror stories see Hatter, 'Brief Sensations'. Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories ran from January 1891 to March 1950, and draw attention to the act of writing with the detective cases conveyed from the perspective of John Watson's accounts.
[112] Hatter, 'Childhood Disrupted', p. 12.
[113] See Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *The Christmas Hirelings*, *Lady's Pictorial*, 1893, republished (London: Simpkin & Marshall, 1894). Interestingly, Grand also wrote for the *Lady's Pictorial* and Dixon published a weekly column called 'Pensées de femme' and, importantly, *Story of a Modern Woman* was first serialised in 1894. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 165. Beegan's chapter gives a valuable discussion of the *Lady's Pictorial*: the periodical was launched in September 1880 by Alfred Gibbons and was, Beegan identifies, a 'prominent illustrated weekly in the 1880s and 90s'; under the management of Ingram Brothers, 'a major early press conglomerate' and sister papers were *Illustrated London News*, the *Sketch*, the *Lady's Pictorial*, and the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*. The periodical also contained work by Florence Fenwick Miller, Marie Corelli, Margaret Oliphant, Vera Carpenter, Lady Colin Campbell, Mrs C. E. Humphry (Mrs. Humphry), Emily Faithful and more. See Gerry Beegan, 'Women of the World: The *Lady's Pictorial* and its Sister Papers', *Women, Periodicals, and Print Culture in Britain, 1830s–1900s: The Victorian Period*, ed. by Alexis Easley, Clare Gill, Beth Rogers (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 232–255 (p. 232).

> further told, are but the pale reproduction of words, looks, and gestures in a tiny girl who was then the author's next door neighbour.[114]

Narrating the 'literary history of a delightful Christmas story' brings a tender personal tone to the advertisement.[115] As discussed in previous chapters, Braddon carried out extensive charity work centred around children's physical and psychological nourishment.[116] Braddon's belief in childhood as a crucial period of life can be found in both her personal and professional life.

Ideala's childhood is not followed as chronologically as Beth's, but Grand still explores the relationship between routine, order, consciousness, and imagination. Throughout the novel there are flashbacks or moments when Ideala speaks her memories; in *Ideala* 'want of discipline in childhood was the reason of this variableness, which she deplored, but could neither combat nor conceal' (*Id*, p. 21). Although Ideala's childhood is influential, the male narrator hampers the intimate psychological exploration common in New Women fiction. Braddon's narratives adopted an increasingly internal characterisation and *One Thing Needful* (1886) is seen by many, including Mattacks, as a turning point.[117] Stella's childhood is not dramatised in quite as a melodramatic form as Ideala's; yet there are distinct echoes in the scenes of rescue from burning buildings, crashes in a carriage, and Braddon's treatment of growing intellect shaping a child's mind. Although in a country house rather than an institution, Stella, with a classics education from her adopted father and his tutor, invades the conventionally masculine education sphere. Similarly, her educated mind forms the heart of Stella's exclusion and is deemed a threat by the novel's conservative characters. *One Thing Needful* and *Ideala* foreground the explorations of childhood and education in *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*.

In *The Infidel* education takes the form of Voltairean philosophy. Although more briefly than Grand, Braddon offers readers narratives of the fictional writer's childhood. In

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[114] 'Miss Braddon's First Children's Story', *Daily News*, 21 November 1894. In a review by the *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* we are told that 'Miss Braddon, most popular of our lady novelists, has written for the attractive Christmas Annual of the *Lady's Pictorial* a deeply interesting story on the every seasonal lines laid down by Charles Dickens himself [and] Like the "Christmas Carol," Miss Braddon's "Christmas Hirelings" inculcates the charity, reconciliation, and "Goodwill towards men"—and women and children—[…] Yet "Christmas Hirelings" is not in the least preachy. Far from it! You are by the supremely clever art of this distinguished authoress at the outset engrossed in the household of the stern old Cornish baronet'. See 'The World of Women by Marguerite', *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 25 November 1893, p. 349.

[115] 'Miss Braddon's First Children's Story', *Daily News*.

[116] The ventures including trips to the countryside and free-school meals typify Braddon's implicit campaign for children's welfare to be a social duty. Maxwell's narration of a time that he went to the schools with his mother and declarations of her progressive stance and work on children's charity was discussed in earlier chapters. See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*.

[117] See Mattacks, 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Secret'.

*The Infidel* ideas of a child's learning and growing consciousness revolve around Christianity, morality, and education. Antonia was raised by her father and with his loss of faith,

> her young mind had been steeped in the Volairean philosophy before she was strong enough to form her own opinions or choose her own creed […] But from her first hour of awakening reason she had never wavered in her ideas of right and wrong, honour and dishonour. (*I*, I: pp. 125–6)

The construction lends a supernatural or mystical light to Braddon's depiction of childhood. Despite the strict regime of educational reading, the heroine retains her independent moral judgement. Antonia's literary reading has a powerful effect on her conceptions of the world and ideas of morality. Alongside her father's books that breached social conventions, making her an infidel, 'the books she most loved—her Shakespeare, her Spenser—had taught her all that is noblest in man and woman' (*I*, II: p. 126). Arguably echoing *Belgravia*'s fierce defence of young women's reading, discussed in chapter three, Antonia's choices are trustworthy, morally counteracting, or at least challenging, the powerful influence her father had on her. Although her father 'steeped her mind' as a child, Antonia increasingly assumes the role of the responsible in their relationship taking on the running of their finances, order to their home, and increasingly their literary work. One of the most melodramatic moments is Antonia finally losing a child's trusting vision of their parent. Antonia is horrified when her father condones and supports Lord Kilrush's offer to be his mistress. Fueled by her reading Antonia sees in her father an 'advocate of dishonour—to urge her to accept degradation!' (*I*, I: p. 125). As a young woman, Antonia's maturity brings the ability to take a moral judgement on her parent. Therefore, *The Infidel* is with the grain of Braddon's wider gendered defence of reading, especially women's reading, as informing, enjoyable, and not corrupting in her writing and editorial work.

*The Beth Book* presents tensions between order and creativity, powerful emotion and pain, and restrictions and liberation throughout Beth's childhood. The narrative of her birth and psychological awakening demonstrates the supernatural, mystical, and spiritual elements in Beth's childhood. Echoing the working women fighting against restrictions, Beth is hampered by a lack of education with the family money used for her brother's education while she is deprived. The main education Beth receives is from her aunt Victoria. Beth's schools are constructed as preparation for women's 'sphere [which] is the stable he ties her up in' [and] "a regular forcing-house for the marriage market"' (*BB*, p. 281 and p. 335). Crucial to Beth's education is her conflicting relationship with order, routine, and chaos. Heilmann's and Sanders's work on water, sexual awakening, and creativity is important in

understanding Beth and Grand's conceptions of childhood and sexuality.[118] Heilmann examines how, '[i]t is when she is submerged under water and rescued [by a man] that Beth's sexual awakening happens and her creativity is at its heights'.[119] The sexual awakening experienced by Beth is arguably symptomatic of Grand's more overtly feminist portrayal of her fictional writer who contradicts socially-accepted femininity.[120] Grand characterises the inherent contradictions and conflicts within the professional women writer's identity and work through the intimate illustrations of Beth's childhood.

As children both Beth and Antonia adopt theatrical styles of writing from a young age. Antonia writes plays and Beth performs improvised stories, both public and private. The concern with performance is echoed in other New Woman novels containing fictional writers. Menke identifies that in Emily Morse Symonds's [George Paston] *A Writer of Books* (1898) the 'harshest opposition between literature and journalistic media comes from the actress Bess Heywood, the novel's most outspoken feminist and most caustic media critic'.[121] Interestingly, Symonds and Braddon's son wrote a farce together entitled *Naked Truth* first performed in Wyndham's Theatre, London, April 1910 starring Charles Hawtrey.[122] Placing them alongside the art historian Lady Dilke and the suffrage campaigner Millicent Garrett Fawcett, Denney looks how both Grand and Braddon 'moved from the private sphere of female influence to the masculinized public stage'.[123] The tension between the public and the private, keenly felt by Braddon, extended across professions.

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[118] See Heilmann and Sanders, 'The Rebel and the Lady and the "Anti"'.

[119] The images of waves, the ocean and sexual desire are key to Heilmann's reading of Beth's creativity: 'Grand's novel thus establishes a conceptual link between the heroine's libidinal body and the creative urges of her mind, suggesting that feminine writing—a writing recreative of the female body—is born from the dynamic fusion of the two within a natural setting'. Heilmann considers the parallels between Grand and Blavatsky such as their shared 'subversive delight in mimicking and subverting Victorian gender paradigms: Grand by juxtaposing a public persona resonant with exquisite femininity with the flamboyant gender impostures of her heroines'. See Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires', p. 40 and p. 34.

[120] Pykett argues that, '*The Beth Book* repeatedly emphasises the fact that the attributes which make Beth a writer are precisely those that unmake her as the conventionally socialised woman, and thus consign her to the improper feminine of the unwomanly women'. See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, p. 180. Gavin and Oulton also challenge the 'rigid notion of the New Woman as a self-conscious rebel or political agitator […] Sarah Grand was never the militant feminist her opponents liked to make out'. See *Writing Women of the* Fin de Siècle *Authors of Change*.

[121] Menke, 'Fictions of the Telephone in the 1890s', p. 220. See Emily Morse Symonds [George Paston], *A Writer of Books* (1898).

[122] The play itself is not referred to but Emily Morse Symonds herself is mentioned in *Time Gathered*. In 1924, Maxwell became the Chairman of the Society of Authors for four years (Jasper Conrad and Rudyard Kipling sent him letters of congratulation). Symonds was one of the two women on the Committee of Management: it included A. A. Milne, Hugh Walpole, and a musician and journalist; 'and we had two ladies—Miss Symonds (George Paston), and Dr. Marie Stopes […] Together they formed a really strong working Committee'. See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*, p. 289.

[123] Colleen Denney, *Women, Portraiture and the Crisis of Identity in Victorian England*, p. 3. Denney focuses her work on the public/private through photographs, paintings, and their work on visual, or the lack of visual,

Braddon determinedly read new plays like *Hedda Gabler* and continually wrote scripts shown to writers and producers, including Bram Stoker and Henry Irving; as Carnell describes, '[h]er lack of success was not for want of trying'.[124] As considered in chapter two Braddon's actresses, including Mary Freedland in *Rough Justice* (1897) and Flora Sanford in *A Lost Eden* (1904) ranged from middle-class women who are forced into the profession by financial necessity and to maintain their reputations, to as Beller describes, 'some morally dubious actresses'.[125] Costumes, mannerisms, and backdrops are fundamental to *His Darling Sin*. Mattacks draws interesting connections between Lady Perivale's introduction in her home and articles entitled 'Miss Braddon at Home' published in the 1890s, establishing the women's identities using descriptions of the home.[126] Importantly, Faunce reads Kate through buildings and clothes tracing her to an agent's highly decorated offices, describing other actresses in their pink petticoats with 'crisp flounces', and finally analysing her home in a 'labyrinth of shabby streets' (*HDS*, pp. 73–5). As discussed in earlier chapters, both women appear in the highly theatrical court case in what Mattacks describes as a 'liminal space between theatre and society' where the two women wear the same costume.[127] To some extent Braddon was hampered by the public's obsession with appearance and being cast as 'the author of *Lady's Audley's Secret*', yet, like John Faunce, Kate Dalmaine, and Lady Perivale, who utilise a variety of identities to achieve their goals, she strategically used that character throughout her career.

