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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

"CAN THE SENSATIONAL BE ELEVATED BY ART?"

THE FICTION OF MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON 1863-1865

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

SUSAN REBECCA BILES

Norman, Oklahoma

1997

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"Can the Sensational be Elevated by Art?"
The Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon 1863-1865

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

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Abstract

Mary Elizabeth Braddon, a prolific writer from 1860-1915, attempted to break away from her label as a "sensation" novelist by trying to improve her style through incorporating advice given to her by Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Between 1863 and 1865, she wrote two novels per year attempting to elevate one to the level of "art" and turning the other out "as neatly as possible" in order to support herself. These three matched pairs of Braddon's novels are here examined an attempt to assess the success of her experiment and to bring to light the factors that influenced her writing and the critical reception they received.

Since few scholars are acquainted with Braddon, I spend Chapter 1 recounting her background and the works of previous scholars about her. Chapter 2 delves into the serialized mode of production in order to contextualize its considerable influence upon Braddon, her readers, and her critics. Chapter 3 begins with the rationale and set up of her experiment then explains the methodology that I use to examine the six novels. Chapter 4 focuses upon the first pair of texts by applying the my methodology. Chapter 5 deals with the second pair in light of the editorial choices Braddon made based upon the previous year's experience. Chapter 6 addresses the third phase of Braddon's experiment and discusses the author's place in literature.

Introduction

"I Was Hooked!"

I first encountered Mary Elizabeth Braddon in the fall of 1989 while researching an assignment for Bibliography and Research Methods class. An assignment? It was THE assignment; designed to point us towards a dissertation topic, it was exactly what I needed, since I had so far refused to be pinned down in regards to my specialization and had become enthusiastic about each aspect of literature presented to me in my course work. Nick Howe made me "stand and deliver" this time though, so I fell back upon my lifelong fascination with things Victorian and my unquenchable love of novels. Feeling that Dickens had been "done to a turn" I began looking into the so-called "minor novelists" with an eye towards those who had been the forerunners of the mystery genre that I read voraciously, especially between semesters. Wilkie Collins was an obvious choice since his works were coming under more and more scrutiny, but I wanted to look around a bit more before settling down.

Another aspect of Victorian publication had come to my attention during my master's degree work. While reading The Old Curiosity Shop for my Dickens class, I turned the page from one chapter to another to be shocked by the narrative voice changing from first person to third. What? Why did this happen? I had only been vaguely aware of serialized publication methods previously, but here they became blatantly obvious, crudely obvious actually. Upon investigation I discovered that Dickens had intended the piece to stand on its own as a sort of short

vignette, indeed, as almost a filler for the periodical he was editing at the time. However, the response he received concerning it indicated that the readers were charmed by the little moppet Nell, the weird atmosphere of the shop, and the grandfather; they wanted more. Realizing that the first person narrative was not quite suited to the novel that he began to envision, Dickens switched points of view for the remainder of the text. Serial readers would not have been quite as aware of this switch by the time the second installment ran, but readers of the novel in its collected form would have, if they paid sufficient attention.

I always wondered why Dickens didn't go back and rework what turned out to be the first three chapters of the book so that they would match the narrative structure of the remainder. That's when I began to more fully investigate the conditions that he was working under and realized that serial publication posed unique problems for a novelist. I whistled at the sheer volume of text required per monthly installment and at the time constraints. I had always imagined that the novelist sat in some garret somewhere creating his/her fictional world with minute care, inspired but angst ridden, aiming to please some mystic force that drove him/her, and voilà, the book was born. It then was warmly received by a publisher who only corrected spelling and grammar errors, and was then printed, bound, circulated and adored. The writer might starve, figuratively and maybe just a little bit literally, at first, but soon was comfortably established and free to continue making magic.

Of course the author never consulted anyone about the novel during its inspired production and fought major changes suggested by editors. In effect, he/she worked in a vacuum. Thus, in my idealism, I completely dismissed the idea of "real life" having anything to do with writing, which was some sort of sacred experience rather than a vocation. Yet, I knew the realities of life all too well, the necessity to earn a living in a world dominated by the capitalistic mindset. I knew that writers had disappointments in rejection slips, and that "the market" demanded certain compromises, but that was for run-of-the-mill "fiction," not "Literature" with a capital L, THE Canon as reified in the anthologies, course syllabi, and suggested reading lists fed to me during my high school and undergraduate days of the late sixties and early seventies. I was a lower-middle class child economically, but socially my parents were middle-middle class. I had grown up in a house filled with the Durants' multi-volume history, an antique signed edition of Mark Twain, the local classical radio station on most of the time, Time magazine, World War II being re-fought in the movies and on television, and my parents' rooting for the Republican ticket during a time when Democrats dominated state politics.

So Conservative, "Proper" ideals and the principle of everything in moderation shaped my world view. Needless to say, the whole hippie thing was a shock and an anathema. I was awfully straight clear up through the late seventies and early eighties when the "Eisenhower Years" got beaten out of me. I began to experience the reality that even if you worked very

hard and very conscientiously, you could fail, that people weren't always what they seemed to be. It sometimes was nobody's fault. But I had not applied this knowledge to the shining star of Literature, or academia for that matter. In my master's program, I finally began to think seriously about what constituted Literature and what political agendas came into play.

Back to 1989. I had this project to do. I had this curiosity about serial publishing. I didn't want to do Dickens. I was interested in popular culture. Thank goodness popular culture was being examined academically. Browsing through a book about "popular writers" I ran across several women authors of whom I had never heard: Rhoda Broughton, Ouida, Mrs. Oliphant, Eliza Lynn Linton, Charlotte Yonge, and this incredible woman named Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The section about her described this woman who had written at least 80 novels, edited a literary magazine, borne several children and raised double that amount and had apparently kept up quite a large correspondence. She had set the society topsy-turvy by writing "sensation" fiction and scandalized it by living in an "irregular liaison" when such things were "NOT DONE." My first reaction was that she made me look like a slacker even though I was juggling supporting and raising three kids and a doctoral program that included teaching.

My second reaction was to go find out more about her. I checked out and devoured Professor Wolff's literary biography about her, Sensational Victorian. My class project defined

itself into researching both her and her chief rival Wilkie Collins and the practices of serial publication. Wilkie's career served as a foil since he had committed more or less the same social sin as Braddon--irregular liaisons--yet his reputation didn't seem to be affected as Braddon's was. Critics seemed to be able to separate the personal and professional for him and not for her. Wolff argued for her inclusion in academic study as a minor novelist and not simply as a sensation novelist; so not some sort of sub-standard writer of a sub-genre but a bona fide, card carrying, dues paying member of the entire fellowship of Victorian writers, who deserved looking at from our late twentieth-century perspective, which embraced popular culture as a valid and worthwhile entry point into those times. I was hooked.

I was learning about literary theory at this time too, grappling with all the angles, "otics," and "isms," finding my way, but stumblingly at times. As I had resisted pinning myself down to a period of British literature, I resisted restricting myself to any certain school of critical thought. I found something extremely useful in each one even though I felt I could not follow any one system wholeheartedly. Deconstruction, semiotics, feminism, Freudianism, and Marxism helped me to find the hidden agendas in literary production, while the new criticism that had been the modus operandi of my undergraduate years, even though I was fairly thoroughly unaware of it, served to focus me on close reading. Structuralism and formalism gave me a vocabulary with which to discuss the problem of examining

the way texts are put together to form meaning.

It is with this task in mind that my study makes use of the narrative theory of Gerard Genette. I believe that his theories provide me with a very handy tool for opening up Braddon's texts to expose the way she manipulated her novels' form within the constraints of the larger schema that was "serialization," which was evolving at the same time it was fossilizing into formula. Indeed, the most striking thing about the mid-Victorian novel is the intricate relationship between the modes of production and the forms thus generated. Genette gives me an insight into the deeper structures of narrative that I have glimpsed or perceived peripherally, while the "scientific method" I employ in applying his theory provides at least the possibility of more objective than subjective criteria for comparison of Braddon's novels.

The study of history so beloved by my father and grandfather infused my world view and attitudes towards literature. I do not think that it is possible to teach literature without teaching history, because literature is the attempt by people to come to terms with their existence and to communicate the efforts and insights, pain and joy that make up living; thus living cannot be separated from its physical circumstances. And since the communications triangle insists upon a receiver of the message, writers must posit an "other" when composing their texts. This "other" is generally someone whose corporeal existence at least partially coincides with the author--there is some commonality of experience even if the

location in time and space does not match closely. Of course the best writers are able to construct their texts so that they communicate to disparate audiences; however, I believe that it behooves us as critical thinkers to attempt to become, as close as is possible, the original intended audience for a piece of literature. This is where history as well as psychology and sociology come into play. How can you get the humor in a description of a fashionable lady who is at "full sail" if you don't know how large crinolines became, or even what a crinoline was? How can you feel the humiliation of a character who has been given "The Cut Direct" or the panic of the Exchange when the first reports of Waterloo came to London? How can you possibly be able relate these things to something in your own life like platform shoes, or being blocked out on a phone number or the stock market crash of 1929?

So historicism, call it old or new as you please, has informed and will continue to inform my examination of literary texts. The older historians would probably not be comfortable with some of my interpretations of what constitutes "valid" historical facts; however, I think the canon of historical texts will not be harmed, and indeed might be greatly enhanced by adding a few alternate perspectives and examining texts heretofore marginalized. It is the context of the original audience I want to get at. Moral judgements upon what passed before I was born are of much less significance than the events themselves as I can get to them through the layers of interpretation that necessarily accompany their reporting.

Increasingly, this matter of audience assumes a prominent position in my work and teaching. As an amateur writer since the age of twelve, I had rarely worried about conveying any meaning; what had mattered to the girlfriends who served as my reading public, and I as part of theirs, was WHAT happened not what it meant in larger human terms. We were writing action stories about spies and rock stars, not the great American novel. My poetry was different. It just burst forth as my emotions needed and the meaning was in the images. Form was usually a matter of rough meter and a simple rhyme scheme. It was only when I began writing the annual spring show for my church's fundraising efforts that I realized that what was represented was certainly augmented by how it was said and how various sections of the text worked in relation to each other.

It was when I began working with a co-author that I began truly experiencing what authorship really meant. We played devil's advocate about what the intended "message" behind our skits and parodies should be and what other meanings were popping out unbidden or unencouraged. We had the advantage of knowing our audience intimately, so we had a very good notion of what would work and what needed revision or scrapping.

This experience helped me to understand more clearly the author/audience relationship in a new light. I grasped and at least partially appreciated the pressures that Braddon wrote about to Bulwer-Lytton in regard to the desire to satisfy him as well as the Mudie's Circulation Library purchasers and customers. Braddon was the writer with many masters, laboring

to make herself a living under the pressures of conflicting realities, literary and social. It is a wonder that she stuck to the task as long and hard as she did considering some of the personal attacks and disappointments that dogged her through the 1860s.

Therefore, this study of Braddon must serve several masters as it seeks to examine the six novels she wrote between 1863 and 1865. Since few scholars are acquainted with her at all and since I feel that the restraints under which she wrote greatly affect the quality of her work, a fairly detailed background begins Chapter One. This recounting will be closely followed by a survey of the scholarly literature, what I refer to as a "Paper Trail" with some emphasis on the evolution of academic focus that appears to be going on. The acceptability of her work as valid or worthy fodder for academic discussion seems to follow the path from simple declaration of her as a possible source for more canonical works, to proposing that her works deserve a second look and re-evaluation, to positioning her as a feminist icon "subverting the hegemony" and, finally, to an avenue for examining Victorian cultural attitudes. How other scholars have appropriated Braddon and her texts for their own purposes should be accounted for as I position my own treatment of her.

Chapter Two will delve into the serialized mode of production in order to contextualize its considerable influence upon Braddon, her readers, and her critics. It is my opinion that the mid-Victorians were coping with the boom in mechanical

technology in many of the same ways that we are presently coping with the boom in electronic technology, and that in no place was/is this boom more consequential than in mass communication. The revolution in printing and the subsequent cheapness of reading material had much the same effect then as the proliferation of the internet has today upon cybertexts. Braddon and her contemporaries contended with and skillfully mastered these technical difficulties as they refined a genre that is very popular again today in the works of such authors as Stephen King. Indeed, King and Georgette Heyer, the popular novelist of historical romances throughout the middle decades of this century, also struggle(d) with the notions of "popularity" and "art." Heyer was also under similar financial pressures as Braddon was, so she wrote novels intended to "pay the bills" while she was laboring hard upon her carefully researched and written Lord John which, unfortunately, remained unfinished at her death. King also "pays the bills" with some novels while experimenting with his art form to varying degrees of success. What Heyer tried to do and King is doing somewhat casually and on their own, Braddon attempted in a deliberate, almost formal, experiment with the aid of a mentor.

Interestingly, King has begun to be issued in shorter, "series" novels of around 150-200 page lengths with six or eight in a series. As the Victorians consumed lengthy novels in pieces due mostly to financial reasons, we are consuming them this way due to mostly time constraint reasons. Serialization seems to have come full circle.

Chapter Three begins with the rationale and set up of Braddon's three-year experiment to raise the literary level of her writing, before it explains the methodology that I used in my quantitative narrative analysis of the Phase One texts which follows in Chapter Four. In discussing my mode of analysis here, I consider Gerard Genett's theory as presented in Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Then I explain, with examples from Braddon's texts, my adaptation and application of his theory. The beginning of Chapter Four is this application, while the remainder is a discussion of the criteria of hyperbole in characterization and language, which I believe also signals qualitative differences in the experimental texts.

Chapter Five focuses upon how the Phase Two texts clearly demonstrate the knowledge Braddon gained from Phase One, especially in the editing of the serial, The Outcasts. It also correlates her correspondence with Edward Bulwer-Lytton in relation to her efforts to produce an "artistic" or "Literary" quality text and why that effort was only partially successful.

Chapter Six and the concluding remarks discuss Braddon's seeming reversion into the sensation mode in her Phase Three novels as the result of fatigue, disillusionment, and perhaps a realization that she should settle for popularity and cease struggling for more favorable recognition, since it was so unlikely to be forthcoming. These novels are less thoroughly dealt with because of the overwhelming similarity between them. Rather than being markedly different, as the Phase One novels were, or as thoroughly worked over, as the Phase Two novels

were, both books benefit from Braddon's general improvement in characterizational abilities while they equally suffer from the shortcomings of melodramatic plot weaving. I concur with Professor Wolff's conclusion that she had expended so much effort upon The Doctor's Wife that she could not/did not rise to the occasion with Sir Jasper's Tenant. Essentially the experiment was over by this point and her attentions were being drawn towards what would become her "second experiment," The Ladies' Mile.

What I want to foreground is the impact of physical, financial, and cultural restraints on Braddon's work. What I want to leave my own readers with is a better sense of the times, the woman, and the texts without calling undue attention to the theoretical tools used to scrutinize them. I hope that my readers will become curious enough to read some of these texts, especially The Doctor's Wife, for themselves. Perhaps as I was hooked, so shall they be.

CHAPTER 1

The Evolution of a Writer and Her Scholarly Paper Trail

In the years since this project was conceived and has taken shape, the MLA Bibliography listings under "Mary Elizabeth Braddon" increased from 10 in 1989 to 30 in 1995. I view this as a reflection of several trends within our field as well as a validation of my initial response to this remarkable woman--that she was well worth study and reassessment, that her work had been overlooked through much of this century, and that study of her works has much to yield to the student of Victorian culture. Since few scholars are familiar with this prolific Victorian author, a biographical section seems to be in order. (All of the information below is taken from Sensational Victorian by Robert Lee Wolff, Braddon's biographer.) She was born in London on October 4, 1835 to Henry Braddon and Fanny White Braddon as the third and last of their children. Her elder siblings Margaret (Maggie), eleven years older, and Edward, five years younger than Maggie and six years older than Mary, were away from home at relatives' or preparatory school for most of her early childhood so that she was virtually an only child. Henry Braddon was, in short, a sporting gentleman and briefless barrister whose finances were continuously tenuous. Braddon wrote in her unfinished memoir Before the Knowledge of Evil, "People said he was clever--and if he had not been his own enemy might have done well for himself, and his

wife and children, but he had begun to be his own enemy very early in his career..." (Wolff 23). The Braddon household was subject to the rigors of frequent financial embarrassments that seemed to "swallow up" the "nice new furniture and all Mamma's wedding-presents, silver, jewelry, china, everything except a set of Byron's poems beautifully bound in white calf..." (24). If Braddon suspected the real underlying cause of the Braddons' separation sometime around 1839, she did not have it confirmed until after her mother's death. Henry Braddon's marital infidelities were an unforgivable sin, but their small means ruled out divorce, so they parted without "fuss or unkindness" (29).

Braddon read insatiably from a very early age and took up "scribbling" somewhere between seven and eight, producing many "unfinished manuscripts" in the "prolific period...the interval between the ages of eight and twelve" (38). During her teens she wrote novels that were ambitiously modeled upon Jane Eyre or historical events that could be romanticized, then became "stage-struck" (44). She was determined to become self-supporting by going on the stage, a step she took in 1857 under the name Mary Seyton, a decision that "convulsed her family to the most distant cousin" (quoted in Wolff 45). Playbills are extant showing that she had at least moderate success with a provincial touring company and ended up with the Theatre Royal in Brighton where she is listed as a "walk" in April 1859 but was in every one of the three offerings for June 7, 1859 as the female lead in the "petite comedy," a handsome widow in the

"laughable farce," and the wife of the second male lead in the main feature. Her stage career ended in March 1860 when she moved with her mother to Yorkshire. As Professor Wolff says:

only detective work among documents hitherto unknown will reveal how MEB [Braddon] found the means of abandoning her stage career and launching herself as an author, and will provide evidence for her stormy relationships with the two much older men who now entered her life. (78)

The two "much older men" in question were a Yorkshire squire named John Gilby and John Maxwell, a London publisher. Gilby, her first patron, got her novel Three Times Dead (1860) serially published as "Trail of the Serpent" (1861) at 2d. a number and financially launched her on a project to write a volume of verse recounting Garibaldi's Sicilian campaign. He was apparently in love with her and setting about to polish her as matrimonial material. In letters from the Wolff collection Gilby's tone becomes increasingly hectoring and berating about the project as apparently Braddon was not producing up to either his time frame or his standards. In October of 1860 he wrote, "I have forwarded to the printers the copy they sent me with both your own and my corrections--you had missed some important ones. These bad grammars will be your plague when you have your own MS. to correct. You must try and do better for yourself" (87). He was also becoming fretful that Braddon's apparent association with "Mr. M"; in a terse P.S. he remarks: "It is not very flattering to me that you agreed to the notes &c at Mr. M's

suggestion without writing to me by first post" (87).

His letters become even more quarrelsome when he got wind of how much time Braddon was spending contributing to Maxwell's current periodical. In November he ranted, "You must not talk of time [a recent request for a deadline extension?] or you'll put me in a rage, but sit up all night till they [the poetic lines] are done. I think Lord B[yron] is your idol. If you don't send me 500 lines of fair copy in a day or two, I must put some of your 'prose' in. Three times dead?" (93).

Maxwell apparently promised Braddon editorship of his periodical but reneged and then even rejected some of her copy, but whatever breach had happened between them was apparently healed by December because her contributions began again to appear in The Welcome Guest. Gilby expressed to Frederick Greenwood, a prominent London journalist, his concern that he had waited too long and that Braddon had fallen into the hands of Maxwell of whom he asked "Do you think he is capable--of--seducing her?" (80).

Apparently he was and did. The Garibaldi work was published before February of 1861. The evidence, sketchy as it is, strongly suggests that Braddon was juggling Gilby at the same time as she was exploring possibilities with Maxwell, who was, after all, better established in the publishing world and was pursuing her romantically.

Eventually Gilby expressed a complete collapse of relations between himself and Braddon in no very kind words. February 20, 1861 is the date of both Gilby's final letter to

Braddon and a love letter from Maxwell. Braddon received both letters in Brighton where she was vacationing with friends. Gilby begins in a very stiff and formal tone, first explaining that his inquiries about Maxwell had been "conducted in a strictly business manner" and lodging a complaint about her "sneering language" from her last letter. He berates her "'promise on your honour' to consult me in seeking literary employment, and to take none without my permission!" then unleashes his wounded ego upon her, declaring:

gratitude! why you hardly know the meaning of the word. Honour! Your code of Honour? You have become such an actress that you cannot speak without acting....I can only feel a pity for you not unmingled with contempt, and wonder if you have one redeeming trait in your character. (95-60)

His letter ends with a stiff request that she return any such books as he has loaned her "marked as mine" to a Mr. Oakey in Westminster. Apparently Gilby had every confidence that Braddon would tamely submit to his elevation of her to marriageable status and be forever grateful for the honor of his efforts, and had no idea that his pedantic attitude might not be acceptable. He did not reckon with a woman who knew her own self-worth and a silver-tongued Irishman.

Maxwell's letter begins "My dear Polly" [a pet name] and reads in part:

Oh! how I feel the want of words to express the weariness of soul that arises when, after an arduous

day's work--one of unceasing toil--the heart wakes up to find itself All Alone! All Alone!! [emphasis in the original]....Asking me to write fresh on the loss of your society, how else can I do but declare the void your absence causes?...Go forth, then, and may every step you take be one of pleasure, every word you hear one of joy, and every acquaintance you need a friend who can appreciate without loving you, yet love you without offending. Ever Faithfully yours,
John Maxwell. (98)

Professor Wolff comments of this letter "very Victorian, very Irish, very banal, this is unmistakably a love letter from a man already certain of his conquest" (98).