Reflecting Braddon's on-going fascination and eagerness to write plays and act, Antonia's literary career revolves around playwriting and reviewing, calling to mind

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presence of these women; for Braddon especially Frith's portrait in 1865 and her reluctance to have photographs taken and for Grand particularly portraits such as Alfred Praga's 1896 painting, as well as in her journalistic writings. Ibid.

[124] Carnell tells how everyone was 'of the opinion that the plays were not suitable for performance: [Edward] Terry said the characters are so uncongenial they leave a most unpleasant taste in the mouth […] The piece is a domestic Tragedy – very true, but I don't think the public like these sorts of things in their amusements. And [Lionel] Brough felt they needed a great deal of work, "as they are at present they are not presentable – there are many faults in construction and too much talk" […] In 1893 she wrote in her diary on the fourth of March that she was reading *Hedda Gabler* for the second time, and a few days later: "Finished Hedda. Carefully read"'. See Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, pp. 398–400 (p. 399).

[125] The stage and actress are prevalent in Braddon's work and these dramatic elements of the novels are recognised by critics, such as Mattacks, Lindemann, and, as mentioned before, Holder, who looks at the actress in *Hostages to Fortune*. See Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', Mattacks, 'After Lady Audley', Lindemann, 'Dramatic Disappearances', Pedlar, 'Behind the Scenes, Before the Gaze', and Holder, 'Misalliance: M. E. Braddon's Writings for the Stage'.

[126] See Mattacks, 'Sensationalism on Trial', p. 217. Mattacks also considers Lady Perivale's clothes as costumes. Particular articles discussed earlier include Hatton's, 'Miss Braddon at Home', *London Society* and Mary Angela Dickens's, 'Miss Braddon At Home'. Interestingly Sarah Tooley's interviews, of both Braddon and Grand, are published in a periodical entitled *Women at Home*.

[127] Ibid., p. 224.

*Hostages to Fortune*. As a child Braddon's fictional writer writes solely in her own voice. There is little detail of the plays Antonia wrote but she openly recalls writing them. When Kilrush suggests that she is young to be a playwright, Antonia fiercely defends her literary education replying,

> "I wrote plays when I was five years younger […] and gave them to Betty to light the fire" […] "she was a fool to burn her trash," said Thornton. "I might have made a volume of it". (*I*, I: p. 51)

Her father's mercenary motives are reiterated whilst Antonia's destruction may be indicative of protecting her authorship from the publishing sphere. As a child forming her literary identity, Antonia's first work is public by nature but private in writing and their fate remains private through the early destruction of the manuscript. Rather than necessarily nurturing the quality of his daughter's work, Thornton desires profit. Reflecting the binary between public and private running through her childhood, Antonia's truest friend is an actress cast in a play written by her and her father; Miss Patty Lester and Antonia met in the wings.

No scandal surrounded Patty Lester but she is, we are told, 'of the world worldly, and had somewhat lax notions of morality' (*I*, I: p. 19).[128] While a child and young woman, Antonia avoids the social scene, but Patty Lester offers the first real insight into both female friendship and participation in the theatrical, arguably strategic, nature of the Victorian marriage market. As Pedlar argues, 'Braddon often used the theatre to interrogate other social spheres and moral codes, and reveal the performativity of everyday life'.[129] The friendship in the world of the theatre gives Antonia 'gaiety, and was a relief from the monotony of literary labour' (*I*, I: p. 20). *The Infidel* stands within the spectrum of actresses filling New Women writing and the broad range of depictions of the theatrical in Braddon's novels, which were used, Beller argues, 'as a potent symbol for the anomaly between semblance and reality'.[130] *The Infidel*'s fictional writer, grew up in an environment pervaded by the theatre. She may stand in the wings and burn her writing, yet both Antonia's literary education and friendship are born in the dramatic sphere.

Both Braddon's and Grand's heroines have distinctly dramatic facets to their early writing. Beth is first a verse-maker writing in secret in the night, but when she arrives at school she becomes a performer reading her stories aloud. Beth declares that the Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray read aloud in the classroom is '"such silly stuff! Why I could tell you a better story myself"' (*BB*, p. 319). Beth takes to the stage looking around the room and

[128] Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 28.
[129] See Pedlar, 'Behind the Scenes, Before the Gaze', pp. 190–1.
[130] Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 28.

capturing the imagination of her audience. Her shows do not necessarily alter her misery, but have powerful emotional effects in the audience, who 'were shaken with awe, and sat silent for a perceptible time after she stopped', and give her an almost celebrity status in the school (*BB*, p. 320). Interestingly, her stories also implicitly stimulate invented illness and bereavements to escape the school's imprisoning regime. Beth assumes the role of both actor and playwright improvising in the moment, although later her performances become Bible readings. The idea of influencing her audience's behaviour unquestionably foreshadows Beth's didactic motivation and tone at the end of the novel as a feminist activist.[131]

While Beth is closer to the role of actor and Antonia is more of a playwright, their places on the edge of the dramatic sphere during their childhood and education bestows a degree of performativity on their writing and their identity. Both women's early roles typify the unstable division between the public and private running through both *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*.

## A Room of Their Own: The Marital Home and the Garret in *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*

In Braddon's and Grand's metafictional novels the conflict between public and private can also be found in the space for writing; Stella, Ideala, Beth, and Antonia all have a room of their own. These spaces can be found in differing homes but the physical space is influential on the women's identity, writing, and femininity.[132] As examined in chapter two, explorations of marriage and household management in Braddon's metafiction confronted the practicalities of daily life concurrent with the literary profession throughout the nineteenth century. In this chapter the discussion moves to examine the 'room of one's own' through a more specifically gendered gaze examining Braddon's and Grand's depictions of a writer's room in dialogue with their social context and New Woman metafiction.

[131] Beth becoming a leader at school for a time is one of the autobiographical moments in the novel as at school Grand set up a club for the repeal of the 'Contagious Diseases Act'. Later in life she was a member of Rational Dress Society, the Pioneer Club and Women's Writers Suffrage League, Vice-President of the Kent division of the Women's Constitutional Suffrage Society, President of local brand of the National Association of Women, and of the local branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. Beth's moment of political activism foregrounded her eventual public speaking at the end of the novel. See Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*, pp. 7–8.

[132] Influential work on concepts of the room, gender, and Victorian literature is Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

By the turn of the century, Braddon was a long way from the house in Bloomsbury and now owned a substantial quantity of property in both the New Forest and London. Through the last decades of the nineteenth century Braddon and Maxwell bought houses and plots of land on which to build, for instance two behind Bolton House in 1892; Maxwell even named properties after Braddon's novels including Audley Road and Marchmont Road.[133] Despite her relative wealth, Braddon's continued involvement in the publication, prices, and popularity of her fiction, and her prolific output, suggest a continued sense of need to earn from her writing. The importance of Braddon's writing space does not diminish, she remains protective of her office from the public eye, despite her homes gaining a celebrity status.

Unlike Braddon and Maxwell who largely remained in the British Isles, Grand, her husband, a surgeon in the army, and their three children moved around Asia, including Ceylon, China, and Japan, through the 1870s, before being stationed in Norwich and Warrington.[134] Frances Clarke McFall left her husband in 1890, moved to London, and became Sarah Grand. With a similar sudden rise to fame and infamy to Braddon's with *Lady Audley's Secret*, Grand gained a degree of financial security after the eventual publication of *Heavenly Twins* in 1893. Taylor sets out the shift in Grand's personal and professional life: 'The financial and personal risks she took with the novel are indications of her determination, ambition, and self-belief, while its commercial success gave her a degree of financial security as well as a high-profile reputation'.[135] Arguably akin to Braddon running the estates in Bank and Richmond and her charity work, are Grand's roles within societies and cities. After moving to Tunbridge Wells in 1898 to be with her son and his family, Grand became Vice-President of that branch of the Women's Constitutional Suffrage Society; Grand then moved to Bath in 1920 taking the position of city mayoress six times between 1922 and 1929. Braddon and Grand may have increasingly moved in different spheres, the literary and the political, but the room inside the home and the geographical location remained influential in their personal and professional identities, and in their metafiction.

In the 1880s and 90s, the space, or writing room, was integral to fictional representations of writers, and has been central to criticism on New Woman fiction such as

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[133] For more details on these properties, dates, and locations see Carnell, *The Literary Lives*, pp. 277–78. Braddon's son tells of their houses and his mother's involvement in their management in moments such as the one quoted in chapter two illustrating them working together on both her publishing and properties. See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*.

[134] Grand was born in Donaghadee in County Down, the family moved to County Mayo, however after her father's death left Ireland for Scarborough and her mother's family.

[135] Taylor, 'Introduction', *The Beth Book*, p. 6. Taylor helpfully sets out the exact ways in which *The Beth Book* matches with Grand's own life, such as her husband's and father's positions in the forces.

Liggins's and Peterson's discussions of the urban and Heilmann's examination of the room and the womb.[136] Bringing together a historical and literary perspective, Young looks at financial and physical independence for women in professions such as nursing and typewriting, arguing how their 'spinster' flats or rooms held both independence and provoked criticism from society as unfeminine.[137] In *fin de siècle* novels such as Charlotte Riddell's *A Struggle for Fame* (1883), Mary Cholmondeley's *Red Pottage* (1899), and, most overtly, Ethel F. Heddle's *Three Girls in a Flat* (1896) the ability for young women to live and write in defined or individual spaces is both liberating and restrictive. Liggins examines how in *The Story of a Modern Woman* Mary Erle's flat is a 'bitter cold' room compared to the family home,

> Nevertheless, it is "her own domain" [and] the journalist writing her copy at her "ink-stained desk" suggest an enviable capacity to carve out a quiet female workplace at the centre of the city.[138]

In these New Woman novels, the writer's room was emphatically tied with social conceptions of femininity rather than the masculinity typically presumed of the study space in the mid-nineteenth century. With distinct resonances with *The Beth Book*, Gissing's novel *The Odd Women* constructs three interconnected locations, the urban, suburban, and the seaside. Like Beth, Rhoda can express love and desire by the sea, outside the strict social codes; Rhoda sacrifices her desire to re-enter the city.[139] As dramatised in novels, young women could establish a sense of individuality and independence, but their own space came with a designation as spinsters or outsiders in Victorian society.

In both *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*, Beth and Antonia inhabit multiple rooms of their own. These fictional writers may move to and from the garret in what can be read as different directions, but these rooms are all used to confront social constructions of femininity. For both women the rooms of their own bring contradictory facets of physical and psychological suffering, independence, and creativity. Grand provides Beth with an

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[136] See Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, Emma Liggins, '"The Life of a Bachelor Girl in the Big City": Selling the Single Lifestyle to Readers of Woman and the Young Woman in the 1890s', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 40.3 (2007), 316–238, Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters*, and Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, p. 85.