John Maxwell was an Irishman who "bought periodicals, experimented with them, combined them, sold them, and started new ones" (80). One of these was the short-lived Robin Goodfellow, a financially unsound continuation of his The Welcome Guest. Five months after they had met, Braddon had a short story accepted by Welcome Guest. Robin Goodfellow was the vehicle for the first installments of Lady Audley's Secret (July 6, 1861) until the journal's demise thirteen weeks later. By this time, Braddon was apparently in an "irregular liaison" with Maxwell; she was pregnant with the first of six children they had together, five of whom survived. The liaison was "irregular" because Maxwell was already married and the father of five children by his wife. She was Mary Anne Crowley Maxwell who was incapacitated and confined to a Dublin asylum. Her

death in 1874 finally freed Maxwell to "regularize" their union and thus legitimize their offspring.

Maxwell was over forty and Braddon twenty five when they met and began their association, both professionally and personally. It is inconceivable that she did not know about his wife. Had children not arrived so frequently over the next few years, they might have been able to hide the liaison. Indeed, an attempt to stave off gossip in 1864 backfired. Maxwell inserted a notice in the newspapers that he and Miss Braddon had been recently married. This was immediately and thoroughly debunked by the first Mrs. Maxwell's brother-in-law, Richard Brinsley Knowles, who published the fact that his sister-in-law was married to Maxwell in 1845 and still very much extant. This contretemps added ammunition to the critics' barrage against Braddon's novels which wounded her despite her seeming nonchalance when questioned about these attacks.

During the years from 1861 to 1868 Braddon was becoming a step mother to five adolescents and birthing five of her own children (and burying one of them) while publishing 16 novels and one collection of short stories. She often had two novels running in serial at the same time and began a new one the moment the final number of an old one was run. For example, in January of 1864, her The Outcasts [later revised into Henry Dunbar and "Lost and Found"] was appearing weekly in The London Journal, at the same time that the last monthly installment of John Marchmont's Legacy and the first monthly installment of The Doctor's Wife were appearing in Temple Bar. Braddon refers in a

Nov. 7, 1863 letter to "the constant pressure of literary labour, which during the last twelve months has rendered me neglectful of almost every other duty" as the reason for not speedily replying to a letter from Mr. Folkestone Williams (Wolff Collection).

Maxwell's critics sneered that he was kept in business by Braddon's output. Braddon was lampooned in a cartoon depicting her as a circus rider leaping through paper hoops with the names of her novels printed on them and held up by a whip-wielding John Maxwell. In late 1866 she bought Lichfield House, one of five houses her publishing receipts enabled her to buy. John Maxwell's affairs were "embarrassed" at this time. He had mortgaged Temple Bar in part to work off debts and keep the magazine afloat. About this time Braddon's publishing company became Ward, Lock & Tyler instead of Maxwell, perhaps in an attempt to infuse new capital into the Maxwell household.

Several "domestic griefs" came to Braddon late in 1868 while she was expecting her fifth child, Winifred Rosalie: her sister Maggie, married and living in Naples, was seriously ill physically and in fear of becoming "mad" as a result of the pain and anxiety--she died that October; her brother, Edward, refused to visit her when he was back in England from years of living in India because of her living arrangements with Maxwell; and, most devastating of all, her beloved mother's long standing heart and lung disease became suddenly acute, killing her on November 1. Braddon blamed Edward for their mother's death, with an anger that did not abate for several years.

After the birth of Rosie on December 14, 1868, she suffered a bout of puerperal fever. In a letter to Bulwer-Lytton three years later, she described the six months after her mother's death as:

life was a blank or something worse than a blank, an interval in which imagination ran riot, and I was surrounded by shadows--one towering above all the rest, and always appearing to me with gravely gracious aspect, as protector, counselor, friend. When that unreal world faded the actual world seemed strangely dull and empty--and my own brain utterly emptied out--swept clean of every thought. (228)

Bulwer-Lytton was apparently the figure of the protector to which she was referring when describing her "nervous collapse." In June of 1869 she had regained her equilibrium, but it took another six months for her convalescence back to strength and it was 1871 before she was again in print. Her sixth and final child was born in December 1870.

In 1871, she began producing her usual two to three novels and uncounted short stories per year while also editing Maxwell's new periodical Belgravia Magazine from 1871 until it was sold in 1876. She and Maxwell were able to wed in 1874, finally ending the intense social and familial strain that had been put on them. At least twenty five more novels and three collections of short stories as well as two dramas and the publication of three of her "juvenile" tales appeared between the sale of Belgravia and John Maxwell's death in 1895. The

influenza which lead to his death was rampant the early months of 1895 and had swept through the household. They had had thirty four years together. As Professor Wolff notes,

The powerful attraction he exercised over her had never lost its hold, although at times, amidst the social and personal frustrations of the 1860's and early 1870's, she had allowed herself to become skeptical, if not cynical, about romantic love. But Maxwell had 'never shirked a domestic duty,' he had always been 'so good to' her, he had been a tower of strength through every family crisis...(357-58)

Eighteen more novels were written between Maxwell's and her own death in 1915, one of which, Mary, was published posthumously.

Her reputation had undergone a powerful change, the irony of which did not escape her. From being personally excoriated in reviews for Lady Audley's Secret and the subsequent novels of the 1860s as having "succeeded in making the literature of the Kitchen the favourite reading of the Drawing room" (197), and from most certainly having too much knowledge of late-night bachelor haunts, bigamy, the lower classes and murder to be any sort of a lady. Braddon was later called "a pleasant matron-like woman," a hostess of "old school hospitality," who presided over the tea table and her solidly merchant-like office desk and chair with grace and aplomb (Hatton 25-26). Her obituary in the Morning Post for 5 February 1915 reads in part:

For more than fifty years, the name of Mary Elizabeth Braddon has been for the managers of circulating

libraries a veritable name to conjure with. No writer of her time it may safely be asserted has appealed to a wider or more appreciative section of the reading public, or has achieved a longer or more unbroken series of popular successes. Whatever fate Time may have in store for the truly monumental array of volumes which she has added to our national literature, there is at any rate no denying the widespread and generally wholesome influence [emphasis added] which she has long exercised over the great body of English novel-readers. (Wolff collection transcription 1)

And yet, the most famous authoress of her day, the novelist completely in tune with her audience who strove in a workman-like way to improve her powers of expression while delighting thousands with her powers of invention, is largely unknown today. Even literary scholars seem to have lost sight of her in the post World War I years. Did tastes change that radically? Did the canon get that closed to women writers? Professor Wolff comments,

if her contemporaries had been too hasty in 'typing' her as a sensation novelist and too complacent to notice that she had grown and developed and changed, those who have come after her have allowed her to become completely forgotten....yet those who neglect her, even in the full tide of a Victorian revival, are the losers:they have missed the pleasure that

even her least successful novels provide, and above all the astonishment and exhilaration aroused by her very best. (408)

Braddon was, of course, prominently present in her writer-son W. B. Maxwell's autobiography Time Gathered (1937), and she gets a few brief mentions in nostalgic surveys of late Victorian literature such as Amy Cruse's The Victorians and Their Reading (1935), Malcolm Elwin's Victorian Wallflowers (1934), and Michael Sadleir's Things Past (1944). But for the most part, serious or even semi-serious scholarship on Braddon did not occur until the second half of the twentieth century.

The primary thrust of the earliest scholarly works was towards source and influence studies, especially on the part of Christopher Heywood, who wrote four such papers from 1960 to 1970 discussing Braddon's work as sources for works by George Moore, Thomas Hardy, Somerset Maugham, and George Eliot, and a fifth paper in 1976 exploring Braddon as a source for T. S. Eliot. In each of these articles Heywood sees Braddon's The Doctor's Wife (1864) as a direct conduit between Flaubert's Madam Bovary (1857) and works by these succeeding authors. His arguments primarily rest on detailed textual comparisons of passages 'lifted' from or 'suggestive of' Braddon's novel in A Mummer's Wife (1885), The Return of the Native (1878), Middlemarch (1871), Maugham's short stories, and, later, echoes of Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret (1862) in The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (1915). These borrowings include general resemblances between plots, lead characters (notably female),

key phrases and descriptions, and the mocking tone taken toward excessive romanticism. Secondary corroboration is provided through documenting the successive authors' familiarity with Braddon's work in general, posited as youthful reading material, and The Doctor's Wife in particular. Heavy emphasis has been placed on establishing that The Doctor's Wife is "almost certainly the earliest borrowing from Flaubert in English literature" (Heywood "Flaubert" 151), thus suggesting strongly that these subsequent authors gained access to Bovary through Braddon rather than, or prior to, reading it in the French. In the case of Hardy, Heywood also traces his association with Braddon through Belgravia Magazine, of which she was the editor. In the case of T. S. Eliot, Heywood's argument suggests "the possibility that Eliot read and was impressed by elements in this novel at an early stage in his formative reading and that memories of it came to the surface in the course of his writing the early poems" ("Lady Audley's Secret" 183).

This source/influence examination is taken up again in 1979 by Sara Moore Putzell who sees another of Braddon's novels, Our Adversary (1909), as a source for Shaw's Pygmalion (1913) and Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret as contributing to George Eliot's Daniel Deronda (1876). Putzell's arguments are more centered on Shaw's admission that "If I find in a book anything I can make use of, I take it gratefully. My plays are full of pillage of this kind....all is fish that comes to my net" (quoted in Putzell "Another Source for Pygmalion 29), and his dubbing of Braddon "a princess among novel manufacturers"

(quoted in Putzell "Attracting the Majority 19). Similarly, George Eliot's letters to John Blackwood in which she "expressed her concern that her novels were 'not so attractive to the majority' as Braddon's" (quoted in Putzell "Attracting the Majority" 19) as well as Braddon's being cited as one of those "three or four novels [into which she was looking] to see what the world was reading" (quoted in Putzell "Attracting the Majority 14) are used as corroborating evidence. Putzell also makes much of concrete similarities among the works while pointing out divergences. Her conclusion is that the influence with Eliot may have been "mutual influence between the popular minor author whose hallmark was sensation and the admired major author whose hallmark was moral education....remind[ing] us that literary forms may develop not simply through the response of major authors to each other's works, but also through their responses to minor author's works and to the tastes created by those works" ("Attracting the Majority" 19).

Whether or not Heywood's articles are persuasive, they mark the beginning of contemporary critical appraisal of an author who was wildly popular during her time as well as extremely prolific. Putzell's extension of source/influence study reinforces Heywood's work while tempering it. Two later scholars have continued this exercise. In "A New Perspective: Naturalism in George Moore's *A Mummer's Wife*" (1987), Judith Mitchell nods towards Heywood's original article, but her use of The Doctor's Wife is not a discussion of direct influence but as "a convenient gauge for measuring the extent to which A Mummer's

Wife achieves a complex transference of the principles of one conception of the novel [Bovary] into the traditions of another [Mummer's]" (21). In other words, she sees Braddon's narrative style as bridge between Flaubert's key principles of naturalism--"the impersonality of the author, the adoption of the methods of the natural sciences, the absence of 'morality,' and the depiction of unexceptional characters," and the omniscient narrator who enunciated "personal moral lessons" in the Victorian novel (22). Her assessment of the narrator of The Doctor's Wife is that there is a "wide moral sympathy for her characters" and "indeed, part of the novel's point about novel-reading is make through the narrator poking fun at Isabel in an exceedingly good-humored way" (22) so that the novel approaches naturalism more than contemporary narrators yet is further from naturalism than is Moore's later work.

C. S. Wiesenthal's "'Ghost Haunted': A Trace of Wilkie Collins in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret" (1993) is the latest source/influence study. It traces Braddon's use of a Collins short story, "Mad Monkton" as reading material for Robert Audley (the sleuth/protagonist) and as a thematic counterpoint to the eventual fate of Lady Audley. Wiesenthal traces internal clues to make his point in this brief article.

These early influence studies were the scholastic toe hold that brought Braddon out of obscurity and lead to increasing interest in her work. Who was this "source" whose works were appropriated by novelists that are better remembered at present? Each of these studies provided specific details about Braddon's

phenomenal popularity which lead me to more carefully consider the manipulation of novelistic elements and the elusive criteria for "quality" writing.

The ground-breaking works on Braddon are Benjamin Nyberg's 1966 dissertation "The Novels of Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1837-1915): A Reappraisal of the Author of 'Lady Audley's Secret'" and Robert Lee Wolff's book Sensational Victorian: The Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, published in 1979. Indeed, they both call for a closer look at Braddon as a novelist that was of "second rank," not "second rate." Nyberg argues for Braddon as an author of great versatility and considerable talent with a distinctive tone and touch. His examination of her work was, of necessity, not in extreme depth probably due to the paucity of previous serious scholarship, but it pointed the way. Professor Wolff's work benefited from access to primary sources from the Maxwell family (Braddon's married name was Mrs. John Maxwell, although she consistently used Braddon for her publications), such as her diaries, correspondence, manuscript notebooks, and original manuscripts. He was also welcomed to photographic and manuscript material held by Henry Maxwell, Braddon's grandson, who also read and commented on much of the book's text, and conducted interviews with several Maxwell grandchildren. As a great collector of first editions, he owned copies of all of her novels and issues of periodicals containing some of her shorter pieces. Indeed, Wolff acknowledges Nyberg's work in his "Notes on Sources" saying that:

Dr. Nyberg skillfully shows that Miss Braddon was far

more than a mere "sensation" novelist. He does not deal with her life or its relationship to her work, and he had no access to a good many of her novels. It is hoped that this book will answer some of the questions that Dr. Nyberg himself shrewdly asks at the conclusion of his study. (411)

Sensational Victorian, with its dual emphasis on biography and critical bibliography, must stand as the definitive work on Braddon.

Christine Devonshire's 1989 dissertation took up where Nyberg left off and Wolff pointed the way. By limiting herself to the "early years" of Braddon's work, 1860-68, Devonshire was able to delve more deeply into the social and cultural implications of the novels while examining what she calls Braddon's "balancing act" between "her awareness of readership and the strategies she adopted to be to some extent her own mistress and to please herself" (8). Her study features a solid bibliography and her elucidation of some basic features of sensational fiction as illustrated by the various Braddon novels lays a firm foundation for later scholars; however, there is one error in her Chapter 3 that must be corrected. I mention it here because the text is so rare that scholars reading the dissertation will be somewhat misled. Her discussion of "maternal sympathy" in Braddon novels--the fact that most of her sensational heroines are motherless which is an important factor in these novels, and in fact, a commonality in most other sensation novelists' works--states that Isabel Sleaford of The

Doctor's Wife is the single exception to this "rule" or "trend." Page fifty of the novel clearly states that Isabel is the child of Mr. Sleaford's first marriage and not emotionally close to her stepmother. This error, rather than undermining the argument about "motherlessness," would serve to strengthen it through this novel's following the pattern rather than being an exception to be explained away.

Barbara G. Betz's 1992 dissertation, "Father-Daughter Relationships in Selected Novels of Mary Elizabeth Braddon," explores Braddon's treatment of this theme, finding it "progressively more subversive" over the course of the five novels (published 1862-1876) under consideration. Her argument discussing the concept of metaphorical father-daughter incest is set up by first looking into Dickens and Gaskell. Especially interesting is her assertion that Victorian readers were "middlebrow" in their tastes and "happily alternated between serious novels by a George Eliot and sensational works by an M. E. Braddon" (5). She states that, "contemporary readers responded to novels because of their intricate storytelling and refused to separate great from popular fiction, a delineation very common in twentieth-century analysis of Victorian literature" (5). One of the tenets on which my argument will rest is that while the critics made such distinctions the reading public generally did not, and that this set into motion Braddon's experiment that forms the subject of my work.

The latest dissertation to deal with Braddon as its sole focus came out in 1995 under the title "Will the Real Lady

Audley Please Stand Up? Subversion and Relativism in the Novels of Mary Elizabeth Braddon" by Shirley D. Tyler. It claims that Braddon "can be regarded as a precursor of postmodernism and the literature of the absurd" because her novels are

palimpsests which, while superficially adhering to both social and literary conventions, deconstruct to a quicksand of shifting perspectives which, in their lack of a central core, their ambiguities and qualifications, mirror the doubts and uncertainties of Braddon's society, reflect upon the limiting and falsifying nature of judgment by external signifiers, and ultimately reveal the emptiness and essentially random and irrational nature of both individuals and her world. (DAI 2846)

While I do not believe that Braddon was consciously attempting to construct her novels along the lines seemingly implied in Tyler's abstract, I can readily see where modern critical theory could yield a great deal of insight into Victorian culture through such applications as this.

The other six dissertations that include Braddon do so as one of several authors used to illustrate ideas about Victorian cultural issues and/or sensationalism as a sub-genre. The first of these was "Every Woman's Secret: Subversion and Accommodation in Women's Sensation Novels" (1983) by Catherine Dibello wherein she examines Braddon along with Mrs. Henry Wood, Caroline Norton, and Matilda Houston. Dibello examines Lady Audley's Secret and Aurora Floyd (1863) to "illustrate characteristic

ways in which Braddon deals with conventional expectations" and to see how "Braddon controls the audience's response so that the reader can identify with Lady Audley's subversive strength without identifying with her criminality by blaming her violent acts on hereditary madness" (10). She considers Braddon's works as differing from Wood's because they are "subversive" rather than "sentimental" or "purposeful" like Norton's and Houstoun's.

Jasmine Yong Hall's 1990 dissertation, A Study in Scarlet Letters: Women and Crime in the Works of Arthur Conan Doyle, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins, and Charles Dickens, emphasized that the connection between female sexuality and crime is both "deployed and regulated" in these authors. Her work is heavily informed by Foucault's The History of Sexuality so that Lady Audley's secret is not only the bigamy, murder, arson, or even the secret that George Talboys is really still alive, but also is that she "rewrites her past history, giving herself a new name and a new personality," thus "signal[ing] the fall from a master discourse to 'feminine prevarication...womanly trickery'" (68). Thus, Lady Audley "authors/authORIZES" herself rather than being "authorized" by the patriarchy and is "suitably punished" by being discredited as insane.¹

Another tack is taken in the other dissertation from 1992. Susan Carol Balee's Sensation Novels of the 1860's: Murder and Madness Everywhere, but Revolution Repressed is more rooted in

¹ See also Linda Abbandanato's Seductive Fictions: Representations of Female Sexuality in the Novel.

historical studies of the period's social and cultural issues, using novels by Collins, Woods, and Braddon as examples of how they document the situations and conflicts of the times. She asserts that sensation fiction not only reflected the strain but also "helped to contain it," although the argument for the latter point is less well-supported and developed than the former.

Two works from 1995 complete the dissertation-length studies under review. Janet L. Grose's The Sensation Novel and Social Reform: Revising Prescriptions of Gender, Marriage, and Domesticity takes Collins, Braddon, Dickens, Eliot, and Trollope for its illustrative authors, using a "new historicist and feminist perspective" to "consider the portrayal of characters and relationships...and the manner in which authors either subtly or overtly satirize and deconstruct stereotypical gender roles" (DAI 2248). The abstract indicates that Grose agrees with Balee that "sensationalism was not merely an escapist form of fiction but was actually a means of advocating social reform, particularly in the domestic realm," but may not go so far as to claim it "contained" or "repressed" a revolution.

Cannon Schmitt's 1995 dissertation, Alien Nation: Gender, Genre, and English Nationality in the "Sensation School", focuses on the idea that sensation novels "were specifically concerned with English nationality...function[ing], not finally to undermine nationality of Englishness, but to re-inflect Englishness, to produce a new Englishness" (2-3). Wilkie Collins and Braddon are the chief examples of the genre that

attracted so many women readers. He argues the "the novel was always significant in defining Englishness; and thus that representations of women in novelistic texts are of particular importance" (42-43).

The distinct change in flavor from Nyberg and Wolff's non-theoretical examinations of Braddon through Devonshire, et al's, filtering her work through more contemporary perspectives brought to my attention the problems of imposing later cultural insights and values on texts produced over one hundred years before. I was concerned that my own efforts could read too much into Braddon's creative struggle, yet I felt that, even if not articulated in the same way, the issues of family dynamics, suppressed feminine anger, and writing as a way to assert authority were operating then, as now. Our current cultural insights applied to previous texts helps bring those texts into a clearer focus, yet it is important to keep separate our cultural baggage so that we can see what valises the Victorians were really carrying around. This is why my study suggests that economic practicality and audience response were more of a factor in her novel production than ideals of subversion.

Nearly every article thus far published about Braddon's work has focused on her smash best-seller Lady Audley's Secret and for very practical reasons; for many years it was the only one of her eighty plus works to be in print and thus readily available. Indeed, most libraries that own copies of her works have them in limited number and/or limited access collections or on micro-fiche. Lady Audley's Secret was issued in paperback by

Dover Press in 1974 with an introduction by Norman Donaldson, by Penguin in 1985 with an introduction by Jennifer Uglow, and by Oxford as an "Oxford Classics" with introduction by David Skilton in 1987. Only recently have three of her other titles appeared in paperback. In mid-1996, Oxford issued Aurora Floyd as another of its "Classics," and "Pocket Classics" reprinted Vixen in late 1993 and Eleanor's Victory in early 1996. That these books are generally only available through special order is no surprise; neither is the fact that Oxford has chosen Aurora, her second most popular novel, as its publishing choice. However, the choices of Vixen (1879), which Braddon called "a simple easy-going love-story with a frank high-spirited girlish heroine" (Wolff Sensational 278), and of Eleanor's Victory, a novel unabashedly melodramatic in form and content, are problematic. A discussion with the editor in charge of these projects would be an interesting prospect. Whatever the motive, the expansion of her available titles is welcomed.