[137] Young suggests that Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893) is 'arguably the most progressive fictional treatment of typewriting as an employment for educated women'. See Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, p. 137.

[138] Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 85.

[139] George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1893). Interestingly, Williams argues that, 'Gissing's critique of marriage and gender relations is thus mapped onto the spatial divisions of a dichotomy between urban center and suburban margin'. William goes on to suggest that Rhoda and her eventual marriage to Everard reveals that Gissing's perspective on "The Marriage Question" is much less a feminist critique of the institution than an utterly dystopic view of male-female relations in any form'. See Williams, 'Female Celibacy in the Fiction of Gissing and Dixon', p. 269 and p. 271.

emphatically secret room in an attic within the constrictive home and medical practice controlled by her husband.[140] Beth's creativity both liberates her and makes her suffer within that room writing both inside it and at the kitchen table suffering from adrenaline and exhaustion in both spaces.[141] At different stages in *The Beth Book*'s narrative Beth leaves the secret room and enters the spheres of solitude at the seaside and a crowded urban community.[142] She returns with a feeling of escaping to her secret and safe room but almost immediately experiences a powerful sense of exclusion, loneliness, and entrapment. Heilmann supports the reading of Beth's unstable personality and position in terms of the cultural, the feminine, and the genius, 'not least because as an artist she is always shape-shifting and assuming the voice of others'.[143] Beth writes in multiple forms, with 'sheer exuberance' as well as 'much more pretentious work' (*BB*, p. 403 and p. 441). Arguably most significant in the construction of a secret room is the corporeal cost of writing which expresses the cost of Beth's genius and the exclusion from her marital sphere. Beth's bodily pain and exhaustion mirrors the symbolism carried by the physical spaces. There is constant fluctuation through *The Beth Book* from community to exclusion, from order to chaos, from joy to suffering, and from desiring to rejecting writing.

Beyond her marital rooms, Beth finds a sense of home in her friends' living rooms. These spaces offer a community who both read her work and listen to her voice, providing a bridge between the room of her own within the marital sphere and the room of her own in the urban sphere. As found in Braddon's metafiction, Grand creates multiple literary characters in *The Beth Book*, Sir George who can be seen as Beth's 'middleman', the reviewer Alfred Cayley Pounce, nicknamed the 'Shakespeare beard', and Grand's earlier fictional writer Ideala, now Mrs Kilroy. Ideala forms the crux of many of the debates in *The Beth Book* about what literature should be and do for its readers; a fictional writer expresses the emotional power books can have on their readers. Beth finds Ideala in one of her friend's living room and at the heart of a community of political women. Importantly, in this environment Beth and Ideala are given the stage to speak, united against 'art for art's sake'. Similarly to Stella in *One Thing Needful*, Beth writes for women. Ideala recognises and criticises the failure and

[140] On the doctor within the home see Tabitha Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel: Family Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
[141] Heilmann argues that 'Grand manipulated patriarchal notions of domestic housekeeping into powerful feminist polemic about the need for social and political regeneration'. See Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires', p. 35.
[142] Heilmann identifies that there is a both creative and erotic experience in her submersion in the waves. Heilmann argues that, 'Most interestingly perhaps for a 21st-century readership, Grand effected a discursive slippage between women's creative and erotic sensibilities […] giving expression to and exulting the New Woman's endless capacity for psycho-erotic and artistic *jouissance*'. Ibid., p. 42.
[143] Ibid., p. 31.

sacrifice the authors of 'art for art's sake' make, ending their careers, even lives, in 'the asylum, the prison, and the premature grave' (*BB*, p. 476). Ideala and implicitly Beth reject these physical and emotional costs which often come to fruition. Ideala is central to Beth's journey from solitary writing and to public speaking. Ideala, Beth, and, through them, Grand speak against aesthetes and pretentious men, although they do not value money or popularity in quite the way that Braddon does. Grand's fictional writers champion writing for the good of their readers and with a didactic tone.

In *The Beth Book* the attic in London, Beth's second room of her own, encases the tension between the working woman and the feminine woman.[144] In the garret the dynamic between romance and professionalism is contended, or questioned; Grand's fictional author's pleasure and comfort in writing is muddied by the publishing process. A division between Beth's act of writing and the books exists in each of her rooms; however, both rooms are characterised by a fear of failure which, as the narrator tells us, protects Beth from seeing herself as a genius. Marking her entry into the urban sphere, Beth begins a new book which is 'more of a task than the pleasure it used to be' (*BB*, p. 507). As in the majority of New Woman metafictional novels, with independence and freedom from the restraint of marriage comes work. Despite the old pleasure and intense experience of writing, Beth feels detached from the success and 'the career of the book gave her no more pleasure than if it had been the work of a friend' (*BB*, p. 532). Interestingly, 'the book' has its own 'career'; it is personified and becomes its own entity rather than Beth having entire control or possession of it. Although there are not the same figures of 'middlemen' present in *The Beth Book*, Grand's mockery of reviews through the character of Arthur distinctly echoes Braddon's metafiction. As a literary reviewer, described by both Ideala and Angelica, from *The Heavenly Twins*, as vicious, Alfred is patronising and constraining of Beth's personal life and career as a writer; he deliberately echoes her husband's condemning words. Alfred openly prepares a review for the book denouncing Beth's assumed ignorance, literary style, and authorial ability:

> he ended with a bitter diatribe against the works of women generally, as being pretentious, amateur, without originality, and wanting in humour, like the wretched stuff it had been his painful duty to expose. Unfortunately for him, however, the book appeared anonymously, and immediately attracted attention enough to make him wish to discover it; and before he found out that Beth was the author, he had committed himself to a highly eulogistic article upon it in *The Patriarch*, which he took the precaution to sign, that the coming celebrity might to know to whom gratitude was

[144] As Pykett discusses, Beth's room is 'a London garret in the New Realist narrative of hardship and struggle' which becomes the place for trying to establish independence. See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, p. 185.

> due, and in which he declared that there had arisen a new light of extraordinary promise on the literary horizon. (*BB*, p. 532)

In this passage of *The Beth Book*, phrases and mistreatments from reviews and gendered prejudices pervading the literary marketplace are exposed and vehemently criticised. Arguably in this depiction of a fictional reviewer Grand's own voice can be heard. Beth experiences the pain and the joy of writing in both her garret in London and secret room in the countryside. Importantly however, it is from the new room that Beth can slowly join a community of politically-minded women and establish herself as a public speaker. Through *The Beth Book*, the fictional writer moves from a secret room in a stifling marital home, to a poverty-stricken garret in an urban environment, and finally to a public, political stage. Grand's metafictional novel offers political campaigning as the answer to the conflict between Genius and Grub Street, between independence and suffering.

For Antonia too, her spaces shift, questioning femininity and professionalism. *The Infidel* begins in a London Grub-Street garret, arguably recalling Braddon's early career living in Camberwell, Brighton, and Mecklenburg Square with her mother. Antonia's writing room is less private than Beth's and tied more firmly to the literary marketplace, continuing Braddon's dramatisations of the practicalities of authorship in her metafiction. Importantly, the garret is both a place of comfort where Antonia reads and expresses her love of literature and a place of working with her father as professional writers. Very differently to Beth, Antonia, like many *fin de siècle* fictional writers, is illustrated entering the professional urban literary world, Grub Street itself. Similarly to *Red Pottage*, *Struggle for Fame*, and *A Modern Amazon*, Braddon's writer walks along those roads synonymous with the publishing industry.[145] Antonia is divided between her professional journalism and her love of literature, between her joyful response to writing and the cost of professionalism. Both Beth and Antonia experience a corporeal response to their writing, or physical manifestation of the production of published work. For Antonia, pain comes from walking the streets and writing constantly to meet the demands of the literary marketplace. Also, as Beth escaped to her room from her husband, when threatened by Kilrush, Antonia 'left him, and took refuge in her garret' (*I*, II: p. 125). Just as in *The Beth Book*, *The Infidel*'s room of one's own holds tension between comfort and the physical pain of writing, doubling the joy and pain of authorship.

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[145] In *A Modern Amazon*, Regina Haughton is depicted walking confidently down Fleet Street. See George Paston [Emily Morse Symonds], *A Modern Amazon* (London: Osgood, McIlvaine &co., 1894).

Visits to the garret are the times when Antonia, Lord Kilrush, and her father, to a lesser extent, speak most directly on what is good in literature, what literature should be, work together on plays, and talk about their enjoyment of reading. Antonia and Kilrush collaborate in their writing which draws them together romantically, although there is a sharp contrast between how they view the relationship. Antonia's motivations for writing take a radical shift on her discovery that Kilrush intended for her to be his mistress. The melodramatic tone arguably draws Antonia, and thus Braddon, closer to New-Woman writing and characterisation:

> she had tried in vain to occupy herself with the work which had hitherto interested her so much to make industry only another name for amusement […] The facile pen had lost its readiness [and] often in these sorrowful days she had pushed aside her manuscript to scribble her recollections of Kilrush's conversation upon a stray sheet of foolscap […] and her own tears had fallen thick and fast upon the disfigured page. (*I*, I: p. 127–8)

Like Grand's Beth, it is when Antonia's room becomes a very romantically charged space that her desire to publish fades. When romance fails and Kilrush leaves, her writing changes to express emotional pain.[146] There are distinct echoes between Kilrush, Antonia, Alfred, and Beth in the intensity of discussion of literature and readers, or audiences. Perhaps most significantly both Alfred and Kilrush desire an adulterous relationship with the women; both Beth and Antonia emphatically refuse.

Braddon constructs the second room of one's own within a wealthy social sphere, in which Antonia assumes a more stereotypically feminine status.[147] Beth moved from the country into urban London; Antonia leaves Grub Street but remains in London, in St. James's Square. With her marriage Antonia becomes Lady Kilrush, but within two hours becomes a widow inheriting a vast fortune and multiple properties. Marrying Lord Kilrush on his death bed she occupies a liminal space becoming a wife, yet not a wife with a husband. Within her new room(s) Antonia is both a conventionally wealthy woman and an isolated, woman

[146] As considered in chapter two, the pen is central to depictions of authorship, most well-known in *David Copperfield* and *Pendennis*. On these facets to professionalism see Dowling, *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*, Wagner, 'Stocking up Paper Fictions', and Flynn, '*Pendennis*, *Copperfield*, and the Debate on the "Dignity of Literature"'.