The first of three articles that use Lady Audley's Secret as the example for bibliographic methodology in using Victorian periodicals, a sometimes tricky endeavor, is Sara Keith's "The 'Athenaeum' as a Bibliographical Aid: Illustrated by 'Lady Audley's Secret' and Other Novels" (1975). It also clears up some confusion concerning the frequent editions of this work, while demonstrating research techniques. Another bibliographically-slanted article is "M.E. Braddon Manuscripts in Australia" (1988) by P. D. Edwards which explains that many of her leather-bound original manuscripts came to be housed

there because her older brother was a Tasmanian politician who rose to be governor in 1894. His library was donated years after both of their deaths. The third is a chapter by Joel Kaplan called "Exhuming Lady Audley: Period Melodrama for the 1990's" in the book Melodrama published by Cambridge UP in 1992, and edited by James Redmond. Interest in the play version of Lady Audley's Secret was revived in the late 1980s when a musical version was staged; the original script was revamped slightly by Douglas Seale and music and lyrics were written by George Goehring and John Kuntz respectively.

Two articles have appeared in a publication named Clues which is devoted to the mystery genre. In 1983 Jeanne F. Bedell contributed "Amateur and Professional Detectives in the Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon" and in 1994 Patricia Marks published "'The Boy on the Wooden Horse': Robert Audley and the Failure of Reason." Both are intended for a less scholarly audience but are solidly founded in research. While these article do not directly inform my study, I mention them here to highlight Braddon's apparent movement from strictly scholarly circles into more popular cultural ones, a distinct necessity if her work is to reach today's audiences in even a small way.

Five scholarly articles about Braddon's works, with Lady Audley as sole object of scrutiny, filter their discussions through the lenses of gender and discourse theories. All reach similar conclusions about the workings of the Victorian patriarchy's efforts to maintain stability by repressing "subversive" discourse, primarily female, through manipulating,

discrediting, or limiting that discourse. Published between 1991 and 1995, they are: "Gothic Maidens and Sensational Women: Lady Audley's Journey from Ruined Mansion to the Madhouse" (1991) by Chiara Briganti; "Pre-Raphaelitism in Lady Audley's Secret" (1993) by Pamela Brewer; "Disclosure as Cover Up: Discourse of Madness in Lady Audley's Secret" (1993) by Jill Matus; "The Victorian Villainess and the Patriarchal Unconscious" (1994) by Linda Hart; and "Gender and Role-Playing in Lady Audley's Secret" (1995) by Elizabeth Tilley. Matus's article is representative of the gender-discourse issues at play when she asserts that:

Critics have seen Braddon's novel [Lady Audley's Secret] as subversive because it shows that deviance from a norm of womanly submission and obedience is likely to be labeled madness. But Braddon's sensation novel goes further than that as it puts a finger on the work done by discourses of morality and madness in establishing gender and class boundaries, and contributing to middle-class hegemony. (351)

She discusses the difficulty of Braddon's working "within a rigid model of ideal motherhood that emphasized woman's dependency, selflessness, and virtuous influence" where "Victorian medical constructions represented defiance or nonconformity as derangement" (334), noting that "unlike the heroines whose thwarted energies and constraints form the subject of much of her fiction, Mary Elizabeth Braddon triumphs over adversity" because she is, as noted by Henry James,

"aggressive, clever, and familiar with the ways of the world, the antithesis of an ideal of innocent and unchallenging womanhood" (345). Matus's argument foregrounds the issue of Victorian hegemony as it censored Braddon's work. This sense of censorship prompted my to focus upon the critic's role in literary production. As spokespersons for the receiving end of the communications triangle, critics have a great deal of impact on the author anxious to please. I began to recognize more clearly that critics were always operating out of their own political and personal agendas even if they were not fully aware of it, and that tremendous pressures on Braddon's work resulted from their often biased and unkind pronouncements.

Three seminal articles that examine Braddon's work along with those of her contemporaries in the exploration of sensational novels as a phenomenon are "Desperate Remedies: Sensation Novels of the 1860's" (1976) by Elaine Showalter, "Ideology of Narrative Form in Sensation Fiction" (1986) by Jonathan Loesberg, and "Feminine Sensation, Eroticism, and Self-Assertion: M.E. Braddon and Ouida" (1988) by Natalie Schroeder. Showalter notes that "sensation novelists seem to have grasped the principle of the best-seller...which embodies the communal unconscious..." (1). Her work traces the chief objections to the genre and the vitriolic critical reaction, concluding that "as long as legal remedies for marital unhappiness were few, tales of desperate remedies would never lack readers" (5).

Loesberg's article goes into more depth about these issues in light of the ideology of the "class question" being widely

discussed during the mid-nineteenth century. Loesberg concludes that, "sensation fiction encoded an ambiguity in its ideological environment as a form of nonseriousness that could both use the frisson of class fear for its literary ends and yet draw back from making any thematic claims in its use of that frisson" so that "sensation novels" very literary shape and narrative structure, at a higher level of "outrageousness" than that in other novels, "deliberately drains those actions of social significance, and yet that very draining is the significant ideological gesture made by the form a sensation fiction" which "simultaneously links it with its ideological environment" (135). Natalie Schroeder's article asserts that the critical attacks on "unnatural" females in the sensation novel center on the "self-assertive or "masculine" female behavior [which is] as much a threat to Victorian society as unchastity" (87). Victorian critics also asserted that since the purpose of literature was mainly didactic, these novels could and would lead their readers into error by introducing them to "power through self-love and aggression" (94).

These studies more fully informed me about the phenomenon of the sensational sub-genre. As tame as these novels appear to modern readers, they were scandalous to the Victorians and generated as much controversy as the movie The Last Temptation of Christ or the photographs of Robert Maplethorpe did during the seventies and eighties.

Renewing the call for modern scholars to reassess Braddon's work is Ellen Miller Casey's 1984 article "'Other

People's Prudery': Mary Elizabeth Braddon," which ultimately decides that Braddon sacrificed "art" to propriety in many cases. She feels that Braddon accomplished this by "maintain[ing] the proprieties [in a shocking situation] by limiting the amount of detail which she provided, by legitimating passion within marriage, even if a bigamous one, and by taking care that at the end of the novel the good were rewarded and the evil punished" (73). Casey supports Michael Sadleir's judgment that "Braddon would have written better novels in an atmosphere of greater freedom in which she would not have had to submit to 'other people's prudery'" (75).

Indeed, it is just this struggle, to make more of her work that prompted Braddon to consult Edward Bulwer-Lytton through correspondence and to conduct her experiment in 1863, 1864, and 1865 that forms the basis for my study. The most important article of all deals with just this matter. The two-part article in the Harvard Library Bulletin (nos. 1 & 2) for 1974 by Robert Lee Wolff is called "Devoted Disciple: The Letters of Mary Elizabeth Braddon to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1862-1873." Its 62 combined pages contain the seeds of his later book-length study of Braddon, as they illuminate the young novelist's efforts to install an older, successful author as mentor for her stylistic development. Most of this material is expanded on in Chapter V of Sensational Victorian but it is in this article that the letters themselves are most quoted and thus it is more valuable. Only one example of Bulwer-Lytton's letters is in the Wolff Collection at Austin and it is quite difficult to

decipher. None of Braddon's letters in the collection are to Bulwer-Lytton so that this article will have to serve to document their correspondence.

It was in Chapter V of Sensational Victorian, entitled "'Can the Sensational Be Elevated by Art, and Redeemed for All Its Coarseness?' (1863-1868)," that the subject of this study was first discovered. Professor Wolff outlines Braddon's attempt to write two novels a year for 1863, 1864, and 1865 "each time relegat[ing] one to the class of pure sensation fiction, content to turn it out as neatly as possible, while giving to the other her best artistic effort" (148). He notes that in these six novels and her letters to Bulwer-Lytton about them "one can follow this struggle in her artistic life" (148). The novels that constituted this experiment were Eleanor's Victory and John Marchmont's Legacy in 1863, Henry Dunbar and The Doctor's Wife in 1864, and Only a Clod and Sir Jasper's Tenant for 1865. The first named of each pair was intended to be the "low" or sensationalistic novel, while the second was the "high" or artistic one.

Even the choice of serial publishing instruments reinforces this schema. The "low" fiction ran in Once a Week (price 3 pence), The London Journal (1 pence), and St. James's Magazine (1 shilling), respectively. All of these publications were known for sensational, highly-colored fiction--Braddon referred to it as "strong meat"--as the first two's cover prices might indicate. Although St. James's price aped its betters and was owned by John Maxwell, its fiction was still considered

"substandard" by many.

The "high" fiction ran in Temple Bar, a 1 shilling periodical started by Maxwell in 1860 and sold to Bentley in 1866. Catering to the upper middle class subscriber, it was a direct challenge to the popular Cornhill Magazine and its circulation was a respectable 30,000 throughout the Maxwell years (Sullivan 404). In his 1957 dissertation Vincent C. De Baun calls Temple Bar an "index of middle class thought," saying that it was useful as a source of study for the fiction of its times, but also an "extraordinarily comprehensive picture...of the life of the social class who in effect ruled the English nation in their time" (iii).

The experiment presents several foci for the student of Victorian culture. What are the elements of the purely sensational novel which were incompatible with the ideas of "art" and "truth" that Braddon wanted to incorporate in her writing? How might they differ from what the critics considered to be so distasteful in the sub-genre? Is the distinction between the "novel of plot" and the "novel of character" valid or a political ploy? How much of Braddon's later work was overshadowed and thus "tainted by sensationalism" by the smashing success of Lady Audley's Secret? To what extent was the criticism colored by disapproval of her private life? To what extent does the quality of her writing improve and what portion, if any, of such improvement can be attributed to her correspondence with Bulwer-Lytton? How did financial constraints influence the novels? Was there appreciable

difference in the financial rewards between each pair and how can they be evaluated? Did she satisfy her public's demand for "strong meat" while attempting to enter the ranks of great novelists? How does gender figure in the literary politics of the time? In brief, "Can the Sensational be Elevated by Art?"

CHAPTER 2

Serialization and the Printing Trade

Several very powerful influences combined to shape the mid-Victorian fiction writer's workspace, reconfiguring it substantially within a very brief time span. The most concrete changes came in the forms of publication and distribution dominating the scene--the serial periodical and the circulating library--which dramatically altered the very literary structure of novels and circumscribed their subject matter to a great extent.¹

The economic forces which had always driven the press drove it even more strenuously in the 1860s when "sensation novels" burst upon the literary scene and dominated it for nearly the entire decade. Strong reader demand for stimulating and daring plotting, boldly drawn characters and titillating allusions to "forbidden fruit" secrets pushed authors to imaginative extremes and lay them open to virulent critical wrath and ecclesiastic condemnation. Rigid class prejudices and literary critical reviewers' overtly moralistic criteria imposed artificial lines of demarcation upon literary standards which further restricted the content and expressive choices available to authors. A brief examination of these forces is necessary to

¹ For further discussion of the serialization/novel/press/society matrix, see The Victorian Serial by Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, Victorian Popular Fiction 1860-80 by R. C. Terry, and Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society J. Donn Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel editors.

contextualize Mary Elizabeth Braddon's experiment, for, in attempting to adjust her writing for the better, she could not escape these hegemonic forces. As briefly implied previously, she was not at leisure to suit herself only. Since she was supporting herself and others upon the proceeds of her literary labour, the goodwill of the press, public, and critic were enormously valuable, although not equally so.

In nineteenth century England, the power of the press was enormous, both literally and figuratively. The literal power was the result of the advent of high-speed mechanical presses and the development of the stereotyping process which increased the potential volume of and lowered the price for printed materials. Publishers of both newspapers and books operated under the same economic constraints with regard to printing practices. Book publishers soon discovered advantages in closely following the periodical press, much to the benefit of Victorian writers. The nexus of periodical publishers, writers, and book publishers became quite closely knit so that examining one without the other only yields a small portion of the nexus, while careful consideration of the influences of each upon the other sheds considerable light upon the fiction of the time.

Even with improvements on the basic platen press, printing was slow and labor intensive, thus expensive. The harnessing of steam power to the printing press was what made large-scale printing feasible for the first time. "The average number of pages printed on the Gutenberg press was 150 per hour; by 1846 steam-powered presses could produce as many as 8000 pages an

hour" (Hagedorn 6). Circulation of established newspapers jumped exponentially, while new periodicals sprang into being overnight, some disappeared just as abruptly scant weeks later, due to low circulation or poor management or both. But for those who remained solvent, volume and speed were of paramount importance.

Periodical deadlines were tighter than those for book publishers. Production schedules demanded so much copy, advertising or text, for so much space. Type for printing was still hand set by compositors who selected pieces from bins of various sized and styled typeface slugs. The number of pieces of type on hand was one of the determining size factors of any particular press run. Type would be locked into forms, used, then "broken down" or redistributed in a matter of days so that expensive slugs were not out of circulation. This was in contrast to the large amounts of type left in forms, raising the publisher's overhead costs, while a novelist proofed galley or a publisher waited to print a subsequent book edition. One difficulty with this rapid production mode was that it allowed little or no time for corrections of authorial mistakes or typesetting errors. Only the most obvious or glaring spelling or grammatical errors received attention if they were caught at all.

Many of the newly formed weekly and monthly periodicals tended to leave the actual news reporting and the political editorial commentary to the established newspapers, choosing instead to tap into a female readership which had been trained

not to express interest in politics. Readers were provided with material of broad appeal, including "curiosities," practical subjects, and serialized novels. The circulation-raising possibilities of catering closely to the readers' tastes in novel material was quickly discovered. The first novels tended to be rather short works; however, authors and publishers soon began exploiting novels' commercial potential by imposing textual breaks on longer works. Thus "narrative purposely does not achieve closure; rather [authors] ended each installment at a point of unresolved narrative tension, precisely in order to leave readers in suspense. If they wished to know the outcome of the events narrated, they would simply have to purchase the next installment" (Hagedorn 7).

Economically, then as now, the cover price of a periodical did not even pay for the ink used to print it. Advertising revenues supported nearly any periodic publication. Since the rate for advertising was, and still is, based on a periodical's circulation figures, the higher the circulation the more charged per column inch of advertising, a solid base of repeat customers was an absolute necessity. Managing editors carefully gauged their readership's taste in fiction and contracted with a writer accordingly, buying at the lowest price possible.

For book publishers the economics of printing were somewhat slower, yet, arguably more chancy. They competed with periodicals fiercely for the "public shilling" at the risk of having too much of their stock languishing in warehouses until it was unsalable and relegated to scrap paper. Since it was

inefficient to have large type stocks unusable when tied up in book-length forms, the average book publisher was wary of untried writers whose wares might not sell out even a modest edition of, say, 500 or 750 volumes. Before the 1860s, reprints (subsequent editions) may not even have been considered for unproven authors because "deciding to reprint a work meant that there was an expectation of sufficient demand to exceed the cost of recomposing a text in a new typesetting" (Dooley 94). Thus, the publisher had a delicate line to tread between taking a financial loss on unsold sheets, bound or unbound, and losing sales of a successful book due to the time spent resetting the type after it had been broken up. This problem was somewhat alleviated by trying out novels in the rapidly developing periodical press. As Hagedorn points out,

book publishers, who still aimed at an elite clientele and produced small, very expensive editions, could use the serial to test a particular novel's selling power. For the publishing industry, the newspaper serial reduced financial risk by placing a novel in a large and less capital-intensive public forum, where it could demonstrate its commercial appeal and generate reader recognition--which explains why virtually every work of fiction written at the time appeared in serialized form before being published in book format. (6)

According to Allan C. Dooley's Author and Printer in Victorian England, "a genuine second edition was guaranteed for

most serialized works, when they came out in volume form after the last magazine installment or monthly part had appeared" (94). So the serialization of a work benefited both the author and the publishers, both in the serial and volume formats. The author could gain two fees for the price of his/her single composition, the serial publisher sold (theoretically) more issues, and the book publisher was more nearly guaranteed selling out at least one edition of the book form. The question of reprints was still problematical, however.

The introduction of stereotyping alleviated this dilemma to a great extent. The process was experimental from its first conception in the 1790s in France until mid-century when it became financially as well as physically possible. Stereotyping began as a plaster casting of type after it was originally set. This produced a "negative" of the type which could then be redistributed for use on other projects. The hardened mold could then be used to cast a metal plate which would become the new "positive" from which sheets could be printed. The cost to produce and storage space needed to retain these plates was much less than typeset cases, but the method was still somewhat unreliable. The papier-mâché method of molding and casting, introduced into English printing after mid-century, made reprinting much easier.

The concept was the same, but the medium for the cast was more efficient. Dooley describes the benefits thus:

paper matrices could be taken without difficulty and at little cost, before the types were distributed.

Plates could be cast as necessary at a later date...or stored for many years...and since a reasonably good papier-mâché matrix could be made from an existing plate as easily as from types, the life of a typesetting could be extended through hundreds of thousands of reprinted copies. Furthermore, the skill of the printers at altering plates and mixing types and plate in the same forme [sic] meant that the peripheral pages of a text [like advertisements or illustrations]...could be changed with ease while the text within continued to be printed from old plates. (94-95)

The first impression of a novel might be fairly small, but the cost, usually 30 shillings sixpence, would cover the cost of composition, stereotyping, the paper, ink, and binding, generally in calf leather for use in circulating libraries and private collections of the well-to-do. Indeed, the orders of such powerful circulating libraries such as Mudie's could guarantee a book's profitability. These three-volume works, called triple deckers, were an advantage to the libraries who could have three patrons perusing a title at any point in time. The more expensive bindings appealed to the subscription-paying patrons and bore up well under heavy usage.

Each additional edition printed from a stereotype cost only the price of the ink, paper, and binding so that the profit margin went up. Correspondingly, the price could go down to reach a less affluent audience. This practice of issuing

"stereotyped or author's editions" utilized compression of the text to lessen the amount of paper used. A typical Braddon three-decker first edition averaged three hundred pages per volume. The spacing between lines of type was wide, at least double spaced, with large top and bottom margins, a format probably created by inserting blank spacer bars between the lines of type. For a stereotype, these spacers were removed, narrowing the line space to its more normal width. The text would not be amended, only the amount of space needed to print it, thus making a one volume work of just over four hundred pages. Some moderately-priced editions were printed directly from the newspaper type setting so that they retained their two-column format, but most were reset into book-page format. Their bindings were generally in boards with cloth coverings probably embossed and possibly with gold-leaf jacket lettering. Costing approximately 6 shillings, these editions met the needs of less affluent readers, often "clubbing" (pooling) their resources to share a copy of a particular work.

The cheap edition, the infamous "yellow jacket," would also be printed on less expensive paper, housed in lower-quality binding materials, and sold in railway book stalls for a shilling apiece. These copies were often the last incarnation of a book's printing. The type might be further compressed in size and the quality of the print not as closely supervised so that worn or damaged plate flaws were allowed to pass with frequency.

Clearly fiction's passage from author to periodical to

book was as complicated as it was rapid. Book publishers, wanting to capitalize on a title's serial popularity, were in the habit of publishing the first edition triple decker from one to three months before the end of the serial run. The time available for authorial correction was exceedingly brief, especially for the author who was writing several serial novels at once. The rapid press was so voracious in its need for copy, neatly penned so that compositors could translate it to type accurately, that several serialized authors commented on the pressures of having the "printer's devil" standing outside the door demanding "More copy! More copy!" while they scribbled away furiously.

In addition to pressures for rapid production, the previously mentioned technique of "imposed textual breaks" fundamentally altered the novel's structure. Sonia Bicanic's article "Writing for the Magazines: A Study Based on the Novels of the Cornhill Magazine (1860-1880)" discusses the three major methods that novelists used to cope with the serial format's demands. The first method had the least effect upon the structure and composition because,

the novelist, as far as possible, ignored the serial divisions, and wrote a novel based on some other constructional plan, or on no particular plan, and he, or the editor, simply kept breaking the story off when a serial part had to end. (13)

This method was very rarely available to any but a highly sought-after author of established reputation because of its

unpredictability in the matter of installment lengths, which were strictly determined by columnar space. Installments might not fall somewhere conveniently within the story line, thus losing the dramatic tension the breaks might engender or enhance, but more often than not, irregular lengths were more work for the periodical's often over-burdened editor. Bicanic cites the example of Mrs. Gaskell's contribution of Wives and Daughters which came to Cornhill's editors in batches varying in length between 23 and 41 pages without chapter divisions.

More commonly "the novelist could treat the serial ending mechanically, feeling that the installment must end on a note of excitement or at least of heightened interest" (13) which opened up two possibilities: the suspense's "[growing] out of the situation as it was, and thus [adding] piquancy and reinforcement to the natural desire...to know what was coming next," or the suspense "could be made by the introduction of some new aspect at the end of the serial part" (14). This second use was considered the more "crude" of the two. While the serial format was becoming more and more familiar to both writers and readers, this was the method most adopted. It posed only minor problems for regular contributors if they were used to installments of a certain size in one periodical and another periodical demanded installments either much longer or shorter. Wilkie Collins found some difficulty in getting used to the longer Cornhill parts after he had been used to the short installments he had done for All the Year Round (Bicanic 20).

The final method for serial division was to take

installment breaks as a

constructional challenge...made to reinforce the effect that the novelist was trying to achieve. This last and most exacting way is less often found, but when it is, it means that the serial installment played a definite part in the creation of the total effect, and must have affected the responses of the first readers...in a way which it is perhaps difficult for us to realize today. (Bicanic 14)

The best example of this method was Cornhill's publication of Romola which George Eliot carefully constructed around a twelve-installment structure resisting editorial pressure to expand it into sixteen parts as "it did not lend itself to this division" (Bicanic 28), thus costing herself about "£2,500 on what many people would think a literary caprice, but what she considered as an act of loyalty to her canons of art"(Bicanic 28).

Obviously this method was not available to any but highly established writers who could afford such a loss and had the clout to defy an editor's request/demand.