[147] Wolff places *The Infidel* in the context of Braddon's *fin de siècle* novels suggesting that 'The "infidel's" money and the luxuries it could buy her did not play so important a part as does the wealth of the characters in many of MEB's other novels set in her own increasingly plutocratic England'. See Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*, p. 383.

without a husband or children arguably assuming the role of spinster.[148] Antonia's first entry into society brings her a joy yet also provides a retreat, as did her garret:

> Lady Kilrush had become one of the most popular women in London […] Was she happy in the midst of it all, she who believed only in this brief life and the pleasure or the pain that it holds? Yes. She was too young, too beautiful and complete a creature not to be intoxicated by the brilliance of her new existence, and the sense of unbounded power that wealth gave her. (*I*, I: pp. 220–1)

Antonia inhabits the social sphere yet the physical language foregrounds the ensuing cost. Braddon dramatises the gap between public social display and personal suffering throughout *The Infidel*. As the novel progresses, Antonia detaches herself from society: '"I have taken a hatred of all company […] I think I hate the world. Here I am as safe as in a prison; for my fine friends will think the house infected, and will be afraid to trust their beauty in it"' (*I*, II, pp. 193–4). In the end, 'Lady Kilrush was forgotten' (*I*, I: 192). Antonia's restlessness heightens through the novel; despite travelling to Italy to find her family, she must reject their offer of a home and struggles to secure a peaceful space. Arguably, Antonia's happiest room of her own is the garret in Grub Street. Braddon dramatises the tension between pleasure and pain, independence and cost in Antonia's career. *The Infidel* is indicative of Braddon's social commentary revealing the pain behind the fashionable front; Braddon's novel dramatises what happens behind the scenes of high class society. To a varying extent, both Beth and Antonia self-sacrifice and experience physical manifestations of their suffering taken on for the good of others. There are elements of contradiction within *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*, but both Grand and Braddon engage with the room of one's own as a site of the tensions between independence, safety, and femininity.

### 'I am not for sale' (*I*, I: p. 102): Marriage and Professionalism in Grand and Braddon

Reflecting Grand's and Braddon's use of the 'room of one's own' as a site for dramatising the choices and tensions facing professional women writers at the end of the nineteenth century, constructions of marriage in *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* carry symbolic

[148] 'The Glorified Spinster', defines the spinster as a woman who fully occupies the single life; they do not therefore live with family and are not 'looking forwards to marriage as their ultimate destiny'. See 'The Glorified Spinster', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1880, pp. 381–6 (p. 374). On the figure of the spinster and the Victorian class structure see Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*.

weight.[149] As discussed in chapter two, the Victorian marriage market is central to both the depictions of professionalism and the political facets to Braddon's metafiction; these concerns had not waned by the *fin de siècle* and *The Infidel* can be seen as contributing to her social criticism and comment. Marriage was at the forefront of Grand's political work and she wrote multiple articles explicitly posing questions to her readers and Victorian society more generally: 'Marriage Questions in Fiction', 'At What Age should Girls Marry?', and 'Should Married Women follow Professions?'.[150] These questions are also asked in *The Beth Book*, exemplifying interactions between New Woman fiction and New Journalism.

Indicative of their politically charged voices, New Woman writers and their novels take conflicting stances on marriage.[151] A focal point to New Women novels are the choices between independence, vulnerability, sacrifice, and modernity underlying the constructions of marriage and their placement within the plot.[152] Marriage can be found at the epicentre of debates on the (anti-)feminist status of a nineteenth-century writer in literary criticism. For instance, Depledge sees marriage as a key instance where both sensation fiction and New Woman novels confront their social context.[153] Many of the fictional writers considered through this chapter sacrifice marriage: for instance, as Williams argues, Dixon's *The Story of the Modern Woman* associates marriage and modernity, 'whereby acceding to marriage comes at the cost of liberty but rejecting it dooms one to bitter solitude and social marginality'.[154] Consequently, the romance plot structure is imbued with political power and

[149] Interestingly, Depledge draws connections between Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893) and Braddon's *Thou Art The Man* seeing later sensation novels containing 'traits of New Woman and *fin-de-siècle* feminism […] with writers tackling issues central to the social purity campaigns of the late nineteenth century such as marriage'. Ibid., p. 196.

[150] See Sarah Grand, 'Marriage Questions in Fiction: The Standpoint of a Typical Modern Woman', *Fortnightly Review*, March 1898, pp. 387–389, Sarah Grand, 'At What Age should Girls Marry?', *Young Woman*, 1899, pp. 161–64, and Sarah Grand, 'Should Married Women follow Professions?', *Young Woman*, 1899, pp. 257–9. Using Grand's 'The Woman Question is the Marriage Question' (1894), Pykett places fictional depictions of marriage in the trajectory from sensation to New Women fiction, arguing that, 'although sometimes more experimental in form and almost always more didactic and overtly polemical than the sensationalists, the New Woman writers shared many of the predecessors' preoccupations [engaging] in a probing exploration and critique of marriage and the family'. See Pykett, *The 'Improper Feminine'*, p. 15. Mona Caird also wrote an article entitled 'Marriage' in 1888 which led to debating in the correspondence column in the *Daily Telegraph*. See Mona Caird, 'Marriage', *Westminster Review*, August 1888, pp. 186–201.

[151] Associated with the opposing stances on the marriage question, New Woman writers occupied disparate opinions on motherhood.

[152] Focusing on Marjory in Maggie Symington's *Working to Win* (1872), Ferrall and Jackson discuss working women, husbands, and plot conventions. See Charles Ferrall and Anna Jackson, *Juvenile Literature and British Society, 1850–1950* (London: Routledge, 2010). Sparks' work considers the importance of marriage and endings suggesting that New Woman novels subvert and/or question the narrative plot tropes and traditions, briefly mentioning *The Doctor's Wife* and *The Beth Book*, but looks more extensively at Ella Hepworth Dixon's portrayal of marriage in the metafictional novel *A Story of a Modern Woman* (1894). See Sparks, *Family Practices*.

[153] See Depledge, 'Sensation fiction and the New Woman', p. 196.

[154] Williams, 'Female Celibacy in the Fiction of Gissing and Dixon', p. 272.

many New Woman novels place marriages early in the narrative so as to examine the experience rather than entirely the romance leading to the marriage.

Neither *The Beth Book* nor *The Infidel* end with a marriage, instead Grand and Braddon place them relatively early on in the narrative in order to dramatise the reality and consequences of Victorian marriage conventions. Also connecting the fictional writers, Antonia and Beth are not sexually decadent, resisting the criticism imposed upon New Woman authors.[155] Perhaps most interestingly, Grand and Braddon may have slightly different political positions but Antonia and Beth fight against the concept of the mistress; both fictional writers refuse to be one. In *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* Grand and Braddon participate in the conflicting dynamic between professionalism and marriage, which has been present throughout the Victorian period, but was arguably intensified and intimately allied with New Woman writing.

Understandably in light of her own marital situation, Braddon's treatment of marriage is one of the most fascinating aspects of her fiction. As explored in chapter two, Braddon's constructions of marriage in her metafiction are vital to her social commentary throughout her career.[156] Similarly as previously considered, Braddon's dramatisations of marriage form the focus of many discussions of her as feminist or anti-feminist, by critics such as Liggins and Schipper.[157] Stella's marriage in the closing pages to *One Thing Needful* is, as explored in chapter two, among Braddon's novels which can be seen as capitulating to narrative convention. Braddon's tendency to conclude with marriage does not inherently divorce her from New Woman authors and novels.[158] Stella's decision can be aligned with several of the fictional writers in New Woman novels, who end the novels rejecting being outcast by society. Braddon's novels do not, however, exclusively rely on marriage as the closure to the

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[155] Ibid. As Ledger states, there was a 'putative association between the New Woman and 'free love' that led to the labelling of the New Woman as a sexual decadent'. See Ledger, *The New Woman*, pp. 12–3.

[156] Beller draws particular connections between Braddon's early novels' preoccupation with financial vulnerability and the debates surrounding the campaigns for the Married Women's Property Act in 1882. See Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 109.

[157] Liggins looks at contemporary social attitudes to marriage in terms of money, wages and jobs, and ability to have some social freedom. 'Mercenary Heroine' – 'Braddon was now writing with her expanding market in mind, which perhaps encouraged her to deviate from the demands of the middle-class reader and to cater for those socially aspirant women of the lower classes who might identify more obviously with such heroines'. See Liggins, 'Her Mercenary Spirit', p. 79. Schipper links Braddon's own experiences in her marriage to Maxwell with her representation of marriage and the destruction of the idealised domestic home in her fiction: 'Braddon exposed the Victorian hypocrisy that forced her heroines to become frauds'. See Schipper, *Becoming Frauds*, p. 3.

[158] As Ann Ardis writes, 'Radical writers were as likely as conservatives to write boomerang plots that either catapult their rebellious heroines back into conventionality or show the next generation's backlash against their mothers' feminism'. See Ann Ardis, 'Organizing Women: New Woman Writer, New Woman readers, and suffrage feminism', *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, ed. by Nicola Diane Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 189–203 (p. 190).

narrative and there is a diverse range of marital plots and depictions throughout her career. Perhaps most pertinent to New Woman fiction there is, as Beller identifies, across Braddon's oeuvre an 'insistently unromantic realism with which she portrays the sordid misery of the financially distressed couple'.[159] Being an historical novel, *The Infidel* does not confront contemporary society as explicitly as New Woman novels; however, when read in the context of the diverse range of political stances in New Woman fiction, Antonia can be seen as a more feminist character than critics of Braddon's gender politics might expect.[160]

A key moment in *The Infidel* is Braddon's fictional author contradicting the expectations that come with being the daughter of a hack. Lord Kilrush does not initially propose and instead, he asks Antonia to be his mistress, as her father 'A Grub-Street hack could have no straight-laced ideas' (*I*, I: p. 55). But, Antonia refuses, proclaiming that '"[t]he price you offer is extravagant, but I am not for sale"' (*I*, I: p. 102). Antonia's non-religious, non-socially dictated moral strictures regarding marriage radically undermine the stereotype Lord Kilrush places on her. Kilrush attempts to impose absolute authority and power, exposing the absence of equality in Victorian marriage conventions, yet Antonia chooses to remain a single working woman, a 'spinster', until her terms are agreed. Like many New Woman fictional writers, Antonia initially sacrifices marriage.

Antonia's determined celibacy after the death of her husband can also be read as politically motivated. As such, Antonia's determination to fulfil her promise to Lord Kilrush takes on an intertextual dimension as well as an expression of a determination to maintain her independence and resist social expectations of reliance on men.[161] Although not as straight-forwardly as before her marriage to Kilrush, as a widow Antonia can still be seen to fulfil the requirements to be a spinster set out in the article cited earlier in the chapter, most pertinently, her refusal to see marriage, or remarriage, as her 'ultimate destiny'. In conjunction, Antonia's rejection of her cousin George Stobart's marriage proposals is loaded with moral and political question. As Beller says, this is more complex than a straightforward choice between two men present in other Braddon novels and, I argue, must also be seen in

[159] Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 107. Beller provides excellent examples of novels which provide especially interesting representations of recurring facets such as age gaps, maternal/paternal roles, social status, and inheritance. Among Braddon's metafiction, I suggest that *Hostages to Fortune* offers one of her best depictions of a household in perilous financial straits.
[160] As considered in the introduction, the importance of cultural and social context, supports my argument for locating writing, most importantly metafiction, in its context.
[161] See 'The Glorified Spinster', *Macmillan's Magazine*, p. 374.

the context of novels containing Grub Street women.[162] Initially Antonia is once again refusing to become a mistress but she is also speaking against George's attempts to convert her to Methodism. In *The Infidel* Antonia will not or cannot alter her stance based entirely on a man's romantic advances. Antonia's philosophical moral stance and determined independence, and implicitly her profession as writer, lie behind her decisions rather than passively conforming to social conventions.

Beth speaks against celibacy, instead making a vehement case for equality and monogamy. Arguably Grand's sensational secret, similarly to Braddon's, is a belief in a secure, domestic home and happy marriage. Beth's marriage is characterised as unhappy, even abusive, yet Grand suggests the fault is in the husband and the market behind the social conventions rather than the concept of marriage itself.[163] Daniel Maclure repeatedly declares that Beth would be incapable of having a career, of writing, as a woman. As Williams discusses, *The Beth Book* resonates with the gender dynamics within Gissing's novels and *Red Pottage* regarding women's rights to make money.[164] Beth, however, repeatedly fights her husband, attempting to establish an equal, respectful relationship speaking openly in many of their more politically-toned conversations about women's rights for monogamous marriage but with loyalty.[165] As Heilmann argues, with the intimate dramatisation of Beth's marital home, 'Grand manipulated patriarchal notions of domestic housekeeping into powerful feminist polemic about the need for social and political regeneration'.[166] Similarly to Braddon's preoccupations adultery and debt are the primary topics of Beth's attacks on Victorian social conventions of marriage.[167] Interestingly, and I argue vital to *The Beth Book*, Beth's economic control or lack of it stands at the heart of her resistance and sense of imprisonment in her marriage, cementing the metafiction's dialogue with the debates on New Women's ability to gain independence yet maintain their femininity.

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[162] See Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 87. Indicative of the need to consider Braddon's material as a whole, this may be seen as an echo of Braddon's engagement with social issues and the connection between her journalism and fiction, as considered in chapter three in terms of *Dead-Sea Fruit* and article on celibacy.
[163] As Kucich discusses, important to Grand's constructions of monogamy is its nature rather than necessarily the fact of it. Kucich suggests that 'Grand defines monogamy as a matter of being "loyal," and exercising "sincerity" as well as a sense of "fair play"'. Kucich also makes an interesting comparison between *The Beth Book* and Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*. See John Kucich, *The Power of Lies: Transgression, Class, and Gender in Victorian Fiction* (London: Cornell University Press, 2018), p. 245 and p. 42.
[164] See Liggins, *George Gissing, the Working Woman and Urban Culture*, p. 167.
[165] Heilmann sees Beth as 'in supreme command of language' within conversation with the men, such as here with Daniel Maclure and 'decadent male critic […] Indicative of her of inherent "genius", Beth's gift or oratory is linked to inspirational acts of "writing –songs, poems, fairytales, stories, romances'. See Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires', p. 31.
[166] Ibid., p. 35.
[167] Perhaps the most powerful of Braddon's metafictional dramatisations of finances and marriage is in *Hostages to Fortune*.

Unlike *The Infidel*, *The Beth Book* ends with a romantic relationship, even if not marriage. Grand's fictional author refuses to participate in an adulterous relationship with Alfred asserting that, '"[t]he passion that has no honourable object is a gaudy, unwholesome need, rapid of growth, swift, and sure to decay"' (*BB*, p. 287). However, Beth welcomes the advances of Mr Brock and the last words of *The Beth Book* are a man's name and the image of Beth as waiting for him and the conventional ending, rescued by her Knight; Grand uses that very name for him. Heilmann suggests that although the romantic ending might be seen as Beth capitulating and losing her independence: '[b]y drawing attention to Beth's dreams of romantic love, [Grand] was able to counter the conservative stereotype of the feminist as frigid man-hater'.[168] In *The Beth Book* Grand chooses to reconcile a working-woman, in the form of an orator, with a feminine romance, or narrative convention, rather than being confined to the role. In the conclusion to *Ideala*, Grand's heroine sacrifices her love to escape the immorality and pain of social exclusion and judgement for an adulterous relationship.[169] Again, Grand's heroine stands against adultery. In some respects, arguably more than Beth, Ideala is seen as pacified and silenced, yet finds her voice in her poetry and suffrage. In each of their metafictions, Braddon and Grand, among all New Woman writers, are faced with negotiating a line between capitulating, challenging, and reconciling when constructing marital or romance plots. Despite the different settings, Braddon and Grand used their fictional writer and the plot of a novel to comment on society and the literary sphere.

**Moments of Epiphany: Christian Faith, Congregations, and Sermons**

In both *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*, religion is employed as a forum for confronting social politics by constructing a dialogue between duty, compassion, morality, and organisations. Heilmann writes on the importance of the religious tone in *fin de siècle* fiction linking it to suffrage: 'By the late nineteenth century religious, especially spiritualist, discourses had become an established feminist vehicle for conveying political thought'.[170] Galia Ofek sees completing readings of the Bible as part of the gender balance in New Woman fiction,

[168] Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, p. 83. Kucich similarly sees '[Grand's] inability to resolve problems of marriage and monogamy are rooted, not in her flawed feminism, but in widespread ethical confusions'. See Kucich, *The Power of Lies*, p. 269.
[169] Beller argues that Grand's short story 'problematizes the issue of endings by resisting closure and leaving the reader with an ambiguous and unexplained conclusion'. As she explores Grand's short fiction challenges narrative conventions. See Beller, 'Latchkeys, Liberty, and Liminality', pp. 192–3.
[170] Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, p. 53.

especially sibling rivalries in *The Beth Book* and, interestingly, *Red Pottage*.[171] Grand and Braddon write extended passages in which their fictional writers explore and interrogate their religious faith, and both Antonia and Beth have a form of religious epiphany or conversion.[172] Religious language including the image of a martyr pervades both novels, particularly powerfully in dramatisations of political acts and speaking to the public.

Grand uses religious language to convey political activism as early as 1888 with *Ideala*, which ends with the heroine speaking as a fierce campaigner for women to fight against the inequality within Victorian society: '"She gathers the useless units of society about her, and makes them worthy women […] God bless her!"' (*Id*, p. 189). Ideala campaigns in both the eponymous novel and *The Heavenly Twins* for a new religion, which, Heilmann argues, 'is equated with social purity feminism, the same way as the next generation of feminists was to equate it with the suffragist movement'.[173] In Grand's novels change in religious faith is aligned with desire for social equality, particularly in offering hope to the lower class. Importantly, in *The Beth Book*, Beth's epiphanies are tied to both education and performance. Her substitute mother figure, Aunt Victoria, offers Beth order and security in Christianity which is perhaps a strongly conservative force; however, the religious faith is accompanied by education and led by a woman who has gained a degree of independence. We are told that if she shared Beth's generation Aunt Victoria would have moved to London and 'joined a progressive women's club' (*BB*, p. 209). In addition, just as her epiphany in school is tied to public appearance, the metafictional novel closes with detailed depictions of Beth speaking in front of crowds explicitly in terms of educating and improving these women's lives. Integral to her epiphany or conversion however, is Beth finding an independent reading of the Bible and of religion, rather than passively accepting the one she is taught.[174] Beth's constant wrestling with her Christian faith climaxes with her speeches echoing the sounds of a sermon, but with a political motivation to perform social

[171] Ofek suggests that in 'both novels, the balance of power between brothers and sisters, men and women, hangs on competing narratives and conflicting readings of the Bible as much as it depends on quantifiable legal reforms'. See Galia Ofek, 'Shrieking Sisters and Bawling Brothers: Sibling Rivalry in Sarah Grand and Mary Cholmondeley', *Conflict and Difference in Nineteenth–Century Literature*, ed. by Dinah Birch and Mark Llewellyn (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 213–227 (p. 12).
[172] Women's conversions in Victorian fiction was touched on in relation to the phrase 'one thing needful' earlier in the chapter and for more on the social and literary history see Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation* and Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestle the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God Humanity* (2014).
[173] Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies*, p. 53. Heilmann also discusses the dynamic between feminism and the Theosophical Society which had considerable number of feminist activists, suffragists, and suffragettes in its membership. Ibid., p. 93.
[174] On the relationship between Beth's and her family's faith see Ofek, 'Shrieking Sisters and Bawling Brothers'.

duty. The audience are her congregation, implicitly making Beth a preacher as well as a suffragist.

Particularly in her later career, alongside her ghost stories, historical novels, and crime fictions, several of Braddon's novels share a fascination with Christian faith, wealth, and charity. In *His Darling Sin*, Arthur Haldane's second novel, 'a sordid book', is redeemed by 'a city missionary, humbly born, plain, self-educated, but a Christ-like character' (*HDS*, p. 85). *The Infidel*'s narratives of charity and George Stobart might be found in Haldane's novel. In direct opposition to those in the 1860s disparaging her knowledge of Scotland, doorsteps, and dialects, repeatedly in reviews Braddon's accuracy of representation in *The Infidel* was deemed excellent: as the *London Quarterly Review* says, '[s]he reproduces the people, the scenes, the atmosphere, the spirit of the eighteenth century, and she describes the work and the influence of Methodism with insight and sympathy'.[175] Braddon's illustrations of Methodism, of John Wesley himself, was the element of her historicism that was most highly praised, and commended by reviewers as remarkable.[176] Similarly to Beth, Antonia's relationship with religion is tied to her education. As discussed earlier in the chapter, her father's atheism, in tandem with her literary education, stands at the heart of Antonia's belief systems. The sense of rejecting organised religion characterises Antonia's actions throughout *The Infidel*. Approaching the narrative's conclusion, Antonia speaks to George: '"If to love Jesus is to be a Christian, why then I am a Christian. But if a Christian must think exactly as you do, or as Mr. Wesley does, I am outside the pale"' (*I*, II: p. 246). Antonia expresses desire for the hope faith can bring and her belief in God fluctuates through the novel, but it is the organisation and prescribed behaviours and beliefs that come with Methodism which she resists.[177]

Echoing how Beth's religion is connected to public speaking, Braddon's descriptions of Wesley's sermons are intensely theatrical. Although Antonia is not speaking, the scenes are infused with a persuasive sense that she is partaking in the performance rather than George's adoration:

> [Antonia] had thrown off her mantle, and the starlight shone upon the marble of her throat and the diamond heart that fastened her gauze kerchief […] Absorbed by her interest in the preacher, she was unconscious of those eyes that gazed at her with an unspeakable love. (*I*, II: pp. 80–1)

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[175] 'Methodism in Recent Fiction', *London Quarterly Review*.
[176] On the reception of Braddon's historicist novels more generally see Wolff, *Sensational Victorian*.
[177] We are told how, 'All the strength of [Antonia's] heart and intellect were engaged in those good works to which the Methodists attached only a secondary merit. Her compassion for human suffering was the dominating impulse of her life' (*I*, II: pp. 250–1).

The narrative focus is on Antonia in the audience, drawing parallels with the early scenes set in the theatre, thus with her professional roles as a playwright and journalist standing as an observer in the wings. Arguably Braddon employs Antonia's contentious relationship with religion to express resistance to Victorian social conventions. In many of her late nineteenth-century novels, Braddon used a choice between a religious man and a lover; however, as Beller argues, in '*The Infidel*, this latter is presented in a more complex way, and the heroine is arguably morally superior to the priest, despite her atheism'.[178] Although his faith is never ridiculed, George is the one who expresses adulterous passion rather than the secular woman; for the second time in *The Infidel*, Braddon rejects adultery. Importantly, as well as protecting the fictional writer from immorality, Braddon prevents Antonia from relinquishing intellectual autonomy. Similarly to Beth, Antonia places the practical act of charity and education above religious evangelism and *The Infidel*'s narrative sympathy is with the heroine's social politics.