Ms. Bicanic concludes that:

it may be said that, after a consideration of the novels serialized in the Cornhill, magazine publication may be said to have had a definite, discernible, and, to varying degrees, important influence on the form of the great majority of novels which were deliberately written by novelists with the aim of serialization in mind, and where they made

their own serial divisions. (30)

I would argue that the second method of dividing serial installments would become the predominant feature of Victorian novel writing until the aftermath of World War I when it made its way into the format for Saturday matinee movie serials such as "Buck Rogers," and then, after World War II, was transferred to the small screen as the standard format of daytime soap operas. Each medium has its differing demands upon the writer, but the driving necessity of making the audience return for more of the story after a lapse of time remains the same over 100 years later.

What made the audience return for more in the 1850s and 60s was somewhat dependent on their actual class or their pretensions to aping the next class upward in the social scale. Periodical magazines were highly conscious of the fine gradations in the strata of their reading public and aimed their fiction offerings accordingly. Louis James points out in "The Trouble with Betsy: Periodicals and the Common Reader in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England" that the maidservant class is "hardly a sub-section of the culture. Servants are the great grey area of the Victorian culture. They formed the largest occupational group by mid-century..." (352). Thus their sixpences or shillings counted for quite a bit in publishing terms.

Among the publications catering to this level were the "fiercely improving" ones like A Sunday Evening's Present to a Female Servant, whose format was similar to a religious tract

and whose contents "urged the domestic to be punctual, honest, serving her mistress in the knowledge that she was thereby serving God, and preparing herself for divine service hereafter" (James 353). Similarly The Servant's Magazine, published by the Committee of the London Female Mission, contained "no illustrations for frivolous entertainment; the small format, unlike that of a newspaper, was for reading and storing tidily; the layout is clear and sober" (353). These magazines, along with others of their ilk, offered no escape into any light reading or emotional variety from the day to day grind behind the green baize door separating the servants' world from their master's. Perhaps the monies being spent on these periodicals came more from mistresses providing "proper" reading for her female staff than from "Betsy" herself.

James posits that "Betsy" perused such magazines as Lloyd's Penny Sunday Times and Reynolds's Mysteries of London which contained "wildly escapist" tales in which heroines like Ela, a foundling with hidden aristocratic parentage, is "imprisoned in her kitchen dungeon, pursued by her harridan of a mistress" after she has been seduced by the villain Rackrent. Thus, even if only imaginarily, "Betsy" could play out her own resistance to her labor circumstances. James also notes that "violence is a marked trait in Betsy's reading. She was an avid reader of murder and 'last dying confession' broadsheets" (356), and that the heroines of her reading "rarely fainted" and had "the stamina and courage more generally associated with the hero in 'respectable' fiction" (357). Indeed, her heroines had

physical stamina, often disguised themselves as boys, and knew that wealth was fascinating but dangerous. Although some individual periodicals were short lived and tended to give way to one another in succession every few years, the overall content, style, and form of them remained fairly constant in relation to their chosen audience.

The reading material most likely to bring the "Betsys" back for more could not be limited to the ordinary domestic sphere in which she was constantly immured. It must have an exotic atmosphere provided by adapting salient features of the gothic, Newgate, and silver spoon novels and the melodramatic theater of mid-century which could provide the framework for the highly-colored, lively narratives demanded. Increasingly in the late 1850s and early 60s, the content was being informed by newspaper accounts of domestic crime and tragedy reported in sometimes grisly detail. Richard Altick's specific study on the connection between contemporary crime, specifically murder, and literature, Victorian Studies in Scarlet, asserts that the cheap weeklies founded in the thirties and forties and especially designed for the semi-literate audience had always "included in their lurid sheets as much crime as radical politics" so that when, by mid-century, the political passions of Chartism had subsided, "crime news was ready to fill the void" (59). Interest in crime was by no means the exclusive province of the "lower orders" and "penny weeklies." The Daily Telegraph, "edited for a middle-class clientele rather than for the workers, is proof enough that murder sold as well to the

substantial shopkeeper, clerk, civil servant, and professional man as it did to the manual laborer [or servant]" (Altick, Studies 61). The Daily Telegraph was excellent in its murder reporting but it had often fierce competition from The Times, in whose columns court cases, murder and divorce alike, received detailed attention. Those who could not procure seats within the courtroom's limited space had to follow high-profile trials through these more respectable news agencies or send their footman out to buy broadsheets from a street hawker. Those who could attend did so in style and followed the case attentively, according to The Trial of the Stauntons edited by J. B. Atlay:

women of family and position, women who have been brought up in refined society, women who pride themselves upon the delicacy of their sensibilities, who would faint at the sight of a cut finger and go into hysterics if the drowning of a litter of kittens were mentioned in their hearing--such women can sit for hours listening the details of a cold-blooded murder. They will put aside their costly lace veils to catch a glimpse of the man who has hurried his brother man to an untimely death. They will peer through their jeweled eyeglasses at the murderous weapon, the knife, or pistol, or blood-stained club, which is brought into serve as mute witness of the deed of wrong. (quoted in Altick Studies 43)

These were the patrons willing to spend a guinea and a half on triple-decker sensation novels for their own

collections. These are the patrons who demanded novels written cleverly to offset the "vulgarity" of the subject matter. Finesse of seasoning was required in the cooking of their "strong meat" whose presentation demanded appropriate flourish and style to compensate for (or disguise) what it lacked in decorum. Indiscretion, after all, was to be avoided in the upper classes; immorality itself was the particular preserve of the "middle orders" who were the ones paying Mudie's Library's subscription prices to have their literature vetted beforehand. If Mudie approved, they felt confident that the proprieties had been observed even if not fully served. These "middle brow" women were more restricted in their direct contact with periodical accounts of sensational murders since, more often than not, their access to the newspapers was through their husbands and fathers who usually restricted them to the society page and who chided or chastised them if they listened to "vulgar gossip" about sordid subjects. This prohibition likely only enhanced the desire to read sensational novels' depiction of crime at least about those younger women bored with pious domestic subjects.

Given the high circulation figures crime reporting generated for its periodicals, is it any wonder that writers seized upon crime and criminality as the focus for their novels? Altick's recounting of some fifteen celebrated Victorian murder cases leaves little doubt that even a less astute author could find much subject matter within this sphere. Often the details of these cases are very much stranger and more improbable than a

hack writer could devise, thus lending a sort of "cover" or legitimacy to fictional representations even if they strayed somewhat outside the pale. After all, what could be less probable than a man asking his employee to help him carry two awkward oil-cloth wrapped bundles containing his dismembered lady friend a quarter of a mile down the road in broad daylight to catch a cab? Perhaps the fact that she had to be moved because he had failed in business and lost the lease to his warehouse which led to the discovery that his previous attempt at dissolving her body by burying it in lime under the warehouse floor had had the reverse effect because he had used carbolic of lime rather than quicklime? Or possibly the fact that he had shot her three times in the head, then had to slit her throat because her chignon, a thick hair-dressing aid full of hairpins, had stopped at least one of the bullets? Yet, incredible as they seem, these are some of the pertinent details of Henry Wainwright's real-life crime. The employee got curious about the bundle he was hefting, investigated far enough to see a severed human hand, and summoned the police (not without some difficulty in convincing them that he was relating the truth). What fiction writer would dare to fabricate this sort of bungling to pass off in a "serious" novel? It is the stuff of farces and pantomimes. None of Miss Braddon's villains would ever have been this inept. Even if the charge of ineptitude never came up against Miss Braddon's evil-doers, the charge of "unnatural" as well as that of "immoral" did about her characters, especially female, and those of implausible and

melodramatic about her plots and situations. The critical voices of her time found sensation novels difficult to assess since they, for the most part, successfully utilized the tools and tenets of realism which was held in high esteem, yet challenged the "safe conventionalities" of Victorian cultural behavior at the same time. The single most curious, and ultimately least effective, yoking of critical criteria was of "literary realism" and "cultural morality." The result, as the decade progressed and the attacks became nastier and more pointed, was to render the critics themselves wide open to counter-charges of prudishness, hysteria and/or mean-spiritedness, but not before literary reputations were damaged and personal feelings were hurt.

R. C. Terry's Victorian Popular Fiction, 1860-80 devotes a chapter to critical reviews, noting early on that some reviewers' "offhanded approach uncovers a serious question about the absence of criteria for judging popular reading" (49). Terry continues, "what this invites us to consider...is the haphazard set of standards by which it [fiction] could be judged. Commentary about fiction was very much a matter of personal whim, the cast of the journal, and arbitrary application of general notions about form and values" (50). Victorian author James Payn complained that criticism was done by "the newest recruit to the light-literature brigade" and was highly padded by extensive quotations from the text under review while being short on useful, serious critique. Thus, critical reviews were often miles apart in the judgment of a particular

work depending upon the individual reviewer's literary standards. This phenomenon can be seen in Chapter 3 where one reviewer calls Eleanor's Victory Braddon's best book, simply because it contains no overt bigamy or murder, while two others pan it, somewhat more accurately, as melodramatic and contrived.

In functional terms, the debate centers on the relative merits of romance and realism as literary modes as well as conflicting views about the novel's purpose. Was it to instruct or entertain? These questions had been debated since the early eighteenth century, but the advent of the sensation novel brought them into the forefront anew and added moral issues to the debate about the role of fiction in a civilized society. Mid-Victorian critics were faced with quite a dilemma when sensation novelists, utilizing topics drawn from actual events familiar to their audiences, drew intricate and detailed situations, scenes and characters that captivated the reading public by being so "real" or "lifelike" that the novels were hard to dismiss when they failed to measure up on one or more other counts, especially regarding moral issues. In other words, they seemed to meet the criteria set down for realism while broaching culturally uncomfortable topics or ideas. They were too skillfully written and, perhaps, too painfully close to the truths that many Victorians preferred not to see.

The critics seem to have devised a method for sorting out realistic novels into two more manageable categories, the novel of incident and the novel of character, with the former being of lesser value than the latter. The sensation novel was assigned

to the first category on the assumption that the realistic imperative requires that the text "should efface [itself] before the illusion that what it represents is real" (Kendrick 21). Walter M. Kendrick further summarizes the critics' point of view this way:

The complaint most commonly brought against the sensation novelists was that, because they devoted all their attention to the construction of intricate plots, they ignored the painting of character. This deficiency was seen as not only an aesthetic but also a moral flaw. As G. H. Lewes observed of M. E. Braddon, she could never attain true eminence so long as her "grasp of character" remained inferior to her "power over plot-interest." (20)

Furthermore, the "major sin" of the sensation novel was its "focusing the reader's attention on the chains that constitute the novel's plot...[making] of fiction merely a game, an activity which dictates its own rules and which stands to the real world in at best an arbitrary relation" so that, like a puzzle, it engages the reader in the discovery of "an artificial pattern" rather than teaching anything about the world; therefore, "At its best, the sensation novel aspired towards the condition of a crossword puzzle....As such, it was potentially subversive of the belief that fiction is and must be mimetic" (21).

Thus, novels of character were generally more highly valued because of "a strong tendency to attribute the whole

value of a novel to its painting of character portraits and to regard the linking together of plot as a merely mechanical business. Plot was a vehicle, and the worth of the novel resided in what it conveyed, not in the conveyance" (Kendrick 20).

Henry James objected to this arbitrary distinction in his 1884 essay "The Art of Fiction," saying that this distinction does not serve and that "practicing novelists" must not have paid very much attention to it. "There are bad novels and good novels, as there are bad pictures and good pictures; but that is the only distinction in which I see any meaning, and I can as little imagine speaking of a novel of character as I can imagine speaking of a picture of character" (quoted in Kendrick 18). Unfortunately, it seems that too many novelists of the mid-sixties did pay attention to it as did too many critics. His "enlightened" view twenty years later was too tardy to keep some well-written novels and some deserving popular novelists from being relegated to the category of "second rate" because of the stigma attached to sensationalism. It is quite apparent that Braddon was one of these casualties, most probably because the idea was supported by, and therefore preached to her by, Bulwer-Lytton.

R. C. Terry frames the realism/romance controversy in this manner:

The narrative mode of realism which dominated the nineteenth-century novel at best mined deeply into human character and experience and transformed

reality, showing what man might be or hope to be--or might hope to avoid. This Thackeray and George Eliot achieved with the utmost attention to detail of place and character and with regard to the conflicts and contradictions of human nature. But most popular novelists used realism crudely. Hence the distinction between lesser novelists and greater is that between the looking-glass and the magic mirror, an often-used metaphor in the consuming and confusing debate at the heart of mid-Victorian criticism of the novel over realism, idealism, and the 'truth' of fiction. (54)

Robert W. Buchanan, a Victorian critic writing in 1862, summed up the "middlebrow" response by stressing the "practical viewpoint" of the age, and saying that writers were less interested in posterity than the corporate and commercial aspects of the trade, so that a novelist must be quite faithful to audience interests. The mid-Victorian artist therefore held the looking-glass up to society, using detailed realism which is inferior for its tendency to focus on humanity's worst activities and thus cannot be inspirational or uplifting. The sensational novel erred greatly in this direction because its stories were inordinately concerned with money, social status, ambition and sensual stimulation. Popular writing was always trying too hard to be "modish," but often "came to grief" through the discrepancy between its minute photographic realities and the increasing absurdity of its incidents. The

magic mirror mode of writing, as exemplified by Scott who "was capable of giving distinctive features to human faces--of suggesting the soul at work within, triumphant over the vagaries of convention and aspiring to a heaven infinitely higher" (quoted in Terry 55), graciously mixed "truth," "common life," and "idealism." Thus, lesser/popular novelists" miss the distinction between show and tell" (57).

No matter which critical framework was advanced or supported by various critics about popular novels' structural inferiority, there was consensus of opinion regarding the detrimental moral effects of popular fiction in general and sensation novels in particular. The circulating library and cheap fiction idealized immoral behavior, often failing to thoroughly punish its female protagonists for their transgressions and insufficiently driving home the point that this behavior produced unhappiness and ruin. Even if the heroine recants or repents in the end or was doomed to lose her true love, good fortune or happiness for her behavior, these were mere tokens or sops thrown in as some sort of cheap or cynical trick so that three volumes of self-indulgence could precede the final chapter. It was bad enough that she had contemplated her "rebellious" actions at all, much less actually committed them. To "get off" of swift and vicious punishment was clearly intolerable. Young women who were "no better than they should be" would get dangerous ideas from reading these books that glamorized female assertiveness and self-interest.

At this point in the late-nineteen nineties, it seems safe

to assume that literary scholars are familiar with the thought and lines of reasoning informing the objections to gender-based claims to superiority in regards to cognitive or emotional processes, abilities, capabilities, or values structures in place at differing periods in various cultures. It should not be necessary here to give much by the way of overview in the matter of Victorian acceptance of the gendered double standard with regard to sexual freedoms and responsibilities. Its powerful effect continues to be felt strongly in our own time despite heated and lengthy discussions debunking its philosophical underpinnings. The creature is slow to die.

That this same double standard was extended to the literary works of Victorian novelists in the areas of "appropriate" subject matter, "proper" characterization and "natural" or "unnatural" character behavior has been previously established by many scholars, notably Elaine Showalter, Martha Vicinis, Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert, during the past quarter century. That it extended to opportunity and payment for publishing in the Victorian period has been ably established by Gaye Tuchman in her Edging Women Out through her application of the "empty field theory." That it also extends to the establishment and duration of a literary reputation has been soundly argued by Jane Tompkins in Sensational Designs.

Suffice it to say that the sexual double standard fully informed critical opinion and circumscribed what female novelists could attempt, assert, and accomplish in their works. Nor was this effect limited solely to what was put into print.

Female novelists were also quickly subject to literary attack for their conduct in their personal lives in a way that no male novelist was until Oscar Wilde's lifestyle came under judicial review. That female novelists' books were judged immoral for what they contained was wrongheaded but somewhat understandable. Grounds can be made for an argument that what a novel contains can be judged by moral criteria as long as these are carefully delineated, but, that a novelist's books can be judged immoral for the lifestyle she chooses to live is inexcusable, although a reality in the Victorian period. This covert criteria, as applied to Mary Elizabeth Braddon, is a central focus of this study. Its influence lead to contemporary critical judgment of her works based on non-literary criteria. Even her non-sensationalistic works were subject to attacks that had more to do with her personal life than the novels' quality .

The argument that I want to make is that Mary Elizabeth Braddon was a serious threat to the powerarchy because she was a cut above other sensational writers. Her middle class background and education, coupled with her lively intelligence and artistic eye, enabled her to speak powerfully to other women of her class. Her sins were exposing the anxieties of her class, its unflattering preoccupation with appearances, status, proper behavior, wealth and upward mobility, and its absurd, unattainable prescription for a woman's happiness as "the angel of the hearth." She refuted the notion that a truly "good" woman will never have a "bad thing" happen to her or be driven by necessity to step outside of social mores. Her novels' plots

distressed some readers and critics because their incidents were more plausible than fantastic. People who should have been protected by their status were not. Criminal tendencies were not confined to the "lower orders" where they "naturally belonged." She "knew too much" and was cynical about men's avocations, thus exposing them to ridicule rather than idolization. She seriously questioned marriage as the "happily ever after" it was billed to be. Her women heroines were ambitious rather than self-effacing, sexual creatures instead of bloodless automatons.

Chapter 3
Experimental Parameters
"Silk Purses and Sow's Ears"

To the twentieth-century student of Victorian literature, Edward Bulwer-Lytton may seem an odd mentor for a budding novelist to choose. Bulwer-Lytton is not one of the "big" names that spring to mind immediately, or even as an afterthought, in most cases; however, his reputation during the 1850s and 60s was very high. The question of Bulwer-Lytton's critical reputation and legacy has been discussed at some length by Allan Conrad Christensen and James L. Campbell, who agree that during his lifetime, Bulwer-Lytton enjoyed high ranking among England's novelists. Campbell writes, "In 1830, before Dickens and Thackeray began to write, he was the most original and important novelist in England" (133). Campbell reports that Trollope saw Bulwer-Lytton as "an intellectual writer and not merely as a popular storyteller"(preface). Christensen asserts that Bulwer-Lytton influenced Dickens, Poe, Meredith, and Eliot, among others through his experimentation with the "silver-fork," "occult," "Newgate," "romance," and "historical" sub-genres, through his aesthetic theories advocating "wholeness" or "unity" in fiction, and through his "tendency to treat fiction as serious art" (231). Christensen's opinion is that Bulwer-Lytton is not fairly judged today while Campbell insists he is a victim of "bad press." Both agree that his works warrant serious study and that more recent scholarship is beginning to redeem his

reputation, placing him in the forefront of the minor novelists, or "second rank."

So the question of whether or not Braddon's choice of a mentor necessarily limited her developmental ability becomes problematic and certainly warrants a more detailed examination at another time. The point is that he, as a famous "serious" novelist and acknowledged intellectual leader of his day was available to her and willing to discuss his artistic theories as well as read and give advice on her work and that she exerted herself to incorporate his ideas on art and the novel into her writing.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon had met Bulwer-Lytton in the early 1850s when she was still a teenager. She had avidly read his works from girlhood onwards, admiring them deeply. Apparently they had several meetings during which he talked to her freely about how novels should be written, and she listened eagerly. The last actual meeting took place in 1854 although she continued to correspond with him until his death in 1873. Her first successful novel (the forth published), Lady Audley's Secret, was dedicated to him, with his permission.

Only a fraction of their correspondence survives. Braddon apparently disposed of his to her, with two exceptions, and Bulwer-Lytton kept only those from late 1862 onwards. The excerpts quoted below are taken from Wolff's 1974 article "Devoted Disciple" in which he transcribes the letters and attempts, through internal evidence, to date those not bearing a date. As Professor Wolff notes, Braddon honestly did believe

that Bulwer-Lytton was a very great novelist, and her opinion was shared by many of his contemporaries, but, Wolff notes wryly, in her effusive praise of his own works "she was [emphasis in the original] buttering him up, but it was the best butter"(6). Her goal was to write something artistic that pleased him, but she was also bound to write to please the subscribers of Mudie's. In her dilemma she asked the question, "Can the sensational be elevated by art, and redeemed from all it's [sic] coarseness?"[Letter 4] (14). She believed that Bulwer-Lytton had done it in several of his works and hoped that she could attain positive results too. Toward this end, she began her experiment knowing that "the curse of serial writing and hand to mouth composition has set its seal on me, and I have had to write a lot of things together" [Letter 1] (10).

The most consistent complaint in her correspondence with Bulwer-Lytton over these three years is the constraints that time put on her work. She was always working against the deadlines of weekly or monthly publication schedules, more often than not, both at the same time. The sheer volume of words she must have put on paper per week is staggering to contemplate. Estimating just from the novels under study here, which does not include incidental pieces being contributed under one or more of her pseudonyms or totally anonymously to penny and half penny journals, in the year 1863, Braddon wrote approximately three hundred and eighty six thousand words that found their way into print in three different novels. The post script of Letter 1 from December of 1862 mentions her hack work:

I do an immense deal of work which nobody ever hears of, for Half penny & penny journals. This work is most piratical stuff, & would make your hair stand on end, if you were to see it. The amount of crime, treachery, murder, slow poisoning, & general infamy required by the Half penny reader is something terrible. I am just going to do a little paracide [sic] for this week's supply. (11)

Professor Wolff believes that Braddon contributed most of the fictional pieces in Maxwell's The Halfpenny Journal, guessing that between July 1861 and June 1865, she wrote at least seven and perhaps eight novels appearing in it (Sensational Victorian 119). Even if we make a conservative estimate that her hack work was only about half as much as her more legitimate writing, this would bring her yearly total to ninety or one hundred thousand words, an average of two hundred and fifty words per day. But of course, she could not write every single day of the year, so that heroic efforts might be required, all too often, to make deadlines. Still, any "breathing space" in her writing schedule was often taken up by editing proofs of the two texts being prepared for publishing in three volumes during that year.