As *The Infidel*'s plot progresses, Antonia increasingly assumes the role of martyr, with distinct echoes of Ideala. She turns her back on Italy and London dedicating her time and health to the Kilrush estate in Ireland, eventually dying a martyr's death. Although, unlike Beth, Antonia is not explicitly didactic, readers are still offered the image of her preaching to 'working women', implicitly to improve their lives. Using an intensely patronising tone, John Wesley writes of Antonia's work in Ireland:

> "She does not attempt to teach, but she reads the Gospel to them; and I may tell you that she has an exquisite voice, and is a most accomplished reader […] Should Lady Kilrush continue in well-doing, I should like her occasionally to address a room full of working women. A woman should know best how to reach such women's hearts". (*I*, II: pp. 242–3).

The narrative is caught between confining Antonia to religious conventions and giving her the chance for a voice on the stage. Also important, is the relative modernism of Methodism in the nineteenth century and John Wesley was seen as the forefront of a new form of Christianity. Importantly, Wesley's description of Antonia taking to the stage follows his announcement of the first female preacher in the movement. Heard through Wesley's voice, rather than the narrative voice, Antonia and the woman preacher are perhaps confined to the patriarchal hierarchy. Nevertheless, Antonia is associated with the beginnings of women's presence in Methodism. In *The Infidel* Braddon tentatively constructs a version of the political public speaking Grand showcases in *The Beth Book.* Related to these authors' use of

[178] Beller, *A Companion to The Mystery Fiction*, p. 87.

the Biblical phrase 'one thing needful' to tap into discourses on morality, marriage, and social politics, Grand and Braddon strategically use religious discourses in the service of women's professional independence.

**'The thousands of those who suffer' (*BB*: p. 541): Beth and Antonia in the Role of Nurse**

Antonia and Beth both assume the role of acting for the good of the people and inhabit the figure of a nurse. As Young argues, the rise of the professional nurse and typewriter chimed with and influenced Victorian 'social or cultural fixations': 'the Woman Question, the Strong-Minded Woman, the Glorified Spinster, and the New Woman'.[179] Social duty and kindness influence the construction of the heroine and the plot itself in both *The Beth Story* and *The Infidel*. Beth's and Antonia's identities as fictional writers are integral to constructions of authorship, as speaking and listening form the basis of their nursing and social care. Antonia listens to the '"poor creatures who tell me their troubles"' (*I*, I: p. 281) and Beth speaks so that 'her words should come with comfort to thousands of those who suffer […] Beth was one of the swallows of the woman's summer' (*BB*, p. 541). Although neither woman overtly displays any desire to have children, it could be argued that Beth and Antonia have a degree of maternal impulse used by Grand and Braddon to confront the conflict between Victorian conceptions of femininity and the working women. There are significant autobiographical aspects to these medical and social facets of the novels. Importantly, the role of nurse in *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* participates in the dialogue between New Woman writers, their metafictional novels, and their social context.

To establish her position as nurse for Arthur Brock, Beth creates the essential room and, 'while the kettle was boiling, she cut bread and butter, and lighted the fire' (*BB*, p. 512). The use of 'bread and butter' harks back to Beth's formation of identity and memory in childhood, creating a circular narrative pattern. Just as Braddon uses the image of bread and butter throughout her fiction, Grand utilises the metaphorical implications using bread and butter as part of the dramatisations of memory and normality during Beth's childhood. Through traumatic memories as a very young child Grand establishes Beth's imagination and individuality, whilst the mother dismisses the request as 'too great an inconvenience to have a

[179] Young discusses the professionalisation of nursing from both a historical and literary position. See Young, *From Spinster to Career Woman*, pp. 12–3.

child dislike its staple food' (*BB*, p. 41).[180] The image of bread reoccurs much later in *The Beth Book* when Beth assumes the role of nurse, taking on Biblical dimensions as the object of her sacrifice for Alfred. Grand does not endow daily bread with the same associations with work and earnings as Braddon, but in *The Beth Book* bread and cheese are associated with money in terms of sacrifice. Beth's choice to give Alfred her money and go hungry herself is a prominent aspect of her nursing. Interestingly, only once she has become a nurse does Beth lose her desire to publish, exacerbating the contrast between Grand's and Braddon's use of the phrase 'bread and butter'.

The symbol of bread, and breadwinner, appears in the majority of the metafictional novels spoken about earlier in the chapter, another facet tying these narratives, their fictional writers, and the authors together. A spectrum ranges from the Christian act of 'breaking bread' in Broughton's *Second Thoughts* to Dixon's *The Story of a Modern Woman* patronising scene of pastoral simplicity.[181] However, for Gissing, Cholmondeley, and Riddell, bread is emphatically tied to earnings. *New Grub Street* uses a slightly comedic tone, but earning bread distinguishes between writers.[182] For Glenarva Westray bread symbolises the family's financial trouble and her vulnerability: 'being only a woman which way would it be best, or indeed, possible, for her to face the world?'[183] Earning her bread is the driving force behind her, if naïve, decision to embark on a struggle for literary fame and independence. *Red Pottage* has an extensive and political use of bread to exemplify literature's association with desperation, poverty, and, interestingly, Victorian class structures. Repeatedly 'daily bread' distinguishes between characters' social status, personal experiences and, at times, morality: 'The rich grind the poor for their luxuries with their eyes shut, and we grind each other for our daily breads with our eyes open'.[184] Very similarly to Antonia's worn out body, 'Rachel had just come in, set and tired, bringing with her a roll of manuscript to be transcribed. A women waiting for her on the endless stone stairs had cursed

[180] Similarly, at Beth's school bread and cheese is used as the main food for the pupils; indeed, they don't seem to eat anything else.
[181] In *Second Thoughts*, the act of 'breaking bread' is drawn directly from Bible verses including 'When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them', Luke 24:30, and Jesus's giving of loaves and fish, Luke 9:16. See Broughton, *Second Thoughts*, p. 230. In *The Story of a Modern Women*, the 'motherless English girl [feels] delight in simple little pleasures—a luncheon of black bread and coarse cheese in some tiny inn'. See Dixon, *The Story of a Modern Woman*, p. 35.
[182] Perhaps comedically and poignantly, 'On the spot I asked her to marry me. I didn't practice any deception, mind. I told her I was a poor devil who had failed as a realist novelist and was earning bread in haphazard ways'. See George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, ed. by Katherine Mullin (1891; Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2016), p. 191. Earlier in the novel we are told that, 'A man who can't journalise, yet must earn his bread by literature, nowadays inevitably turns to fiction, as the Elizabethan men turned to the drama'. Ibid., p. 70.
[183] Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame* (London: R. Bentley and Son, 1883), p. 22.
[184] Cholmondeley, *Red Pottage*, p. 35.

her for taking the bread out of her mouth. […] "now he gives [the work] all to you because you're younger and better-looking"'.[185] Similarly to Braddon's novels, 'daily bread' is poised between a Biblical image and a practical one. For all these novels, bread is consistently an object of necessity.

For Beth, the role of nurse replaces the role of writer and acts as a bridge to her public speaking. The transition from writer to public speaker is the most autobiographical dimension to *The Beth Book*, and *Ideala*. Similarly, this aspect provides the greatest parallel between Ideala and Beth. Heilmann sees a development from *Ideala*'s eponymous heroine to *The Beth Book*'s, arguing that,

> [Beth] has evolved into an even higher state of being than Ideala and is therefore predestined to become a spiritual leader of even greater potency and influence, a prediction that appears confirmed by the ending. Her oratorial power to command words and inspire deeds has the potential to reach a wider audience.[186]

Re-appearing in *The Beth Book*, Ideala aids Beth in finding her new career in social duty and suffrage. Importantly, a fictional writer expresses the relationship between readers, fiction, and its influence on society, but also speaks of the value of caring for the suffering. Beth's private care for a suffering individual foregrounds her speeches aimed at comforting the 'thousands of those who suffer' (*BB*, p. 541). For Grand the image of a nurse extends the idea of writing and speaking for the good of people, rather than for the aesthetic pleasure of well-tuned prose.

Antonia occupies the status of charitable visitor within the private home, but significantly as a financial patron rather than occupying the role of romantically charged carer.[187] Even more overtly than *The Beth Book*, charity forms an autobiographical dimension to *The Infidel*. As discussed in earlier chapters, Braddon carried out extensive charity work after achieving financial security herself. Her predominant focus was on education and schools, including setting up and financing school trips to the countryside and school meals in poverty-stricken areas of London; like Antonia, Braddon was predominantly in a managerial role. Braddon's own social politics were questioned in the press, including a cartoon in *Funny Folks* laughing at her campaign for school meals. The subtitle to 'Boarding Schools for the Million' reads 'Miss Braddon contends that we should feed as well as teach

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[185] Ibid., p. 34.
[186] Heilmann, 'Visionary Desires', p. 36.
[187] Foster examines the social and moral facets to charitable visitors, particularly the middle-class woman. See Laura Foster, *The Representation of the Workhouse in Nineteenth-Century Culture* (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cardiff University, 2014), particularly 'Chapter Three: Visiting the Workhouse', pp. 133–185.

in the Board Schools: then we should have very different results'.[188] The six illustrations illustrate the 'starved scholars' indecently eating, falling asleep after lunch, becoming 'well-boarded waifs exciting envy', and we are told that 'the result of feeding mind and body—no City will hold the Statues of all the Great Men'.[189] Braddon, though, was more incisive about the personal and political impulses to philanthropy than this lampoon suggests. She interrogates Antonia's motivations for her acts of charity and nursing, which fluctuate between boredom, social responsibility, and a powerful desire to care for the needy. *The Infidel*'s narrative divides Antonia's time as a writer and her time involved in charity work arguably echoing Braddon's dual identity.

Once Antonia has inherited her fortune and assumed control over a significant amount of money, Antonia fluctuates between lavish spending on social conventions, such as fashion, and a recurrent desire or guilty compulsion to undertake charity work. She enters a business arrangement with her cousin George Stobart which involves care of the poverty-stricken in London. Significantly, Antonia is the financial investor rather than George; the money is inherited from her husband, but Antonia has gained control over it. Echoing the household management facets to her earlier metafiction, Braddon employs the contradiction between a business manager and the figure of the nurse to challenge the separation between the feminine maternal figure and the economically-independent, working woman. *The Infidel* powerfully questions the significance of the motivations behind acts of charity, by placing Antonia's Voltairean philosophy, alongside George's Methodism. George is patronising perhaps in his sense of entitlement to order Antonia, to exert authority over her, but 'her intrepid spirit tempted her to lunge deeper into the dark abyss of guilty and unhappy lives' (*I*, I: p. 280). Antonia never entirely loses her independence, either in society or in her opinions. At the beginning of the novel Lord Kilrush is the donor for both Antonia and her father, but later in the novel Antonia gains the role of donor. There is arguably a degree of gender reversal in *The Infidel*. In both *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel*, nursing, charity, and acting for social good are sites for interrogating professionalism, literature, and femininity.