Despite the pace of this prodigious production, she can not have spent all of her time writing. In 1863, her daughter and second child, Fanny, was born. Though Professor Wolff can not pin down an exact date, it seems that June or July is most likely. 1863 was not an exceptional year either. Braddon attained approximately the same amount of output during 1865 and

only slightly less in 1864. During this time she also had another baby sometime in late 1864 or early 1865 (he died summer of 1866) and was pregnant again by September 1865 with another son, William. However well she felt during her pregnancies, some few days around these births were most certainly not spent at the writing desk.

One cause of this seemingly maniacal work schedule has to have been the voracious demands of serial publishing, but the major reason she felt compelled to work at such breakneck speed was the need to support herself and her mother and, increasingly, the children of her liaison, since these offspring could not be made legitimate by Maxwell at this point and would have little, if any, claim to his estate. Additionally, it appears that Braddon was the major prop of Maxwell's publishing concerns now and throughout his life and career. It can safely be conjectured that Maxwell's businesses were hand-to-mouth affairs a great deal of the time, so that a steady income from them could not be counted on. Braddon was, in effect, the breadwinner, whose eye had constantly to be on the market, shrewdly calculating what was going to sell and how much it would bring. But it most certainly told on the quality of her work that so much of it was sent to press with the ink hardly dry on the manuscript pages.

These pressures and the resulting frantic pace of work make her decision in 1863 to deliberately attempt to produce "serious" fiction all the more remarkable. The experiment to see if she could improve her work to a level approaching art can be

broken up into three phases that do not quite align with the calendar years 1863, 1864, and 1865. Phase one begins in late November 1862 and runs until October of 1863. This covers the period from the volume publication of Aurora Floyd through Eleanor's Victory and almost to the volume publication of John Marchmont's Legacy (December 1863), corresponding with the first six letters to Bulwer-Lytton. In November of 1863 Braddon was most probably editing John Marchmont for the volume editions so the writing was done, although it would not finish its serial run until January. Phase two runs from November 1863 through December of 1864, encompassing the editing of The Outcasts through Henry Dunbar and its publication in March 1864, and the entire writing period of The Doctor's Wife, which came out in volume in October of 1864, stopping just before she began writing Sir Jasper's Tenant. Letters 7 through 14 were written during this period as was the first portion of Only a Clod. Phase Three matches the calendar year 1865. During this time Only a Clod is released in May and Sir Jasper's Tenant in October as triple decker novels and Braddon has a good start on The Lady's Mile, her first novel without any crime in it. Letters 15 through 18 are found in this phase. As a visual aid, a chart of the experiment correlating the installments under construction, the installments in serial run, the novels being edited or issued, the reviews of these novels and letters between Braddon and Bulwer-Lytton is included in the special cover pocket.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon had encouragement from several

sources to pursue improvement in her writing. She enjoyed the encouragement of Tinsley Brothers to expand on her successes with Lady Audley's Secret and Aurora Floyd, which she jokingly referred to as her "pair of bigamy novels." The Tinsleys paid her a bonus of £500 after the success of Lady Audley's Secret, £200 more than had been agreed on, and a contract for £1,000, for Aurora Floyd's copyright over two years. The Tinsleys also contracted for the two novels she was planning for 1863 at £1,000 each, which was in addition to the fees she would receive for their serialization. These were intoxicatingly lucrative terms indeed for such a novice writer.

Similarly, the reviews for both Lady Audley's Secret and Aurora Floyd offered some encouragement. The Athenaeum review of October 25, 1862, commenting that "the descriptions of scenery are excellent, and discrimination is displayed in the delineation of even the minor characters," found that Robert Audley was the "most natural and agreeable character in the book" and that Lady Audley "in many ways...puts us in mind of Becky Sharp." The reviewer closed by saying,

It will easily be seen from these extracts that the book is well written and worth reading. There are certainly several incidents of a rather inexplicable nature, and a few highly improbable circumstances occur here and there in the course of the story; but these things are allowable in a work of fiction, and do not interfere with the plot, the interest of which is pretty well sustained from the first to the last

chapter of the book. (526)

The phrases "well written" and "worth reading" stand out. Most young novelists would accept this judgment as a signal to continue in the same vein, while attempting to improve the overall product. The November 18, 1862 London Times review was even more positive, calling Lady Audley's Secret "a good galloping novel...to be enjoyed rather than criticized...full of rapid incident, well put together" and "the work of a really clever authoress" to whose readers "we can promise abundance of excitement in the new story, which, indeed, is pitched in a key high enough to attract readers who usually care little for novels." The character of Lady Audley is "well conceived, and developes [sic] itself naturally."

The reviewer acknowledges that there are a few problems with the novel and that "Miss Braddon would be entitled to rank as the first of lady novelists if she had perfectly succeeded in reconciling these contradictions; nevertheless, her portraiture is by no means feeble, and gives promise of great success hereafter." "Indeed," he continues, "it is seldom that one sees a novel so well balanced in the display of power, showing such even [emphasis in the original] excellence of plot, of passion, of character, and of diction." The reviewer caps his praise off by attributing some of the flaws, such as they are, to the fact that the authoress has been writing three novels at once which must have affected the whole. He predicts that "hereafter, however, she can have no such defense. By means of her present work she acquires a position which ought to render impossible

the extravagance of writing three novels at once." Would that it had been so.

If this highly favorable review were not enough, the January 31, 1863 Athenaeum called Aurora Floyd "a superior book to 'Lady Audley's Secret,'--the characters are more natural and the story more probable," and especially praising her "knowledge of the world, and especially of the horse-racing world." Later, when her critics chose to tar her with the brush of immorality, this sort of "knowing" about men's haunts and habits would earn for her the sneers on her work and reputation that so hurt and bedeviled her, but, early on, the realism of these details was put down in the assets column.

Braddon had popularity, money coming in, and had contracted for two new novels for the coming year, yet she wanted more. She wanted to do something worthy of her literary mentor. She was the first to acknowledge her own shortcomings. In Letter 1 she hopes that Bulwer-Lytton will like Aurora Floyd better than Lady Audley, thinking he will, because it is "more boldly written, & less artificial than the latter," continuing: "I know that my writing teems with errors, absurdities, contradictions and inconsistencies [sic]." She promises that she will "try patiently to improve my style by an earnest study of one of the first masters of the English language, & the [emphasis in the original] first master of the art of construction [referring here to Bulwer-Lytton himself]" (10). Whether or not her opinion of Bulwer-Lytton's work was a bit high, she could have done a great deal worse in choosing an

object for emulation, and certainly did not confine herself to just reading his novels. Her letters contain many references to Scott, Dickens, Collins, Eliot, Flaubert, Shakespeare, and Tennyson, among others. She was on the right track about models for improvement.

She was, perhaps, overestimating the possibility of attaining "Art" in the highly commercial vein of publishing to which she had committed herself, but she at least knew that a complete departure from her previous works was not likely to be accepted by either the publishers or the reading public. Therefore, the plot of both novels planned, John Marchmont's Legacy,--the capital letters here and hereafter indicate that it was intended to be the "higher" of the two novels in her schema--and eleanor's victory--here and hereafter the lower case letters indicative of its being relegated to "a neatly turned out money maker"--are less overtly sensationalistic than her previous works but do contain highly colored episodes and covert criminality.

The first novel in aspiring to "higher" stylistic qualities in Braddon's experiment was John Marchmont's Legacy. Since only one of these experimental novels is currently in print, and that one not widely circulated, each will receive fairly detailed plot and/or scene descriptions. John Marchmont's Legacy revolves around the possession of Marchmont Towers in conjunction with the fate of young Mary Marchmont. Braddon had decided to try out Bulwer-Lytton's advice that novels should be driven by the internal mechanism of its characters' wants,

needs, and frailties rather than by any external mechanism of chance events or mere plot devices. Thus, she attempted drawing an unusual female character in the form of the psychically tormented Olivia Marchmont, nee Arundel, who is Mary's stepmother. The sly Paul Marchmont, her second cousin and prospective heir to the estate, is the other moving force. His character is more formulaic, a villain who manipulates others to do the real dirty work so that he can acquire Marchmont Towers and begin collecting valuable canvasses.

The sensational elements are relatively mild. Unlike her earlier work, there are no bigamists or murderers. No crime has taken place before the story opens, and there is no "guilty secret" early on. In fact, the first three chapters of the book describe John Marchmont and his daughter Mary's living in poverty, and being helped by an old pupil, Edward Arundel. A consumptive, John has distant expectations to an estate in Lincolnshire that would require the unlikely deaths of three men to realize. Of course these take place, but all the circumstances are believable enough and non-criminal.

Eleanor's victory, by comparison, is clearly more sensational. Eleanor Vane's father is a spendthrift, having run through three fortunes, and has very distant, and improbable, expectations of yet another from an old school chum. The money for his youngest daughter's schooling is cheated from him during a night at ecarte. In his wild grief, Vane kills himself with poison, leaving behind a fragmentary letter seemingly calling on Eleanor to avenge him and leaving a bare clue to the cheaters'

names. The rest of the story revolves around her attempts to identify and bring to justice her father's "killers," while getting herself a living as a lady's companion. The number of coincidences, usages of false names, and motivational misunderstandings that follow far exceed credibility and strain characterizational verisimilitude.

It would be too simple to assign a lack of subtlety only to rushed publication schedules. Braddon was highly aware of her audience and her weekly reading public did not prize delicacy of tone, lightness of touch, or subtle shadings. She was fully aware of their predilection for strongly spiced pottage, with characters who were clearly good or bad "by nature." Mental exertions did not catch and keep their attentions; physical ones did, so that is what she dished up, action and plenty of it. In fact, most of her stories had to make up for the fact that they did not contain as many bleeding bodies and histrionics as her competitors' tales, so they made up for it with a wholesale production of near misses, misunderstandings, secrets, tears, and fainting fits.

A brief overview of each story like those just presented above, is probably about as much as Braddon began with early in phase one. Since Braddon worked hard against deadlines, it is fairly safe to assume that she was rarely more than a month ahead of her readers, barely keeping up with the compositor's demands. After conceiving of the opening situation and an inciting incident, she probably had only a fair idea of where she was going with the story but no set plan, beyond a few key

stops along the way, counting on her fertile imagination to supply enough fodder for the whole. This surmise can be made from noticing the number of rather backtracking introductions of minor characters or descriptions of pre-existing circumstances as needed to get out of a "plot corner" into which she had written herself.

One good example of a plot corner is the abrupt introduction of Richard Thornton in volume 1 chapter 5 of eleanor's victory. Braddon carefully set up the atmosphere of fifteen-year-old Eleanor's social isolation in Paris through the first four chapters when, voilà, a staunch old friend from the Vanes' bohemian past who has not seen her in years recognizes Eleanor on the avenue. In the next chapter, he is the coincidental means by which George Vane's body is identified in the morgue; otherwise, Eleanor would never have discovered what had happened to him. Braddon has a great deal of very quick explaining to do, so that the ensuing "adoption" of Eleanor by Richard and his aunt can make any sense at all.

John Marchmont's Legacy shows much less of this sort of backtracking, probably due to its less harried publication schedule; however it displays a good example of one of Braddon's "inconsistencies" or "errors." This occurs between parts 2 and 3 of John Marchmont's Legacy when Edward suddenly becomes three years younger than before. In Chapter 6 he is described on his sudden appearance at Marchmont Towers as not noticing Mary's sudden blush because "young gentlemen of four-and-twenty are not very attentive to every change of expression in little girls of

thirteen" (48). The first chapter of part three, chapter 7, introduces Olivia. When Edward visits her and her father at the Rectory, she has been out doing charitable works and looks weary. Edward comments "why, you must work as hard as a prime minister, Livy, by their account; you who are only a few years older than I," to which Olivia replies, "I was three-and-twenty last month." "Ah, yes; to be sure. And I'm one-and-twenty. Then you're only two years older than I, Livy. But, then, you see, you're so clever, that you seem much older than you are" (63-64). Thus Edward suddenly reverts from twenty four to twenty one in the space of time between July and September of the same year. It is hard to tell if this change in Edward's age is deliberate or not. If her manuscript copy of part two were still at the printer's, she could have simply been in error. However, if she decided that the age gap between Edward and Mary should be lessened to increase the credibility of their marriage later on, and that making Olivia older than Edward would make Olivia's secret infatuation more poignant, she might have deliberately inserted the change and neglected to edit it out during any revision for the volume publication.

These errors are less an indication of carelessness on the part of Braddon than an illustration of the hazards of serial publication. The danger of inconsistency is further exacerbated by the difficulty of dual, simultaneous authorial invention, the juggling of two storylines within the imagination and on paper, especially against a hard and close deadline. That more frequent and glaring errors do not appear speaks to Braddon's

ability to concentrate and retain details. In any case, the serial format would have helped to "hide" such errors due to the time lapse between reading sessions. A certain percentage of the audience would not have refreshed their memories by rereading previous installments just before beginning the new one, although this practice did occur. The errors are only too easy to pick out when the text is more or less read at one sitting or otherwise closely examined.

Matters Temporal

John Marchmont's Legacy was contracted to begin appearing in the December 1862 issue of Temple Bar (a shilling magazine) and was to run for thirteen installments with an average size of eight thousand five hundred words per. Assuming that Braddon had to prepare the first installment in November and had probably completed Aurora Floyd sometime in October so as to prepare it for volume publication, she had the relative luxury of not having to begin another serial until February, as eleanor's victory was not due to begin its run until March 1863. Therefore, not counting her hack work, she only had to produce some eighteen thousand words for one plotline in November and December.

The "lower" of the planned novels, eleanor's victory, ran weekly in Once a Week, a 3 penny (or 6 penny, depending on which source is consulted) magazine. It was contracted to appear in 31 installments averaging six thousand three hundred words each.

Since it was to finish in just seven months and one week, Braddon had to produce three times as much copy per month for it as for John Marchmont's Legacy. For the month of March, thirty-three thousand seven hundred words were prepared for these two novels. It is impossible to say how much of eleanor's victory was prepared in advance of its March premiere; at a minimum, the approximately seven thousand eight hundred words of the first installment must have been ready for composers around the first of March.

Marked differences in narrative pace become apparent through comparison of these two installments, some of which can be chalked up to the disparity between the relative paces of melodrama and serious drama as popular and artistic media, and others which are due to reader expectation and installment length. These differences are indicative of Braddon's awareness that melodrama employs a different temporal structure than more serious narrative forms. Whether she was instructed by Bulwer-Lytton on this point or stumbled across it herself through her reading or her stage experiences is impossible to say from current sources; nevertheless, she displays an almost instinctive awareness that melodrama's internal pace is accelerated by the multitude of incidents that crowd on and even interrupt each other, whereas serious drama's internal pace is more deliberate and less prone to interlacings of incident. Furthermore, melodramatic incidents more often consist of physical action between two or more characters or characters and natural forces/obstacles than serious drama incidents.

Serious drama's pace owes itself more to interlacings of character portraiture and scene painting and/or philosophical discussions and authorial commentary than purely physical action, while its characters pursue complex, often abstract, or intangible goals (i.e., justice or personal catharsis). Emphasis is placed on the characters' internal conflicts, and their working out is portrayed through more or less "normal" daily activity. In the course of the narrative, highly dramatic incidents are commensurate with the dramatic action.

In contrast, melodramas are powerful stories involving the achievement of relatively simple and tangible goals (i.e., marrying person x or preventing person y from foreclosing on the mortgage) whose attainments are artificially drawn out or delayed in relation to their introduction. The narrative makes these goals clear very early on, yet requires the balance of the text for their accomplishment. The narrative focuses on the obstacles to these goals' attainment, often in minute detail, utilizing an episodic structure fraught with strange coincidence, concealed identity or disguise, abduction or other physical mayhem, and a sense of strict poetic justice (Brockett 348). As such, the narrative time in relation to the actual story time must be manipulated in prescribed ways.

These and other aspects of Braddon's writing are clarified in light of the work of Gerard Genette in his Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method. Genette distinguishes between three types of time implicit in any narrative. The story time, what German theoreticians call the erzählte Zeit, is that period

of time during which the story's events actually take place (the signified). This narrative content is an independent factor, whereas the other two "times" are dependent on it in distinct ways. The next layer of time is the narrative time or Erzählzeit, which Genette calls narrating (the signifier), which is sculpted by the author as narrator with varying degrees of slippage in regards to author as narrator and author as author. This stage is the most dynamic and, Genette believes, "the only one available to textual analysis, which is itself the only instrument of examination at our disposal in the field of literary narrative, and particularly fictional narrative" (27). The final layer of time is the reading time of the audience which Genette implies is the one least available for systematic study, but seems to me to be of vital concern for serialized writers. It is my belief that consideration of the third layer of time in its relationship to the second is a fundamental factor in the narrating of serialized novels in general and sensation novels in particular. More about this aspect in a moment.

That the narrative/story/signified time and the narrating/telling/signifier time rarely, if ever, have a one to one correspondence is generally assumed. The events themselves happen either too slowly or too quickly for the author to represent them in words. The bulk of Genette's book delves into the types and effects of event omission, repetition, and elongation on the narrative text. The given here is that the narrative voice (via the author) exercises numberless options

concerning what narrative materials (events, explanations and commentaries) to include or exclude from the text. It is the manipulation of this "slippage" between the event and its telling that creates dynamism and meaning within the text. The act of narrating, therefore, is one of violence and assertion of authorial ego, in the case of narratives based on historical events, and, additionally, one of imagination in the case of fiction no matter how closely it is identified with "realism."

If we grant that the manipulation of time is of considerable importance in the novel issued in its entirety, it is not too much of a leap to consider that temporal manipulation is of even more importance in the novel issued in volumes or installments. The interruption by chapter endings and beginnings provides the readers with possible pauses in the consumption of the text, while being simultaneously structured to lure the reader into continuation. These pauses are very brief, often only as long as it takes the reader's eyes to travel to the following page.

The interruption of narration in books issued in volumes, though they can be as brief as the closing of one volume and picking up the next, is still one in which the reader has more time to reflect on the story and to discuss it with others. The author must structure each volume to have an internal integrity, while simultaneously fulfilling its designated function within the entire artistic concept. This interlocking is multiplied when a novel is issued in installments of a few chapters at a time during which interval a week or a month must pass in the

lives of the reader.¹ It is this artificial time passage between authorial production and audience consumption that forces serial authors to focus on temporal manipulation even more consciously than non-serial authors.

As Malcolm Andrews notes, "Someone paying his shilling for the first monthly installment of Bleak House when it appeared on the bookstalls in March 1852 had no alternative to waiting a full year and a half before he could reach the end of that novel" (243). Thus, the serial audience who could not possibly afford the novel when it was finally issued in volumes or the circulating library fees for borrowing it, was forced into a "piecemeal" reading. Those who could afford these prices and fees were in the position to choose what format in which to consume the work. If they chose to demonstrate self-restraint and wait for the final book issuance, they would have run the risk of annoyance because other installment readers might choose to discuss installments as they appeared, thus "spoiling" the story. Additionally, there would have been some sort of implicit pressure on abstainers to be as "up to the minute" with the story as their peers, a sense of "missing out on" the "conversation" current in their immediate circle or larger society. These difficulties, similar to the ones experienced today when a person chooses to delay watching a video-taped

¹See Michael Lund, "Clocking the Reader in the Long Victorian Novel," "Reading Serially Published Novels: Old Stories in Thackeray's The Newcomes," and "Novels, Writers, and Readers in 1850" for further examination of this phenomenon.

sports program and must run the gamut of those who already know the score, were certainly daunting.

Perhaps then, the volume style of reading was often a second reading, one for continuity's sake and reflection on or savoring of particular passages or scenes after the excitement and tension of the serialized reading. Perhaps too, the volume style was more likely for readers in those areas of England where the periodical carrying the serial was not readily available, so that volume consumption was the only possible form. In either case, serial authors kept the opportunities, restrictions, and limitations afforded by serial installments firmly in mind when shaping a story. Andrews claims that Dickens handled the problem of giving "the monthly number, as far as possible, its own integrity as well as establish[ing] its place in the whole design" by providing "rich detailing of the picture to give substance" (244). He argues that monthly installment publication frustrated the linear, "conventional" progress of a story, while it encouraged "exploring and absorbing details that lie, as it were, to the side of the main narrative path" (244).

So, if "piecemeal" reading tended to enforce increased detail while it frustrated or elongated the storyline, audience interest had to be sustained somehow, or the public would abandon it as "dull" or "insupportable" and turn to something more absorbing. Serial writers in general, and Braddon in particular, provided their readers with lively smaller incidents within each installment to retain interest. These smaller

incidents might provide nothing more than a pleasant passage of time similar to l'entrè act dances, pantomimes, or songs, or they might be the vehicle to drop clues about a developing mystery which are not to be seen as terribly important at the time but prove to foreshadow future events. They might also serve as illustrations of a character's traits or relationship with others or provide "color," "tone," or "mood." For whatever purpose, smaller incidents kept the installments themselves moving within the larger framework of the novel, which moved at a different pace.

The relationship between the pace and frequency of the smaller incidents and the story as a whole provides one measure by which we can judge a piece's degree of melodrama. Another measure would be, of course, the degree of dramatic intensity of each smaller incident's depiction (the author's use of language), but I would like to set this factor aside briefly to take up the matter of pace and frequency.

Pace and frequency were even more pressing for serial novels that were consumed on a weekly basis. These audiences were more demanding for what Braddon called "strong meat," the highly spiced and quickly cooked and served variety of story. They had less tolerance for long passages of time between action sequences than did more sophisticated readers. They didn't seem to mind the suspense of hand-wringing meditation on the part of a hero or heroine, as long as the threat or feeling of guilt being experienced were of a heightened order. But, on the whole, this audience became quickly bored with elaborate scene

or character painting and philosophical discussions that slowed things down. Therefore, an examination of the sections of John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory reveals a distinct difference in Braddon's manipulation of time and installment incident, that is in line with her awareness of her audience's preferences as well as the differing modes of temporal consumption. John Marchmont's Legacy was to appear in monthly installments while eleanor's victory appeared weekly. Both were intended as sensationalistic domestic mysteries, but Braddon's intention to have character prompt incident is facilitated by a slower-paced narration, emphasizing character painting in detail and fewer smaller incidents per installment in John Marchmont's Legacy. In eleanor's victory she relied on the melodramatic formula that sacrifices characterization to the level of stereotypes at the mercy of incident, while it requires quickly-paced and thickly interlarded minor incidents to propel the storyline.

In order to examine more easily the dynamic of incident to pace (and later incident to characterization and linguistic hyperbole), I would like to propose the following schema. Narrative material can be roughly divided into four categories of use which are, of course, never pure but which can be labeled according to the preponderance of one characteristic over the others in the mix. These categories are not intended to be taken as strictly delineated or prescriptive, rather as convenient terms for this discussion. The categories, in brief, are as follows:

- Descriptive Material consisting of exposition, character/scene painting and/or mood setting/enhancing.
- Narrative Material consisting of reporting physical action or mental activity.
- Connective Material consisting of temporal or scene shifts and/or the explanation of the importance of a fact or the relationship/connection between characters or events.
- Authorial Commentary consisting of either direct or indirect author/narrator observation or reflection on characters or events and general philosophizing from the author/narrator point of view.

Some examples from Braddon should illustrate these categories.

DESCRIPTIVE MATERIAL

Exposition

Every time the reader is introduced to a new character or setting, whether early on or later in a text, exposition of the same must necessarily take place. Here is the opening of John Marchmont's Legacy:

The history of Edward Arundel, second son of Christopher Arundel Dangerfield Arundel, of Dangerfield Park, Devonshire, began on a certain dark winter's night on which the lad, still a schoolboy, went with his cousin, Martin Mostyn, to witness a blank-verse tragedy at one of the London theatres.... The story of young Arundel's life began when he was a light-hearted, heedless lad of seventeen, newly

escaped for a brief interval from the care of his
pastors and masters. (1)

A few pages later, readers meet his uncle:

Hubert Arundel had been wild at college, and had put his autograph across so many oblong slips of blue paper, acknowledging value received that had been only half received, that by the time the claims of all the holders of these portentous morsels of stamped paper had been satisfied, the younger son's fortune had melted away, leaving its sometime possessor the happy owner of a pair of pointers, a couple of guns by crack makers, a good many foils, single-sticks, boxing-gloves, wire masks, basket helmets, leathern leg-guards, and other paraphernalia, a complete set of the old Sporting Magazine, from 1792 to the current year, bound in scarlet morocco, several boxes of very bad cigars, a Scotch terrier, and a pipe of undrinkable port. Of all these possessions, only the undrinkable port now remained to show that Hubert Arundel had once possessed a younger son's portion, and had succeeded most admirably in making ducks and drakes of it....The Rector's pensioners smacked their lips over the mysterious liquid, and confidently affirmed that it did them more good than all the doctor's stuff the parish apothecary could send them. (6-7)

The tone of the first passage is straightforwardly expository;

whereas, the tone of the second is highly ironic, with the sort of subtlety and type of indirection commonly found in more artistic novels than in "popular" ones. Braddon very clearly spotlights the prevailing prejudice against a "useless" younger son who wastes his patrimony through the device of cataloguing his "material assets." Additionally, both of these passages serve to pin down a rough time frame (the early 1800s) and setting (England, both in London and a country parish), and to name and give corporeal substance to characters (Edward and his profligate Uncle Hubert). Their general status in society (landed gentry) as well as some of their personal history is also revealed.

Embedded in the latter passage is the germ of a comparison between the two as to how they handle their careers as younger sons which is not strictly expository but certainly in accord with my second type of descriptive material, character/scene painting.

Character/Scene Painting

After initial introduction, characters or scenes require occasional descriptive passages to convey narrative material more effectively and/or to enhance the mood of a scene. This example of characterization is taken from chapter 2 of John Marchmont's Legacy:

Mary's soul had long ago bade adieu to infancy, and even in these visions [of future riches] she was womanly: for she was always thoughtful of others rather than of herself, and there was a great deal

more of the practical business of life mingled with the silvery web of her fancies than there should have been so soon after her eighth birthday. At times, too, an awful horror would quicken the pulses of her loving heart as she heard the hacking sound of her father's cough; and a terrible dread would seize her--the fear that John Marchmont might never live to inherit the Lincolnshire fortune. The child never said her prayers without adding a little extempore supplication that she might die when her father died.

(19)

This second example of scene painting, is from chapter 1:

He [Edward] made his way very rapidly out of the theatre, and fought manfully through the crowd of half-price playgoers waiting about the pit and gallery doors, until he found himself at the stage-entrance. He had often looked with reverent wonder at the dark portal; but he had never before essayed to cross the sacred threshold. The guardian of the gate of this theatrical paradise, inhabited by fairies at a guinea a week, and baronial retainers at a shilling a night, is ordinarily a very inflexible individual, not to be corrupted by any mortal persuasion, and scarcely corruptible by the more potent influence of gold or silver. Poor Edward's half-a-crown had no effect whatever on the stern door-keeper, who thanked him for his donation, but

told him that it was against his orders to let anybody go upstairs. (10-11)

These passages enhance the reader's initial introduction to the scene at large by providing carefully selected detail that conveys much more than a physical description of persons or places. Verbal touches such as the word "womanly" as applied to an eight-year-old girl and the phrase "fairies at a guinea a week" denoting a particular class of actor are like subtle touches of artist's pigment on canvass which create highlights or depth of perspective.

NARRATION MATERIAL

Physical Action

The reporting of physical activities, whether they are performed by a character, the natural environment, or machinery demands a great deal of careful thought and construction to achieve the desired effect. Most passages are dotted with the description of smaller physical activities which serve to support the scene, such as the following from chapter 6 of John Marchmont's Legacy in which Edward, back from India, is relating some of his experiences while drying out after a wet journey:

They have not been exactly child's play," he said shaking back his chestnut hair and smoothing his thick moustache. He was a man now, and a very handsome one; something of that type which is known in this year of grace as "swell;" but brave and chivalrous withal, and not afflicted with any impediment in his speech. "The men who talk of the

Afghans as a chicken-hearted set of fellows are rather out of their reckoning. The Indians can fight, Miss Mary, and fight like the devil! but we can lick 'em."

He walked over to the fireplace,--where, upon this chilly wet day, there was a fire burning,--and began to shake himself dry. Mary, following him with her eyes, wondered if there was such another soldier in all Her Majesty's dominions, and whether he must not very speedily be made General-in-Chief of the Army of the Indus. (49)

His words and Mary's reaction to his sudden arrival, not his physical actions, are the focal point here. The physical actions, functioning to enhance verisimilitude, are subservient to the other elements in the passage. This sort of usage does not constitute what is meant here by physical action. The sort of physical action that takes center stage by virtue of its structural and/or rhetorical importance to the text merits the designation under discussion. The passage can be as extensive and overtly physical as the following from chapter 25, called "Captain Arundel's Revenge," for obvious reasons:

He had sprung out from amidst the crowd only one moment before, and had dashed up the steps of the terrace before any one had time to think of hindering him or interfering with him. It seemed to Paul Marchmont as if his foe must have leaped out of the solid earth, so sudden and so unlooked-for was his

coming. He stood on the step immediately below the artist; but as the terrace steps were shallow, and he was taller by half a foot than Paul, the faces of the two men were level, and they confronted each other.

The soldier held a heavy hunting-whip in his hand--no foppish toy, with a golden trinket for its head, but a stout handle of stag-horn, and a formidable leathern thong. He held this whip in his strong right hand, with the thong twisted round the handle; and throwing out his left arm, nervous and muscular as the limb of a young gladiator, he seized Paul Marchmont by the collar of that fashionably cut scarlet coat which the artist had so much admired in the cheval glass that morning.

There was a shout of surprise and consternation from the gentlemen on the terrace and the crowd on the lawn, a shrill scream from the women; and in the next moment Paul Marchmont was writhing under a shower of blows from the hunting-whip in Edward Arundel's hand. The artist was not physically brave, yet he was not such a cur as to submit unresistingly to this hideous disgrace; but the attack was so sudden and unexpected as to paralyze him--so rapid in its execution as to leave him no time for resistance.

(288-89)

Here the description is supportive of the narration of what is happening. Edward's horsewhipping of Paul is a prominent

turning point in the story, and its vivid recounting drives the event's importance home. Action passages of this sort of significance can also be much less extensively depicted and yet retain their impact as can be seen in this from chapter 42:

Paul Marchmont went from room to room with the flaring candle in his hand; and wherever there were curtain or draperies about the windows, the beds, the dressing-tables, the low lounging-chairs, and cosy little sofas, he set alight to them. He did this with wonderful rapidity, leaving flames behind him as he traversed the long corridor, and coming back thus to the stairs. (403)

The action of setting fire to Marchmont Towers is of considerable consequence to the novel's structure, and by far more horrifying than the horsewhipping, yet even more striking and crucial to it is the action narrated in the next three sentences:

He went down-stairs again, and returned to the western drawing-room. Then he blew out his candle, turned out the gas, and waited.

"How soon will it come?" he thought.

In this instant, we realize that he is going to commit suicide in addition to destroying Mary's physical legacy. It is a chilling moment that is all the more striking for its stark brevity, a rhetorical device that Braddon would improve on as her experiment progressed.

Narration of both physical and mental activities can have

the effect of either quickening or slowing the story's pace, depending on what is depicted, how it is verbally constructed, and for what rhetorical purpose it is included. The expression of a character's thoughts, here designated as mental activities, are also included in passages which are primarily intended for descriptive, connective, or other rhetorical purposes, much like the first example for physical narration given above; however, other mental activity narrations qualify for consideration as distinct units in this schema. The criteria for these are similar to those expressed above, in that the passage should have substantial structural or rhetorical function. An example is from chapter 7 of John Marchmont's Legacy, in which Olivia's mental reasonings express one of the major conflicts within the book. Edward, completely unaware of her adoration for him, has revealed to Olivia that John has expressed interest in her.

She stood at the gate nearly an hour later, and watched the young man ride away in the dim moonlight. If every separate tramp of his horse's hoofs had struck on her heart, it could scarcely have given her more pain than she felt as the sound of those slow footfalls died away in the distance.

"O my God!" she cried, "is this madness to undo all that I have done? Is this folly to be the climax of my dismal life? Am I to die for the love of a frivolous, fair-haired boy, who laughs in my face when he tells me that his friend had been pleased to 'take a fancy to me?'"

She walked away towards the house; then stopping, with a sudden shiver, she turned and went back to the hazel-alley she had paced with Edward Arundel.

"Oh, my narrow life!" she muttered between her set teeth; "my narrow life! It is that which has made me the slave of this madness. I love him because he is the brightest and fairest thing I have ever seen. I love him because he brings me all I have ever known of a more beautiful world than that I live in. Bah! why do I reason with myself?" she cried, with a sudden change of manner. "I love him because I am mad." (65-66)

This early expression of Olivia's conflict points to the crux of the novel as a whole and to the overriding feature of her character. At the mercy of a strictly measured and ruled religious philosophy, Olivia is the embodiment of human love stunted and twisted by such unyielding doctrines. Throughout the book, her mental state, with its self-delusional and rationalizing tendencies, drives the plotline and informs the moral philosophies and, therefore, must be accessible to the reader.

CONNECTIVE MATERIAL

Just as coordinate and subordinate conjunctions provide structural links between portions of a sentence and transitional keywords and phrases smooth the way between sections of an essay, what I would like to call here connective material

facilitates the temporal or spatial changes necessary within a novel. Connective material both points to the transition and helps the reader understand the relationships and/or connections between materials either presented or elided.

Commonly present at the beginnings of chapters, connective material can consist of narrative passages which chronicle simultaneous events like this example from chapter 7 of John Marchmont's Legacy:

While busy workmen were employed at Marchmont Towers, hammering at the fragile wooden walls of the tennis court,--while Mary Marchmont and Edward Arundel wandered with the dogs at their heels, amongst the rustle of the fallen leaves in the wood behind the great gaunt Lincolnshire mansion,--Olivia, the rector's daughter, sat in her father's quiet study, or walked to and fro in the gloomy streets of Swampington, doing her duty day by day. (57)

They can also be primarily descriptive mood-setting such as this from chapter 12:

Olivia Marchmont sat in her late husband's study while John's funeral train was moving slowly along under the misty October sky. A long stream of carriages followed the stately hearse with its four black horses, and its voluminous draperies of rich velvet, and nodding plumes that were damp and heavy with the autumn atmosphere.

They can and do serve multiple functions as seen when this

passage continues:

The unassuming master of Marchmont Towers had won for himself a quiet popularity amongst the simple country gentry, and the best families in Lincolnshire had sent their chiefs to do honour to his burial, or at least their empty carriages to represent them at that mournful ceremonial. Olivia sat in her dead husband's favourite chamber. She had been working hard that morning, and indeed every morning since John Marchmont's death, sorting and arranging papers, with the aid of Richard Paulette, the Lincoln's Inn solicitor, and James Gorby, the land-steward. She knew that she had been left sole guardian of her step-daughter, and executrix to her husband's will; and she had lost no time in making herself acquainted with the business details of the estate, and the full nature of the responsibilities entrusted to her. (97)

The passage demonstrates that some time has been elided since the ending of the previous chapter, and signals the monumental shift in power that has taken place. It also throws into relief the differential in emotions that Olivia and John evoke from the neighborhood. His is a "quiet popularity" due to his "unassuming" nature, hers a business-like responsibility which recalls the cold respect of the empty carriages.

During the Victorian period, connective material generally serves to conduct the reader into a different reality from the one previously presented with a minimum of the "mental

regrouping" required in more modern forms of the novel.

AUTHORIAL COMMENTARY

Of the four categories being proposed here, perhaps this one is the easiest to quickly identify in the Victorian text, especially in Braddon's works. Sometimes she addresses the reader directly with a rhetorical question as in the following passage from chapter 10 of Aurora Floyd:

Have you ever visited some country town after a lapse of years, and wondered, O fast-living reader, to find the people you know in your last visit still alive and thriving, with hair unbleached as yet, although you have lived and suffered whole centuries since then? (81)

Interestingly, the direct address appears less and less frequently after Aurora Floyd, where it is often used to evoke sympathy for her heroine. No examples of it are found in John Marchmont's Legacy at all, where, however, there are many examples of her using the singular personal pronoun type of commentary, as seen in the following from chapter 13 of John Marchmont's Legacy:

I think that Olivia, in the depth of her gloomy despair, took some comfort from such speeches as these. Was this frank expression of regard for Mary Marchmont a token of love? No; not as the widow understood the stormy madness. Love to her had been a dark and terrible passion, a thing to be concealed;

as monomaniacs have sometimes contrived to keep the secret of their mania, until it burst forth at last in some direful work of wreck and ruin. (125)

Braddon is particularly fond of this device for ending her earlier novels, which lends them the quality of oral recitation and authorial benediction on the final happy resolution of all difficulties reminiscent of the fairy tale genre.

The least intrusive form of direct address occurs when "reader" or "I" is not used, yet it is clear that, rather than a character, the narrative presence is holding forth. This example comes from chapter 32 of John Marchmont's Legacy:

It is in the nature of good and brave men to lay down their masculine rights when they leave their hats in the hall, and to submit themselves meekly to feminine government. It is only the whippersnapper, the sneak, the coward out of doors, who is a tyrant at home. See how meekly the Conqueror of Italy went home to his charming Creole wife! See how pleasantly the Liberator of Italy lolls in the carriage of his golden-haired empress... (309)

This example is ironic, a tone Braddon usually assumes in these "asides," but more serious ones are interlarded throughout her books to emphasize poignant moments or make observations on society. The way in which I qualify them as direct and differentiate them from the indirect category to follow is that, although they may spring from a particular incident, character description or situation in the story, they comment more on the

world at large, shedding more of a slanting illumination on the incident or situation than indirect commentary that spotlights one of these directly. For example, consider the following passage from chapter 31 of John Marchmont's Legacy:

Olivia Marchmont had never been the most lively or delightful of companions. The tenderness which is the common attribute of a woman's nature had not been given to her. She ought to have been a great man. Nature makes these mistakes now and then, and the victim expiates the error. Hence come such imperfect histories as that of English Elizabeth and Swedish Christine. The fetters that had bound Olivia's narrow life had eaten into her very soul, and cankered. (301)

These indirect comments are more difficult to detach from descriptive, narrative, and connective material as they serve to bridge the gap from the fictive microcosm to the macrocosm of real life experience. Indirect commentaries in Braddon generally seem to be painted in more delicate tints than her direct interpolations and draw much less attention to themselves overall.

Having established these categories, hereafter they will be designated in capital letters thus: D=Descriptive, N=Narrative, C=Connective, and A=Authorial. Simply identifying them within a text in a quantitative way yields little of value, however, until we apply the two additional criteria of frequency and duration to their study. In borrowing these terms from

Genette, considerable violence is done to his usage of them. Genette uses frequency to mean the number of times an event in the story is told or repeated, what he calls the relationship between diegesis and narration. In his own words:

...a narrative statement is not only produced, it can be produced again, can be repeated one or more times in the same text....Schematically, we can say that a narrative, whatever it is, may tell once what happened once, n times what happened n times, n times what happened once, once what happened n times. (114)

His term "duration" refers to the time of the narrative in relation to the time of its representation in written form, for which there is no one-to-one ratio. The difficulties involved here preclude what he calls "rigorous comparison of real durations" he settles for the notion that:

A narrative may also be defined...by comparing its duration to that of the story it tells...in a way that is more or less absolute and autonomous, as steadiness in speed. By "speed" we mean the relationship between a temporal dimension and a spatial dimension (so many meters per second, so many seconds per meter): the speed of a narrative will be defined by the relationship between a duration (that of the story, measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years) and a length (that of the text, measured in lines and in pages). (87-88)

The analysis must be done on a "macroscopic level, that of large

narrative units, granting that the measurement for each unit covers only a statistical approximation" (88) so that the rhythm of a narrative can be studied.

Now, Genette's work with Proust, which serves as the running example in his book, presents unique challenges for narrative discourse study, due to the atypical nature of Proust's novel's construction. The linearly structured nineteenth-century novel cannot be as usefully analyzed through application of Genette's terms as thus defined; however, modification of these terms, attempting to retain the overall sense of their intention to study the construction of the storytelling in relation to the story being told, provides a useful forum for judging the narrative pace or "speed" of linear novels. Thus, Genette's term "frequency" is redefined here to mean the number of times that our above units D, N, C, and A are alternated within a given portion of Braddon's text (chapter, installment, volume or novel as a whole) while duration indicates the lengths of these units in approximate wordage. The purpose of this sort of parsing is to demonstrate that the relationship of frequency to duration is quite different between the "higher" and "lower" texts in phase one of Braddon's experiment.

I wish to attribute this phenomenon to basic structural differences between the genres of melodrama and serious drama (read "popular" and "art" here too) that Braddon was exploring. I believe that this sort of temporal manipulation is clearly demonstrated in the separation of the outcasts into henry dunbar

and "Lost and Found" in the second phase of her project, and it is almost entirely absent from the two texts that constitute the third phase which in some way accounts for their being less distinguishable into "higher" and "lower" than any of the other pairs. Thus, the temporal manipulation in conjunction with the focus on a plot driven by character traits rather than incident, and the degree of linguistic hyperbole will provide the framework for discussing of Braddon's work. Therefore, in the following chapter, I propose to carefully parse selected sections of John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory to expose the frequency/duration ratio, before then extrapolating from this to their overall structure.

In addition to using the story's pace to illustrate the differences between melodrama and serious drama, I will also examine the extent to which incident or character traits drive the plot as well as the depth of characterization overall. It should become clear that in eleanor's victory the characters in general, and Eleanor in particular, are stock characters driven by their circumstances and displaying only shallow "growth," which is achieved abruptly through contrived development; by contrast, the conflicts in John Marchmont's Legacy arise clearly from Olivia's inner struggle between her intense sense of "Christian duty" and her hopeless love, as well as from and Edward's "coming of age" through adversity.

In her April 13th letter, Braddon recalls that Bulwer-Lytton had once told her that "the strongest & safest point in a story or a play is domestic interest--that is to say the

position of a man & wife as compared to that of lovers"

("Devoted" 12) and that her focal point has always reflected this advice. This is sound reasoning, since any untoward action on the part of a husband or wife would involve harsher social penalties and produce more far-reaching consequences. The unmarried person's behavior was strictly regulated by social codes. Their actions were overseen by watchful and careful relatives in a sort of apprenticeship style. The stewardship of "The Family" would extend to guidance in education, career choices, and approval of a potential spouse with such a degree of control that it was often reinforced through legal channels in the form of entails to estates, marriage settlement contracts, and legacies. Disowning a child had very real meaning, and its threat curbed many an impulse. The married couple enjoyed much more freedom in regards to their living style and much less direct interference from "The Family" in their daily decisions. It was expected that the husband had passed into the realm of sobriety from whence he directed and protected his wife, correcting any of her faults as necessary. The wife in turn governed her household servants and children by the husband's proxy, leading by good example in a well-regulated household. Thus each marriage partner was called on to exercise great personal responsibility in the ordering of their lives since so many other's lives depended on their choices.