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[188] 'Boarding Schools for the Million', *Funny Folks*, 5 June 1880, p. 179. *Punch* also held an item on Braddon's charity. See 'Miss Braddon's School Days', *Punch*, 15 May 1880, p. 228.
[189] 'Boarding Schools for the Million', *Funny Folks*.

In 1904, an article in the *Lady's Realm*, a staple for public libraries, announced the Lyceum Club's intention to create an information bureau for its members, contributing to 'providing a *pied-a-terre* for the intellectual and artistic professions'.[190] Dora D'Espaigne tells that,

> The hundred and eighteen names on the provisional committee comprise pretty nearly every well-known women in these special subjects in England; and it would be easier to say who is *not* included than who *is*, in a list which includes the Countess of Aberdeen, Miss Billington, Rhoda Broughton, Mrs. Egerton Castle, Sarah Grand, Beatrice Harraden, John Oliver Hobbes, the Duchess of Leeds, E. Nesbit, Miss Braddon, Mrs. Meynell, L. T. Meade, Mts. Molesworth, Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, Flora Annie Steel, the Duchess of Sutherland, Miss Sarah Tytler, and Mrs. Humphrey Ward.[191]

Just as Braddon's and Grand's names were read alongside each other in a list of distinguished professionals, their writing was read in tandem in magazines including the *Lady's Realm* itself, *Women at Home* and, as discussed earlier, the *Lady's Pictorial*. Bringing together a disparate and dynamic range of women writers, including Braddon and Grand, the *Lady's Pictorial*'s 'diversity of texts and advertisements, both conventional and radical', as Gerry Beegan argues, 'allowed readers to negotiate the tensions that were central to being a modern women'.[192] Considering the interplay and proximity between women writers at the *fin de siècle*, Palmer identifies the significance of 'Some Women Novelists' in *Women at Home*, among them, Braddon, Corelli, Grand and Linton.[193] As did the *Lady's Pictorial*, the interviewer, Sarah Tooley, orders the interviews alphabetically, which, as Palmer argues, breaks down chronological bias or a hierarchy often imposed by modern readers and critics.[194] The *Lady's Realm* itself published fictional works by a spectrum of women writers,

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[190] Dora D'Espaigne, 'The Lyceum Club', *Lady's Realm*, 1904, pp. 603–608 (p. 603).

[191] Ibid., p. 607. As D'Espaigne sets out, 'The information bureau is to assist members [of The Lyceum Club] in their several professions by supplying information concerning the placing, publishing, and exhibiting of their work, the obtaining of appointment, and the pursuits of their studies'. The article opens by telling readers of 'A ladies' club in Piccadilly! […] no body ever believed that a band of women could be found audacious enough to step in and appropriate it. Then, one golden afternoon in June […] It was the official opening of the Lyceum Club, and the ladies had come to stay'. Ibid., pp. 602–3. Just as Grand asked 'At What Ages Should Girls Marry', Miss Billington asked which profession in the *Young Woman*. See Miss Billington, 'How can I earn a Living?: Journalism, Art or Photography', *Young Woman*, 1894, pp. 307–11

[192] As mentioned earlier in the chapter, on the *Lady's Pictorial* see Beegan, 'The *Lady's Pictorial* and its Sister Papers'.

[193] See Sarah Tooley, 'Some Women Novelists', *Woman at Home*, December 1897, pp. 161–211. In many of Tooley's interviews published here and in other magazine, including the *Humanitarian*, there are photographs of the writer and/or their home. Palmer discusses how the 'article includes transcribed interviews with Braddon and Marryat among its twenty-two subjects […] Alongside Braddon and Marryat, Tooley's article covers "new women" novelists, Sarah Grand and Olive Schreiner'. Also featured were supporters of the women's movement: Beatrice Harraden, John Oliver Hobbes (Pearl Craigie), the anti-feminist novelists Elizabeth Lynn Linton, Marie Corelli, and the children's writer L. T. Meade'. See Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*, p. 157.

[194] Ibid. In 1907 the *Review of Reviews* quoted Braddon followed by Grand in their article, 'Books I should like to have Written': 'Miss Braddon follows with "The Vicar of Wakefield," for then should know that in wit, honour, and pathos she was the greatest of English novelists. Madame Sarah Grand eulogises "The Autocrat of

including Symonds, Cholmondeley, and Broughton.[195] The third volume held Braddon's illustrated historical novel *In High Places* juxtaposed with Grand's short story 'The Baby's Tragedy' and her article 'The New Woman and the Old', as well as short stories by Corelli, Francis, and Mathers.[196] Braddon's and Grand's fictions were written, published, and read in intimate proximity through the 1880s and 90s, even into the twentieth century, and should be read and studied as such in modern criticism.

Grand's *The Beth Book* stands within a trilogy, the core of her literary career. Grand was associated with the coining of the phrase 'New Woman' and her writing output was much more solidly in the journalism and public speaking than Braddon's. Although certainly not as tied to modern, progressive movements as Grand, Braddon did not relinquish her place in the periodical press; as throughout her career, integral to her professionalism are the multiple strands to Braddon's work, from historical novels to ghost stories. *The Beth Book* and *The Infidel* are indicative of a conscious choice to enter the conversations on marriage, professionalism, independence, constructions of femininity, and modernity filling New Woman novels. Both novels question the concepts and literary figures 'Woman of Genius' and 'Woman of Grub Street'.

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the Breakfast Table" as the book from which one derives most help and comfort'. See 'Books I should like to Have Written', *Review of Reviews*, May 1907, p. 517.

[195] Also Braddon's son W. B. Maxwell's short story 'If Men Could Fly' and a serialised novel, *Seymour Charlton* were published between 1908 and 1910. In 1908/9, M. Moysten Bird wrote the metafictional short story 'The Sentimental Journalism: The Adventures of a Would-Be Author in Grub Street'.

[196] See Corelli's 'The Despised Angel: An Allegory', Francis's 'A Rose From Beauty's Garden', and Mathers's 'A Romance of a Motor Car', *Lady's Realm*, November 1897 – April 1898. Braddon's *In High Places* was continued in volume four in a total of twelve instalments. Grand's short story 'She Was Silent' appeared in the very first volume and she went to publish the serialised novel *Babs the Impossible* (1900–1). Grand may well have written further non-fiction articles. Interestingly, these instances of cohabitation in the *Lady's Realm* coincide with the publication of *The Beth Book* and the *The Infidel*.

# Conclusion

*'There is an hour in the twenty-four that has magic in it, that makes common things strange and ugly things beautiful, and London an enchanted city'*[1]

This is the first line from Mary Elizabeth Braddon's very last, posthumously published, novel *Mary* (1915), a novel which closed a career which certainly had "magic in it". Braddon was a remarkable writer and woman; a brave young woman on the stage in Brighton, the writer of over ninety novels and a hundred short stories, partner in a controversial relationship with Maxwell, an early woman editor for ten years, the host of famous literary gatherings, an estate(s) owner, a caring and generous mother, the founder of important charities, a keen, if reckless, horse rider, a gardener, an art collector, a Victorian, and an Edwardian. Braddon was, as the *London Journal* describes, a 'Person of Note' to her contemporaries, and to today's readers and scholars.[2] This thesis provides a dual perspective on how Braddon is constructed by the Victorian social and literary spheres, and how Braddon constructs the Victorian social and literary spheres. Braddon wrote within the contentious yet intimate relationship between literature and commerce in the nineteenth century founded on the industrialisation of print.

Braddon was so prolific and her work so multifaceted that there are limits to what can be included and explored in any project; in my thesis the most obvious absence is *Lady Audley's Secret*, although I recognise the novel's powerful influence in Braddon's career, public perception, and criticism. However, as *The Infidel*'s presence epitomises, one of my priorities is her professional stretch across the Victorian era to challenge the restrictions of genre and time period often imposed and contribute to the expanding range of Braddon studies. Addressing the questions 'What is an Author?' and 'What is a Book?', my research resists theories of the death of the author and instead argues for the importance of cultural and social context. Fiction, including metafiction, is not an unconstrained expression of an individual's aesthetic ambition or an emotional manifestation; it is also shaped by its material conditions of production, publication, and dissemination. In this thesis, I read several of Braddon's novels in their serialised editions rather than in volume form, reflecting the importance of the paratextual. Individual instalments and the paratextual illuminate the

[1] Braddon, *Mary*, p. 1.
[2] See 'People of Note', *London Journal*, 19 February 1898, p. 160. Only a few months earlier the *London Journal* included Braddon in their piece 'Some Famous Women', *London Journal*, 14 August 1897, p. 152.

interactions and processes surrounding Braddon's fictions.[3] I suggest that essential to considering the professional author, is understanding the publishing processes a Victorian writer worked within. My thesis participates in growing work on *Belgravia* as an important view into Braddon, serialisation, and the periodical press.[4] The literary marketplace was an intricate and shifting network of loyalties. Victorian professional writers were interdependent. Using various perspectives, chronological, conceptual, case study, and comparative, my thesis aims to marry research on Braddon and the Victorian literary marketplace.

**Distinctively Braddon**

Many Victorian writers used the literary trope of a fictional author and, as traced through the thesis, Sala, Yates, Thackeray, Dickens, Cholmondeley, Broughton, Dixon, Symonds, Gissing, and Grand all penned fictional writers. However, as my research has explored, Braddon was a distinctive Victorian writer and her metafictions, stretching from *The Doctor's Wife* in 1864 to *The Infidel* in 1900, provide insightful depictions of the shifting terrain of Victorian professional authorship. Especially in the 1860s and 70s, Braddon and her novels engendered an extreme and emotional response in readers and critics alike. Braddon did not passively accept the vicious criticism, instead defending popularity and re-formulating sensationalism through her fictional writers and her strategic editing. The introspection of *Belgravia* was not unusual amongst Victorian publications with the journal self-consciously responding to the profound impact of commercialisation upon the values ascribed to literature, authorship, and profit. Braddon was one of the early women editors and active in the periodical press; consequently, Braddon's novelists, journalists, poets, editors, and actresses filling *Belgravia*'s pages gain a political weight. The diversity of these characters also emphasise how Braddon's metafictions are not, unlike many, straightforwardly autobiographical but illustrate the wider literary sphere. Braddon was at the forefront of the syndication of newspapers in the late 1870s into the 1880s. Braddon's and Maxwell's collaborations and evolving publication processes extended until the end of the nineteenth century, as did her fictional writers, offering a rare view into the enormous changes in the Victorian publishing world.

[3] All but two of the novels discussed in the thesis were first published as a serialised novel.
[4] For prominent works see Phegley, '"Henceforward I refuse to bow the knee to their narrow rule"' and Palmer, *Sensational Strategies*.