In this age of public living due to the omnipresence of servants, domestic failings were quickly communicated to an interested audience and just as quickly atoned for or "wrapped

up in clean linen" as much as possible. Poor choices led to domestic disturbance to varying degrees; the higher the degree, the more society became aware of it and reacted. Serious breaches in conduct resulted in social doors firmly closing, a sort of death in life. Still, the position of wife or husband provided the autonomy necessary for making poor choices on a more frequent basis and for the friction of people under the threat of exposure, especially for wives who were so very dependent on the good graces of their husbands.

Braddon's letter "ventures to hope" that Bulwer-Lytton will think John Marchmont's Legacy better written than Lady Audley or Aurora Floyd, noting that they are both sold "I think at the highest rate to be screwed out of a publisher for the class of book I can write" ("Devoted" 13). She had, in fact, scored somewhat of a coup in regards to the serialization of eleanor's victory by getting about 4 guineas per page for it from Once a Week. Customarily, novelists received from between £2 and £4 per page for serial rights with the higher amounts going to the author with more drawing power (Hatley 16). Sometimes the first one or two installments received a higher rate than subsequent text and some editors were more generous than others, but Braddon's 4 guineas was fairly out of the ordinary. Because Once a Week was trying to reverse its circulation figures' slippage, it hooked its wagon to Braddon's star despite that fact that editor Samuel Lucas had voiced his condemnation of "popular novelists such as Mary E. Braddon or Harriet Beecher Stowe or Charles Kingsley, and he chided the

Dickens-Charles Reade-Wilkie Collins school of fiction for 'writing with one eye on the Victorian theater'" (Hatley 12-13). Apparently he learned to hold in abeyance his vexation while paying £750 for the months eleanor's victory was boosting his circulation embellished with the fine engraved illustrations that Once a Week always lavished on its readers.

Braddon tells Bulwer-Lytton that at £2,000 each John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory will earn her enough money "to keep me & my mother for the rest of our lives, & I will then [emphasis in original] try & write for Fame & do something more worthy to be laid on your altar" ("Devoted" 13). She fears,

I shall never write a genial [emphasis in original] novel. The minute I abandon melodrama, & strong, coarse painting in blacks & whites, I seem quite lost & at sea. Perhaps this is because I have written nothing but serials, which force one into overstrained action in the desire to sustain the interest. ("Devoted" 13)

So it seems that early on in her experiment Braddon has nagging doubts about either her ideas and abilities or her medium or both. She is always feeling the pressure of earning money and the compromises that this necessitates. The strain of serving the competing masters of audience, editor, Bulwer-Lytton and herself must have hindered rather than helped her.

CHAPTER 4

Phase One

John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory

In this chapter I propose to carry out a careful, detailed textual comparison of the first pair of novels in Braddon's experiment.

According to the principles of inductive reasoning and the tenants of "scientific method," sampling a body of material in order to analyze the whole must be done according to certain rules so that the sample is statistically reliable. The summaries of these rules are taken from Marlys Mayfield's Thinking for Yourself: Developing Critical Thinking Skills Through Reading and Writing, a rhetoric text from which I teach. Her chapter on inductive reasoning states, in part,

The greater the size of the sample...the greater is the probability of that sample being representative of the whole of a class....The more representative the sample is of a class, the more likely it is that accurate conclusions will be drawn about the class from the sample....If statistical evidence is offered, it should be offered in sufficient detail to permit verification. (282)

These three principles were the guidelines I followed to select the sections for parsing, so that the analysis of John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory could fall into the category of statistically reliable data. The discussion below

outlines the parameters of sample selection before beginning the sampling process itself and the analysis of them.

Due to the length differences in publication installments, the samples for comparison of John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory are based upon approximate word count with consideration for chapter divisions rather than strict installment divisions. The one-volume text of John Marchmont's Legacy used here contained approximately 500 words per page for a total of about 200,000 words, while the text of eleanor's victory, set in triple-decker format, contained approximately 200 per page, yielding roughly 184,000 words. The latter novel is 9% shorter than the former. In order to attain a balance of the four novelistic components defined in Chapter 3, samples were selected with the overall rhetorical structures common to most nineteenth-century novels in mind. Generally, the beginning chapters' purpose of exposition is accomplished through a heavily descriptive construction of the status quo leading up to the inciting incident that begins the rising action. The final chapters' purpose as denouement is achieved most usually through narrative passages which unravel the dramatic complications and establish a new status quo. The middle portion of a nineteenth century novel commonly contains a mixture of descriptive, narrative, connective, and authorial comment that more nearly represents the majority of the text.

In order to most equitably compare the two books, the samples taken were 80,400 words of John Marchmont's Legacy and 80,100 of eleanor's victory, less than ½ % difference. This

makes the sample-to-book ratio of 40% for John Marchmont's Legacy and 44% for eleanor's victory, which should be enough to project fairly accurate percentages of each element for the whole novel. The samples consisted of the first 25,400 and last 24,000 words of John Marchmont's Legacy, the first 24,400 and last 25,000 words of eleanor's victory, and a section of 31,000 words of John Marchmont's Legacy and 30,500 words of eleanor's victory from the center portion of each novel. The following chart locates the samples in relation to their composite chapters and places them within their installment format.

John Marchmont's Legacy

eleanor's victory

[Chapters]*

{Installments}

Sample 1:

[1,2,3]	[4,5,6]		[1,2]	[3,4]	[4]	[5,6]
{1}	{2}		{1}	{2}	{3}	{4}

Sample 2:

[20,21,22]	[23,24,25]		[26]	[27,28]	[29,30]	[31,32]
{7}	{8}		{14†}	{15}	{16}	{17}
				[33,34]	[35,36]	[37,38]
				{18}	{19}	{20}

Sample 3:

[40,41]	[42,43,Epilogue]		[52]	[53,54]	[55,56]
{13}	{14}		{27†}	{28}	{29}
				[57,58]	[59]
				{30}	{31}

* For easier comparison, eleanor's victory's chapters have been converted from the triple-decker format, wherein each volume resumes chapter numbers with 1, to what they would be in the single volume format.

† Indicates the second half of the installment.

Each sample was individually analyzed to discover the differences between the "art" novel and the "popular" novel in regards to the proportional relations of the four types of materials to each other. Additionally, totaling the sampling provided a blueprint of differences between the novels. The working hypothesis was that the "popular" novel would rely more heavily upon narrative action than the "art" novel, both overall and within each sample, which, indeed, the statistical analysis supports. As expected, the majority of the two texts consisted of descriptive or narrative material in varying ratios to each other while the connective material and authorial comment was proportionally small as shown by the analysis as presented below.

D=Descriptive N=Narrative C=Connective A=Authorial

John Marchmont's Legacy

	<u>Sample 1</u>	<u>Sample 2</u>	<u>Sample 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
D	63%	38%	43%	48%
N	24%	55%	49%	43%
C	11%	7%	7%	8%
A	2%	0%	1%	1%

eleanor's victory

	<u>Sample 1</u>	<u>Sample 2</u>	<u>Sample 3</u>	<u>Total</u>
D	37%	23%	20%	26%
N	62%	66%	66%	65%
C	0%	10%	13%	8%
A	1%	1%	1%	1%

Before discussing these findings in the holistic sense, I wish to consider the samples individually in light of not only the ratio of narrative to descriptive, but the phenomenon of frequency outlined in Chapter 3, that is the number and arrangement of segments of descriptive, narrative, connective, and authorial passages within a sample segment. Predictably, considering the overall tendency of melodrama to interrupt its storyline more often than more artistic novels, the frequency of change is 9½ higher in eleanor's victory than in John Marchmont's Legacy. Interestingly, the interruption ratio is higher in John Marchmont's Legacy than in eleanor's victory in sample one; but in samples two and three, as expected, John Marchmont's Legacy is interrupted significantly less than eleanor's victory. More significant than the sheer numbers of interruptions is the sequence of the 4 types (narrative, descriptive, connective, authorial) of text within each segment. This sequencing taken along with the frequency of change and the ratios charted above provides clues to what Braddon considered as structural differences between the "artistic" and "popular" novels--the skeletal framework upon which the muscle of character vs. incident-driven plot was hung and the cruder or more refined skin tones of language covered.

SAMPLE ONE

The initial installment of Braddon's first "higher" novel of the 1863 set was John Marchmont's Legacy which concentrated,

in part one, on the introduction of the Marchmonts, father and pre-pubescent daughter, living in poverty, and of Edward Arundel, second son of the landed gentry, enthusiastic seventeen-year-old destined for the army. The first 1,350 words of Braddon's book laboriously diagram the background of the Arundel family and its marriages, up to Edward's birth, while this young man is on an outing to the theater. Thus, the book begins in the descriptive mode in the illusory world of Drury Lane Theatre wherein "the tragedy was the dull production of a distinguished literary amateur" that "even the great actor who played the principal character could not make...particularly enlivening" (John Marchmont's Legacy 8). Coupling the pedigree recitation with the ponderous drama set in medieval times establishes the expectation of a leisurely, if not potentially torpid, pace for the following text, as well as establishing the importance of the family and all of its compulsory roles and responsibilities as a thematic motif.

Braddon switches to a narrative mode for the next 2,650 words as Edward and his cousin endure the fifth act in anticipation of the pantomime to follow. When idly scanning the chorus and back recesses of the stage, Edward discovers his old tutor, John Marchmont, now a supernunnary in a shabby costume with an ominous hacking cough. As Edward takes action to obtain a word with John, the gentleman-scholar whose life has been shattered by dismissal from his teaching position, the death of his wife and his deteriorating health, Braddon sketches the grit behind the glitz of the stage in light but perceptive touches.

She describes such details as John's costuming, the stage manager's behavior, and backstage conventions. Edward, gaining access to John during a break between entrances, renews the acquaintance and is invited to partake of breakfast at Marchmont's lodgings the next morning. After the languid action upon the stage, the controlled chaos backstage, with its curious mixture of hurry-up-and-wait unfamiliarity to both Edward and the reader, serves to accelerate the story's pace, if only slightly and briefly, before the end of the chapter.

In chapter 2, the scene shifts to a description of young Mary Marchmont's preparations for their guest, a delicate exercise of balance between her slim budget and the proprieties of middle-class mores. Braddon spends nearly 2,700 words upon the task of painting Mary, the poverty surrounding her and her mental anxieties about the breakfast. Her sense of anticipation tends to retard the pace again but not completely back to its opening level. Momentarily the pace of things speeds up again upon Edward's subsequent arrival and grows more rapid through the consumption of the fare. Mary's careful economy is destroyed in less than 600 words. After this brief narrative section, Chapter 3 embarks upon a 3,000 word description of John Marchmont's extremely distant prospects for inheriting the family property. These are described first during an after breakfast walk, then in a letter to Edward after he has thrust some lucre into poor John's hand as he jumps into a cabriolet to go home, inwardly determined to be of further use to the Marchmonts. Braddon takes great pains to represent the

torturous reasoning of the Marchmont entail while reproducing the exact text of this legal instrument, which goes on for some 1,000 words without benefit of a period.

The final third of the chapter utilizes connective material to convey Edward's procurement of a position as law clerk for John, which raises his standard of living substantially. Mary and John no longer have to practice extreme economy and John's health improves. During this section, time is elided and the scenes shift location several times. The winter of 1838 passes with Edward returning to his tutor, Mary and John settling into their better living, and some only slightly improbable circumstances occurring to bring John closer to the idealized estate, although he is blithely unaware of this fact.

The connective material is briefly interrupted by 300 words of authorial comment upon the subject of mystery through reference to Wilkie Collins' character Dr. Fell and Charles Dickens' Uriah Heep. This passage's interpolation between this connective material and the beginning of Chapter 4's long connective passage detailing Edward's two years of preparation to enter the East India Company serves as grounding for John's unfounded aversion to his cousin Paul, while it anchors the reader to the events in England, signaling that the action will remain with the Marchmonts rather than following Edward to the sub-continent. The connective material of Chapter 4 is also briefly interrupted by a narrative in which Edward takes leave of Mary and she begins her fretting about Edward's overseas

welfare.

Since Chapter 4 is the beginning of John Marchmont's Legacy's second installment, Braddon is bound to speed the action up from its leisurely beginning. She has "hooked" her readers into caring about the main characters so that now she is obliged to have something happen to them, but not a great deal of something just yet. She is still in the development stage with her characters and their situations cannot change drastically until further into the story. She still has a central figure, Olivia, to introduce, but must transform the scene around John, Mary, and Edward gradually enough for physical growth to occur. John's finances improve through the clerk's position's intermediate step rather than the sudden acquisition of the Marchmont estate.

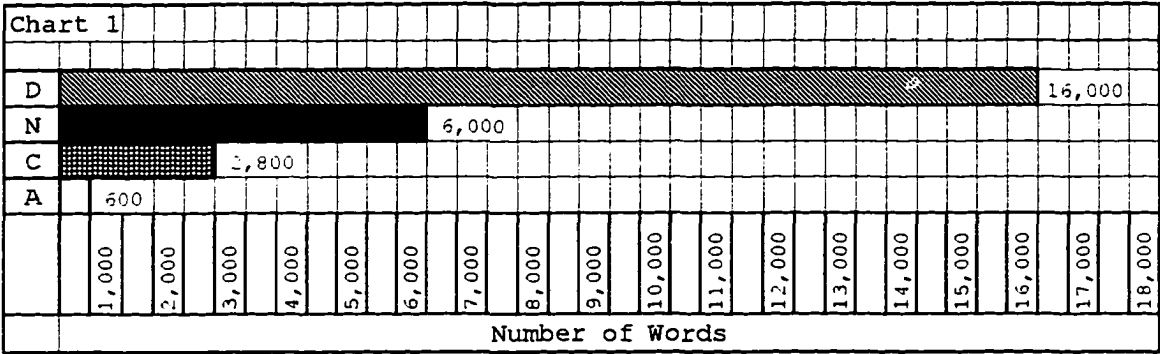
To improve too quickly would be to introduce the element of fantasy or melodrama too strongly and risk the plot's driving the characters rather than the other way around as Braddon was consciously attempting to do. But, simultaneously, she is obliged to feed her readers some action, some change, some time passage to keep their interests up. The use of connective interrupted by brief narration allows her to do this economically in much the same way a film uses the montage technique; in other words, there is the illusion of action due to the presentation of brief vignettes. Each vignette has very little action within it, but their close juxtaposition and rapid presentation simulate action on a broader scale.

Once she has satisfied her readers' thirst for some

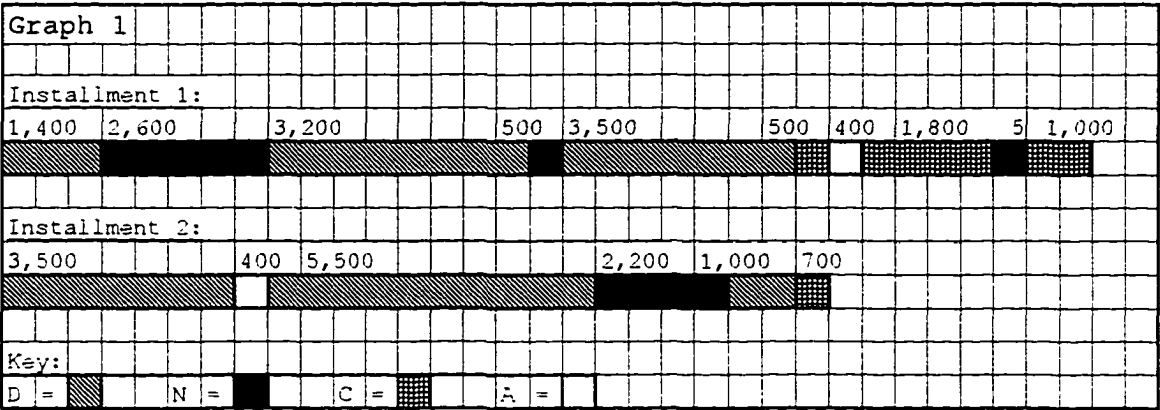
action, Braddon is able to interpolate a very lengthy passage describing the Marchmont Towers estate in minute detail. She must carefully establish this setting as the primary focus for the remainder of the novel to emphasize its worth as the object of desire for Paul Marchmont and the living hell endured by Mary and Olivia. Eight thousand words constitute Chapter 5's extensive recounting of John's discovering the item in the Times that informs him of his good fortune, a leisurely tour of the Tower's environs, and Mary's reaction to this grandiose elevation in fortune. Only a brief authorial referral to The Castle of Otranto as an allusion to possible dark forces at the Towers interrupts the description.

The final chapter of this installment, and our sample, is divided between a lively 2,300 word narration of Edward's return on furlough from India, a short, 1,000 word, descriptive passage concerning the rectory at which his cousin Olivia goes about her weary duties, and to 300 words of connective material wherein six weeks of Edward's stay at the Towers is hurried over. Thus, through six chapters--two installments--no crime has even been hinted at. The deaths that have occurred have been offstage and very much of natural causes, and to characters that the reader has only heard of in the third person. The main characters have been lifted out of their poverty into the lap of luxury over a span of years, not days, and the main characters have merely begun to be developed. There is a sense of anticipation, of a love triangle evolving, of John's imminent death and a possible threat from the mysterious cousin Paul to tantalize us into

picking up the next number when it is issued, but the overall pace of the story has remained sedate, like a trotting horse. This has been accomplished by the lopsided proportion of descriptive material to narrative, as can be seen in the following summary in which the relative numbers of types of words are compared:



The first installment has interpolated two narrative sections into the descriptive section while the second installment has prefaced its lengthy descriptive passage with connective material briefly interrupted by direct authorial intrusion and narrative portions and followed it with a narrative/descriptive/connective string. Visually stated, the sample segment would look like this:



Thus, the interruptions to the descriptive passages act as leavening does in bread dough, to lighten the mass and give it shape while its texture is developing. The converse situation is occurring in the structure of the first sample of eleanor's victory, wherein the descriptive passages serve to interrupt the break-neck pace of the narrative in the same way that punching a dough down and kneading it arrests one rising and prepares bread for the next one.

The first installment of eleanor's victory introduces fifteen-year-old Eleanor as she is making the Channel crossing, all alone, to join her father in Paris. She arrives at the Paris train terminal only to fall into the arms of flamboyant George Mowbray Vandeleur Vane, onetime bosom friend of the Prince Regent and now the down-at-the-heels pensioner of his grumblingly tight-fisted eldest daughter, Mrs. Bannister. The majority of this background material is related during Braddon's 3,200 word narrative of Eleanor's Channel crossing and train ride to Paris. Only a 600 word descriptive passage in which Eleanor answers a fellow passenger's questions to explain how she has left school due to financial problems and that she shall support her dear papa herself, briefly interrupts this segment.

Chapter 2 details Vane's shabby rooms in a 2,200 word descriptive passage, slowing down the story's pace only fractionally since the action of their settling Eleanor in and the reading of Hortensia Bannister's letter is embedded within the passage. Vane seems unable to comprehend why his eldest children by his first marriage should be so cruel to him just

because he has wasted their patrimony among the three fortunes he has run through. Vane is determined to "do right" by Eleanor to show his contempt for Mrs. Bannister's patronage. Much of this segment is told in lively style through dialogue between father and daughter before Braddon slips into a narrative passage in which Vane agitatedly reacts to the letter like a second-rate tragedian, then serves a small repast. He is still ranting against the accusations in the letter as he falls to sleep so that this first installment ends upon an action note.

The second installment is nearly all descriptive of Vane's life from his cradle to the present moment. Its 4,700 words are interrupted only by 200 words of authorial comment upon Regency beaux and ladies' extravagance in general, and Vane's history is so very colorful that the passage resembles narrative although its function is clearly to relate background information. It is character painting of a vivid, likable rogue who is his own worst enemy which sets up the lengthy narrative passage that follows without retarding the story's pace perceptibly. Braddon packs in Vane's running through three fortunes and two wives while outlining the reasons for his expectation of Maurice de Crespigny's fortune, his reduction to hand-to-mouth charity, and Eleanor's haphazard upbringing so that this passage, covering 60 years, occupies only the time in the story that Eleanor and her father are asleep.

The third installment begins with the next morning's awakening and preparation for their promenade through the Paris boulevards on their way to collect Mrs. Bannister's proffered

funds. The installment consists of the 5,600 words of Chapter 4 which is all presented in the narrative mode. The reader strolls with the pair all around Paris, sups with them at their economical banquet that evening and meets with them two shabby-flashy gentlemen, one French and one English, who persuade Vane to come with them for a game of ecarte. Eleanor only catches a glimpse of the latter's face. Vane's supreme weakness is played upon so that he leaves Eleanor to find her way back home alone. This narration is punctuated with lively conversation between the girl and her father and several minor incidents that enhance the reader's perception of both the city and its inhabitants while a sense of suspense builds. We are sure that Vane is going to lose Eleanor's tuition money so that at each skirmish, we expect trouble but are denied its occurrence until the next installment.

The narrative continues into Chapter 5--the beginning of Installment 4--when Eleanor, on her way home, has a chance meeting with an old friend from England, the scene painter Richard Thornton, who is in Paris upon assignment to pirate a French play and copy its scenery for production back home. After a 600-word description of who he is, Braddon resumes the narrative mode as Thornton sees Eleanor home. The rest of Installment 4 chronicles her waiting up in vain for her father's return. The passage details the weary hours of worry through the technique of focusing upon the passage of pedestrians along the street outside Vane's lodgings. These become less numerous as the night wears on so Braddon pulls the focus into the room

where Eleanor counts the quarter struck by local clocks, reads fitfully, and thinks about the two men who met her father earlier. Dawn breaks at the end of this chapter "but there were no signs of the coming of George Vane with the morning sunlight; and as the day grew older and brighter, the anxious face of the pale watcher at the open window only grew paler and more anxious" (eleanor's victory 115). Braddon's not allowing Eleanor to fall asleep lends a forward momentum to the waiting. Time drags on her hands but is neither completely represented to the reader, thus slowing down the pace, nor artificially elided through the device of sleep. The reader's experience then imitates that of Eleanor but time flows intact from one dawning to the next in this segment.