Braddon's fictional writers are also illustrations of the tension between the public and private spheres. Like many, or all Victorian women writers, Braddon was caught between domestic and professional responsibilities. In 1898 the *London Journal* named Braddon 'A Great Story Teller'; the entry ends with the line,

> She spends her time between Lichfield House, her beautiful home at Richmond, and Annesley Bank, in the New Forest. She is not without her hobbies, amongst them being a passion for china collecting. Some very beautiful specimens adorn her rooms.[5]

Her son's autobiography, *Time Gathered* (1937), offers a valuable view into Braddon as Mrs Maxwell, an alternative identity she inhabited particularly in Annesley Bank.[6] Braddon resisted interviews until the end of her career when a select few interviewers and photographers were allowed to enter her home, including Mary Angela Dickens, Sarah Tooley, Joseph Hatton, and Clive Holland.[7] Perhaps conversely, Braddon welcomed a multitude of guests and 'residents' into her houses hosting parties, gaining an increasingly influential place in the literary sphere, and rapidly rising in Victorian society. Braddon's fictional writers and their homes are physical expressions of her domestic responsibilities, business-minded approach, and charity work. Miss Braddon and Mrs Maxwell created and re-created herself and Victorian authorship in a multitude of pseudonyms, literary styles and forms, and fictional writers running through her life and career. Braddon gives the literary trope of the fictional author a profoundly contemporary dimension, by using it to address concerns central to the literary marketplace in which she worked.

## Embodied and Embedded Authorship: From *Dead-Sea Fruit* to *Sex and the City*

Braddon's work anticipated a plethora of metafiction whose authors emphasise the writer's, particularly the woman writer's, commercial as well as creative labour and consider the importance of the physical experience and place of that work. Contemporaneous with Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Dead-Sea Fruit*, but sparking a multitude of adaptations, was Louisa

[5] The article ends with the line, 'Miss Braddon became the wife of Mr. John Maxwell, the publisher, whose loss she lives to mourn'. See 'People of Note', *London Journal*, p. 160.
[6] See Maxwell, *Time Gathered*. As mentioned earlier in the thesis, Maxwell's autobiography is tinged with bias as her son.
[7] Hatton, 'Miss Braddon at Home', *London Society*, Dickens, 'Miss Braddon At Home', *The Windsor Magazine*, Tooley, 'Some Women Novelists', *Woman at Home*, and Holland, 'Miss Braddon: The Writer and Her Work', *Bookman*.

May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868-69) in which Jo March and her sisters enact and write their own *Pickwick Papers*.[8] Although with more biblical imagery, in *Little Women*, just as for Braddon, bread is a focal point for examining household management, morality, and professional earnings, including the fictional writer's.[9] The most recent adaptation closes with Jo's book being set, printed, and bound, foregrounding the physical entity and business systems vital to authorship.[10]

Stretching across the twentieth century until the present day fictional writers pervade novels and television dramas. In L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908), for example, writing offers the heroine a voice tied to shaping identity.[11] Fay Weldon's novel, *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* (1983), features the wealthy, immoral, and glamorous novelist Mary Fisher.[12] Fictional women writers are also detectives, such in as *Murder, She Wrote* (1984) which, in the very title, positions Jessica Fletcher as an author.[13] Concentrating on writers such as Atwood, Chevalier, and Waters, Heilmann and Mark Llewelyn bring together metafiction and metahistory identifying the 'cutting-edge' way contemporary women writers can 'create their "own" (counter-)histories'.[14] Very recent and relevant to today's society, particularly in its racial politics, is the author of a bestseller, *Chronicles of a Fed-Up Millennial*, Arabella in the television series *I Will Destroy You*.[15]

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[8] Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (Boston: Robert Brothers, 1868-69)
The adaptations stretch from a Broadway stage production in 1912, the first film in 2018, in colour in 1949, a ballet in 1969, a BBC mini-series in 1970, an anime series in 1987, an influential film in 1994, an opera in 1998, a musical in 2005, a BBC mini-series in 2017, a modern-day film in 2018, to the film in 2019.

[9] Dolan argues that 'Alcott shows her readers a model to find both happiness and material comfort, and this message would not have been as powerful in her work without the metaphor of bread'. See Kathryn Cornell Dolan, 'Her Daily Bread: Food and Labor in Louisa May Alcott', *American Literary Realism*, 48.1 (2015), 40–57.

[10] The adaptation foregrounds the difficult reconciliation between marriage and professional authorship and Jo is persuaded to forego her heroine's resistance to romance for literary conventions and sales aligning itself with contemporary feminist discourses on professional women.

[11] See L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables* (Boston: L. C. Page, 1908).

[12] See Fay Weldon, *The Life and Loves of a She-Devil* (UK: Hodder and Staughton, 1983). For more on the gender politics see Victoria Kennedy, 'Haunted by the Lady Novelist: Metafictional Anxieties about Women's Writing from *Northanger Abbey* to *The Carrie Diaries*', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 30:2 (2019), 196–205 (p. 201). In a film adaption (1989) Mary Fisher is played by Meryl Streep, who is arguably also one of two fictional writers in *Julie & Julia* (2009).

[13] See the American crime drama *Murder, She Wrote* (1984).

[14] *Metafiction and Metahistory*, pp. 1–3. Heilmann and Llewellyn draw from Waugh's definition of metafiction. Ibid., pp. 2–3. The term metahistory is also explored by White. See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). In Waters's *Fingersmith* the abusive Mr Lilly is introduced as 'In his hand there was a pen, that he held clear of the paper; and the hand itself was dark, as Maud's was fair—for it was stained all over with India ink, like a regular man's might be stained with tobacco'. See Sarah Waters, *Fingersmith* (London: Virago Press, 2002), p. 75.

[15] The novel is based on the heroine's popular Twitter account and she is trying to meet the deadline for her next book. Michaela Coel created, produced, stars, co-directed the BBC and HBO series made up of twelve weekly 30-minute episodes starting 7 June 2020. Lucy Mangan for the *Guardian* wrote a review linking it to the murder of George Floyd in 2020.

Many fictional writers are diarists revealing both the fictional writer and their writing.[16] Cassandra Mortmain opens *I Capture the Castle* (1949) with the words, 'I write this sitting in the kitchen sink' and closes with 'Only the margin left to write on now'.[17] In Dodie Smith's socially political novel it is the young woman writer who frees her father, a harrowed genius, from writer's block and rescues the family from economic ruin.[18] *I Capture the Castle* is implicitly a three volume novel, materially shaped by the three books in which Cassandra writes: 'I: The Sixpenny Book, March', 'II: The Shilling Book, April and May', 'III: The Two Guinea Book, June to October'. This division gives both materiality and a professionalism, even commercialism, to Cassandra's writing. *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996) is instead formed of dated entries lending a serialised form to Fielding's very popular novel and the film adaptation (2001).[19] Concurrently aligning writing with the commercial, Bridget Jones is also a journalist who inspired discourses on femininity, the romcom genre, and the female body.

The popular writer, Marian Keyes' novel, *The Other Side of the Story* (2004), includes three interconnected writers, Jojo, a literary agent, Lily, a bestselling author with writer's block, and Gemma, a budding writer, establishing, like Braddon, a fictional literary marketplace. A line can be traced from the debates circulating in the Victorian periodical press on sensational fiction to contemporary discourses around 'chick lit', the genre Keyes is firmly placed within, yet fights against.[20] Similarly, a sustained gender hierarchy may be found in the inequality in literary prizes and many women persisting using male pseudonyms or initials of their first name(s).[21] Akin to the contrast between serialisation and volume

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[16] As set out earlier in the thesis, Braddon wrote her own fictional diarist in *Thou Art the Man*, which I only chose to exclude on the restrictions of space.

[17] Dodie Smith, *I Capture the Castle* (London: Random House Children's Books, 2001), p. 7 and p. 409.

[18] Smith's metafiction deliberately tackles literary conventions ('This is a chance to teach myself the art of suspense') post-war class structures, and gender politics. Stewart argues that Smith's metafictional bildungsroman participates in the post-war forging of national and cultural identity, and confronts the tension between modernism and realism. See Victoria Stewart, 'Realism, Modernism, and the Representation of Memory in Dodie Smith's "I Capture the Castle"', *Studies in the Novel* (2008), 328–343.

[19] See Helen Fielding, *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996) and *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001). The dvd's front cover declares that, 'All women keep score…only the great ones put it in writing'. The diary form traces a year, which is roughly the time over which Victorian novels were serialised. Adding to the self-consciousness is the relationship to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and the implicit use of plot and characterisation.

[20] Marian Keyes was first a journalist then novelist, and vocally champions women writers and defends popular fiction. See Marian Keyes, *The Other Side of the Story* (London: Penguin, 2004).

[21] To date thirty two men and eighteen women have won the Booker Prize and last year (2019) saw the first black woman, Bernadine Evaristo. Also, the creation of a very new prize, the Comedy Women in Print, aims to fight the gender bias. For examples of names see J.K. Rowling/Robert Galbraith, PD James, A. S. Byatt. Kennedy draws connections between George Eliot's 'Silly Novels by Silly Lady Novelists' and chick lit. See George Eliot's 'Silly Novels by Silly Lady Novelists', *Westminster Review*, October 1856, pp. 442–461 and Kennedy, 'Haunted by the Lady Novelist', p. 194.

readers in the nineteenth century, in the twenty-first century viewers are divided between live viewing, catch-up television, and the release of whole series, 'binge watching'.[22]

Metafiction has also adapted in form, from periodicals to television serials and from novels to films. In the enormously popular television series *Sex and the City* is the fictional writer, journalist Carrie Bradshaw.[23] *Sex and the City* has one narrator, but four women's voices and perspectives in Carrie Bradshaw, Charlotte York, Miranda Hobbes, and Samantha Jones, who dramatise the intimate connection between writing and its social context.[24] Just like Braddon and her novels, *Sex and the City* was, as Deborah Jermyn describes, 'Vilified and celebrated in equal measure by broadsheet and popular press'.[25] Viewers are reminded of Carrie's profession and each episode or instalment takes the form of a column.[26] Similarly to Braddon in the Victorian period, Carrie Bradshaw and *Sex and the City* are a familiar and emotive presence in contemporary culture and society.

In every aspect of the literary profession exists a fundamental tension between the individual and the institution, the artistic and the financial, and the author and their work. *Little Women*, *The Infidel*, *I Capture the Castle*, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, and *Sex and the City* all illustrate the act of writing, ranging from working in the attic wrapped in a blanket, with 'ink-stained fingers', chewing the pen, 'sitting in the kitchen sink', to the "think-and-type". Across the centuries these fictional writers dramatise the dual creativity and materiality of authorship, and portray women claiming authority over their often popular rather than erudite narratives. Braddon's compelling fictional authors allowed her to confront, influence, and reinvent the fascinating Victorian literary world.

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[22] Each viewer is individual in their act, process, or order of viewing.

[23] The very popular American television series based on Candace Bushnell's newspaper column and book. See *Sex and the City*, HBO, 1998 – 2002.

[24] '*Sex and the City* is a postfeminist cultural product that shows women in a world where they can be feminine, attractive, and feminist at the same time'. See Fien Adriaens and Sofie van Bauwel, '*Sex and the City*: A Postfeminist Point of View? Or How Popular Culture Functions as a Channel for Feminist Discourse', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, 47:1 (2014) pp. 174–195 (p. 191).

[25] Deborah Jermyn, *Sex and the City* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008), p. 8.

[26] As Jermyn describes, '"I couldn't help but wonder…" Carrie's contemplative "think-and-types" became one of the signature shots of *Sex and the City*'. Ibid., p. 3.

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