Since the beginning of the book, no time has been elided, and only flashbacks have been utilized to fill in expositional material. The narrative and descriptive passages have alternated with each other with only one tiny interruption by authorial commentary. No connective material has been utilized so that the pace of the story has been relentlessly steady.

In Installment 4, Braddon begins with a 1,000 word description to familiarize the reader with Richard Thornton. The switch to Thornton's point of view only barely slows the pace, as it serves to increase the tension and mystery. When Thornton walks to the Paris morgue to sketch it for a backdrop, the mode returns to narrative. Around sunset, he has made a gruesome discovery, and, as the installment ends, he encounters Eleanor outside of the morgue searching for her father:

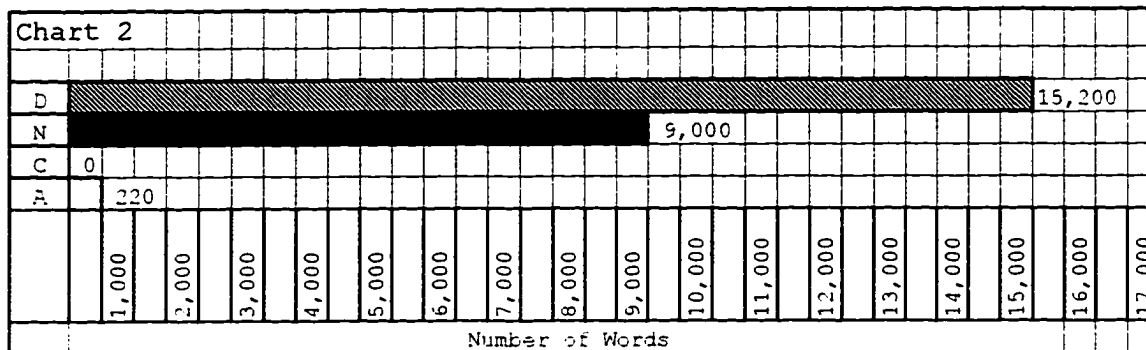
Not more than half a dozen yards from the Morgue he came suddenly upon the lonely figure of a girl, whose arm rested on the parapet of the bridge, and whose pale face was turned towards the towers of Notre Dame.

She looked up as he approached, and called him by his name.

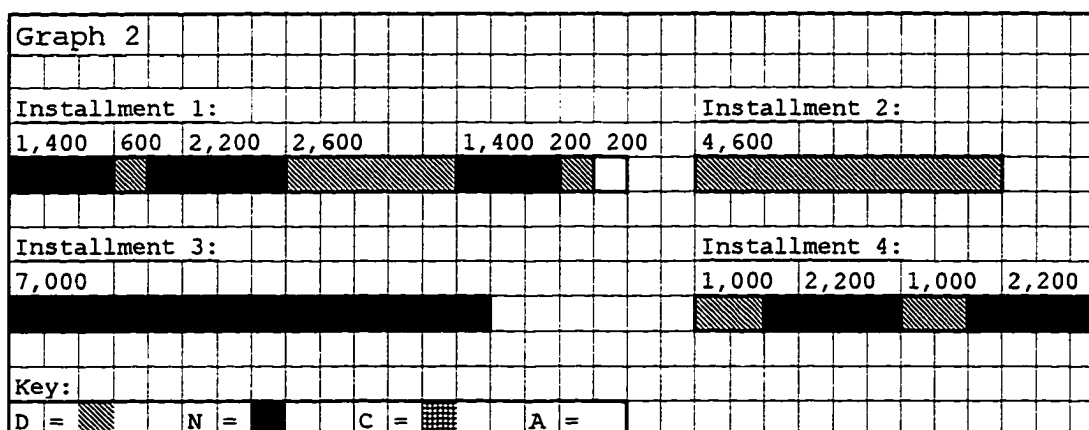
"You here, Eleanor?" he cried. "Come away, child; come away, for pity's sake." (1:129)

By ending on this imperative note and not revealing either Eleanor's reaction to Richard's entreaty or the cause of his distress, Braddon has left the narrative in mid-beat, providing quite an enticing incentive for her readers to pick up the next installment. It is not hard to guess who Richard has recognized in the morgue, but confirmation of it must wait.

Thus, by the end of March, after only six chapters of eleanor's victory, we readers have already witnessed the main crime of the novel around which the succeeding text revolves. We have traveled across the Channel with a naive fifteen-year-old girl and met glamour and squalor cheek to jowl, ambling through the gas-lit streets of Paris in the company of a bathetic old roué who, shortly after introduction, abruptly dies, leaving her completely defenseless. Braddon has managed this through a ratio of narrative to descriptive material that is almost the opposite of that used in John Marchmont's Legacy, as can be seen in the following chart:



The pace of this segment is a gallop alternated with a canter as narrative and descriptive succeed each other. The first and last installments have more of a mixture of N and D, while the middle two installments consist wholly of either one or the other mode. Visually, the sample can be shown this way:



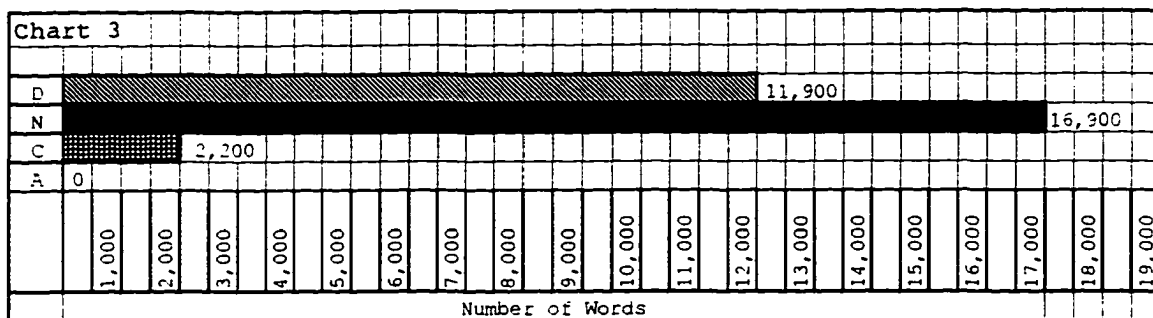
The most prominent feature of this sample is that the entire action takes place over three consecutive days. The text generates a feeling of high-pressure momentum that pulls the audience along relentlessly. The young heroine has been abruptly reunited with then separated from her traditional provider/protector and left in a much more perilous position than her counterpart in John Marchmont's Legacy. There has been almost no time spent on character painting and development

except for the one character who will no longer grace its pages directly, George Vane. The story has begun episodically, shifted scenes quickly and seems somewhat directionless at this juncture. In John Marchmont's Legacy, we perceive that the story will concern a struggle over the Towers and unrequited love, but in eleanor's victory we are left hanging with no more tangible story foundation than the vague notion of finding out just what has happened (murder?), who has done it (the two strangers?), and what will happen to Eleanor (destitution?)

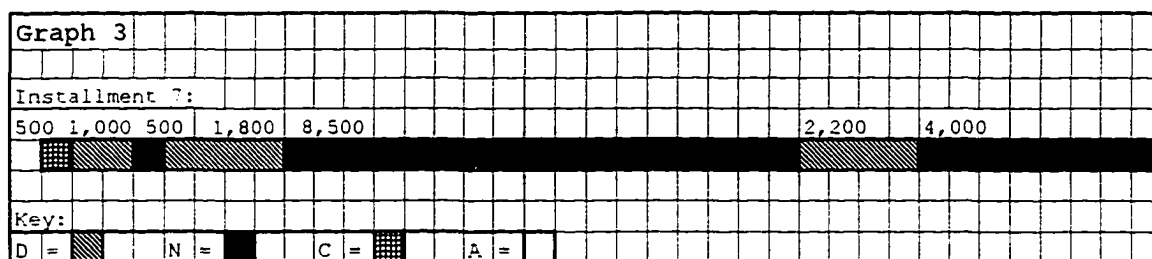
SAMPLE TWO

Our examination of the second and third samplings will look at the differences in percentage and sequencing of the D,N,C,A elements without relating the allied plot development quite as thoroughly as before. Demonstrating the pace differentials between the two novels is more important than what is actually being conveyed within the tale. So the discussion here, and for sample three, will be focused upon presentation of the raw data and its comparison with the previous sample.

Overall, John Marchmont's Legacy's Descriptive/Narrative ratio changes from 63%/24% to 33%/55%. The Connective element is down to 7% from 11% previously and direct Authorial address has disappeared altogether.



The number of changes from one mode to another is one less than in sample one, a total of 15, and they occur more frequently in the second installment than the first, corresponding with the difference in pace between the two installments. Installment 7's pace is noticeably faster than Installment 8's, in part due to the preponderance of narrative material in 7 and its fewer interruptions. The sequencing looks like this:



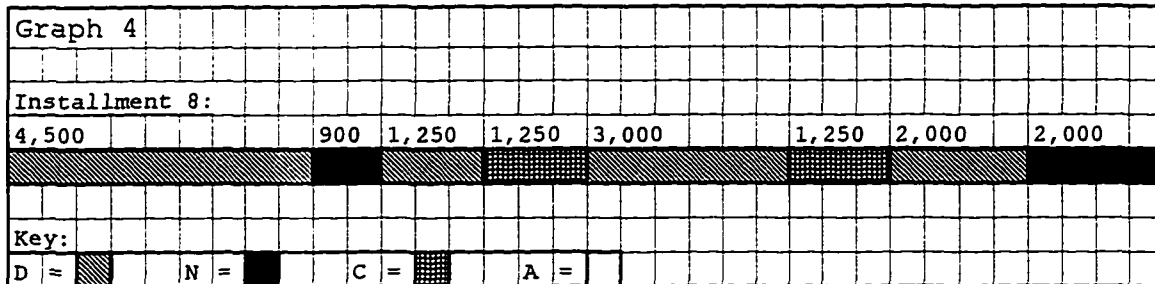
A major turning point has occurred with Edward's railway accident at the end of the previous installment so that Installment 7 (Chapters 10, 11 and 12) begins with a 200-word connective segment that shifts the reader three months ahead and onto a speeding train. There is a description of Edward's injuries, his presently weak condition, and the recounting of his initial recovery that runs 2,500 words with a 400-word narrative interruption representing a carriage ride from the station to the Towers. Again, since Braddon uses the backdrop

of traveling, these descriptive passages do not slow down the pace. We readers are very anxious to learn how Edward has recovered and are as eager as he to be reunited with Mary. The bulk of this installment is narrative in form, with roughly 11,000 words as compared to 2,500 words of descriptive material. Edward's arrival at the Towers and his highly-charged interview with Olivia and only slightly less intense interview with Paul Marchmont are all presented in narrative, with only a 1,000 word description of Mary's return to the Towers and subsequent disappearance interrupting. The suspense of our finding out about Mary as seemingly slowly and frustratingly as Edward does increases rather than diminishes as Edward moves from person to person to gather their pieces of the puzzle.

The extremely long narration includes much physical movement, highly-pitched verbal exchanges, and mental hand wringing. Its tone is frantic and forceful, echoing Edward's determination not to collapse at this critical time.

Braddon is in the position of having to appear to have a great deal of action happen but have Edward be as much in the dark about Mary after his investigation as he was while he lay in a coma after the train wreck. The mystery of Mary's disappearance is not due to be solved until the very end of the novel so illusion of action heightens the suspense without forwarding the plot discernibly. This installment was the beginning of Volume 2 of the triple-decker version so that a flurry of activity was required from that structural viewpoint also.

Installment 8 slows the pace down again by reverting to more description than narration and utilizing connective material to jump ahead in time at two points. It charts this way:



Braddon, having satisfied the reader's need for movement/action, can focus more on descriptions of how Edward's investigation affects those at the Towers, his own overwhelming grief, and his growing suspicions that Paul Marchmont is behind Mary's disappearance, if not her death. We seem to be being prepared for a long period of waiting and scrounging for tiny clues embedded within lengthy descriptions for the next third or so of the novel.

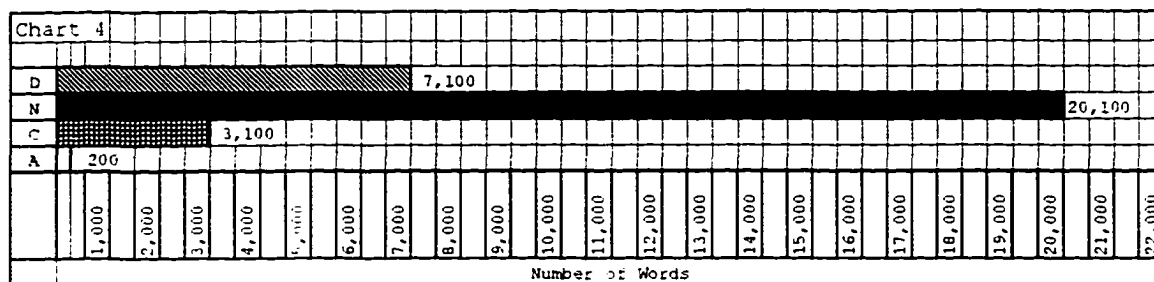
During this sample, Braddon is extensively developing Edward's character, first through his actions and conversations, then more slowly through his inward musings and overhearing what others say about him. The man of action is forced into a waiting and spying game that ill suits his nature and habits. Attention is lavished upon Olivia's character as she copes with Edward's frustration and her own smoldering anger and feelings of rejection. We see her coldly rigid treatment of Mary drive the girl from the Towers for a second time in the novel in the

passages, both narrative and descriptive, recounting the three months that Edward has been in a coma. The sample dwells upon Edward's despair after an unsatisfactory but not confrontational interview with Paul Marchmont in the riverside painting room. The scene is narrative in mode but very low-key. The conversation is speculative, and Olivia, who is present, ends the segment by quietly declaring "I can never leave this place till I leave it in my coffin. I am a prisoner here for life" (John Marchmont's Legacy 256), a statement which articulates the position of practically every other person living at or near the Towers. This morose declaration serves as a conversation stopper as well as signaling the grinding halt of this narrative passage.

Thus, after a whirlwind 7th installment, the 8th one ends upon an image of total inaction that reinforces the overall mood of mourning and depression and the seasons of late fall and early winter which is the time frame of this segment, while it structurally sets up the next few installments' languorous pace. Braddon's plot dictates that enough time must pass for the unseen Mary's baby to be born, Paul to take over the Towers a year after Mary's disappearance, and for Edward to decently mourn his lost love so that he can fall in love again without unbecoming haste. These ends necessitate a delicate time elision that connective material is less suited to handle than the lengthy descriptive passages that dominate the portion of the book between samples two and three.

The change in D,N,C and A ratios is much less dramatic in

sample two of eleanor's victory. Descriptive material diminishes by 14 $\frac{2}{3}$, 10% of which moves to the connective material mode and 4% of which is added to the narrative mode.

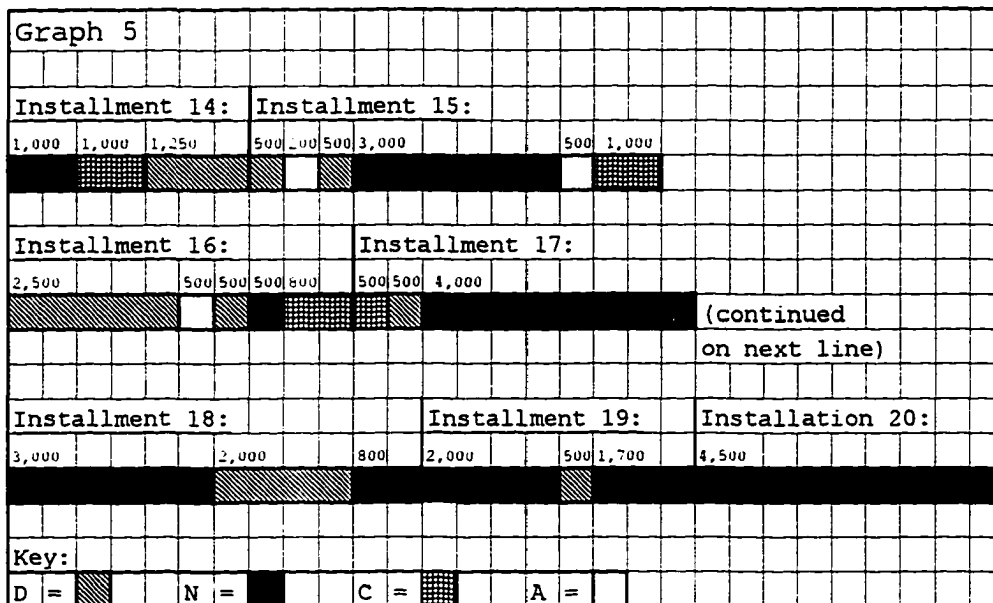


Braddon's interruption rate is up from 13 in Sample One to 19 here, which is to be expected since the novel is well into the rising action wherein complications are occurring more quickly than in Sample One. Interestingly, the mode changes do not align with chapter or installment units as much as they have previously or as they did in Sample Two of John Marchmont's Legacy. For example, one very long narrative passage straddles Installments 17 and 18 while another runs from Installments 19 and 20.

This phenomenon could be attributed to several causes, such as Braddon's composition of several installments in consecutive sittings so that this section of the story line was more holistically composed than at other times during the writing of this novel. It could also be due to her having to go back after a passage was written to arbitrarily insert chapter or installment breaks at the required word length. The latter explanation seems less likely since Braddon was quite adept at installment writing. Rather like a lecturer who comes to have an internal clock set at 50 minutes, Braddon would have come to

know when she was reaching the end of a unit. For whatever reason, the installments tend to begin in the middle of a descriptive or narrative mode that lends an additional forward impetus that complements the plot action. As in John Marchmont's Legacy, this section of eleanor's victory is supposed to be a sort of cooling off period between the inciting incident and the climax, wherein the plot becomes more complicated and characters have to fret and smolder to heighten the suspense.

The sequence of modes looks like this:



This sample comprises the second half of Volume II, less the final chapter, in the triple-decker format. The setting centers around Tolldale Priory, the estate of Gilbert Monckton, which borders upon that of Maurice de Crispigny. The action in this segment is sedate and unsensational compared to the action in Sample One. Eleanor and Gilbert's marriage is a tame affair

carried on mostly offstage. The courtship of Launcelot and Laura drifts along while Eleanor frets about how to get proof of her suspicions about Launcelot. Richard is called upon to help Eleanor, but even their finding proof in the sketch book is an anti-climax since they cannot act upon it. The further damning evidence of Launcelot's meeting with the law clerk is told indirectly by Richard rather than experienced directly by the reader and the potentially exciting discussion over marriage settlements occurs offstage so that we only see Launcelot's sulky reaction. Indeed, the most action we are given occurs at the very end of the sample when the French visitor to Launcelot appears.

Braddon is slowing down the pace of her tale even though the narrative mode is still overwhelmingly employed. The effect here is to tantalize the reader with the possibility of real action while very little actually occurs. This technique, quite familiar to viewers of daytime drama, depends upon stretching out the narrative passages by including minute detail about everyone and everything, and suggesting that there are tiny nuances of meaning to be squeezed out of even seemingly insignificant occurrences. The relation of internal thoughts and feelings is essential, as is the convention of talking at cross purposes. The chapter aptly entitled "Slow Fires," demonstrates this technique. Gilbert has mistaken Eleanor's detective-like interest in Launcelot Darrell as love, and, since their honeymoon, has been watching Eleanor closely for signs of proof. He knows that his ward Laura Mason is infatuated with

Darrell and is just convincing himself that it would not be a bad match when the scene begins:

He found his wife sitting in one of the windows of the library, with her hands lying idle in her lap, and her eyes fixed upon the garden before her. She started as he entered the room, and looked up at him with a bright eagerness in her face.

"You have been to Hazlewood?" she said.

"Yes, I have just come from there."

"And you have seen--?"

She stopped suddenly. Launcelot Darrell's name had risen to her lips, but she checked herself before uttering it, lest she should betray her eager interest in him. She had no fear of that interest being misconstrued; no idea of such a possibility had even entered her head. She only feared that some chance look or word might betray her vengeful hatred of the young man.

"You saw Laura--and--and Mrs. Darrell, I suppose?" she said.

"Yes, I saw Laura and Mrs. Darrell," answered Gilbert Monckton, watching his wife's face. He had perceived the hesitation with which she had asked this question. He saw now that she was disappointed in his reply.

Eleanor was incapable of dissimulation, and her disappointment betrayed itself in her face. She had

expected to hear something of Launcelot Darrell, something which would have at least given her an excuse for questioning her husband about him.

"You did not see Mr. Darrell, then?" she said, after a pause, during which Mr. Monckton had placed himself opposite to her in the open window. The afternoon sunshine fell full upon Eleanor's face; lighting up Eleanor's every change of expression; revealing every varying shade of thought that betrayed itself unconsciously in a countenance whose mobility was one of its greatest charms.

"No, Mr. Darrell was in his painting-room; I did not see him."

There was a pause. Eleanor was silent, scarcely knowing how to fashion any question that might lead to her gaining some information about the man whose secrets she had set herself to unravel.

"Do you know, Eleanor," said the lawyer after this pause, during which he had kept close watch upon his wife's face, "I think I have discovered a secret that concerns Launcelot Darrell."

"A secret?"

Sudden blushes lit up Eleanor Monckton's cheeks like a flaming fire.

"A secret!" she repeated. "You have found out a secret!"

"Yes, I believe that my ward, Laura Mason, has

fallen in love with the young man."

Eleanor's face changed. Her feverish eagerness gave place to a look of indifference.

"Is that all?" she said. (eleanor's victory 2:161-2)

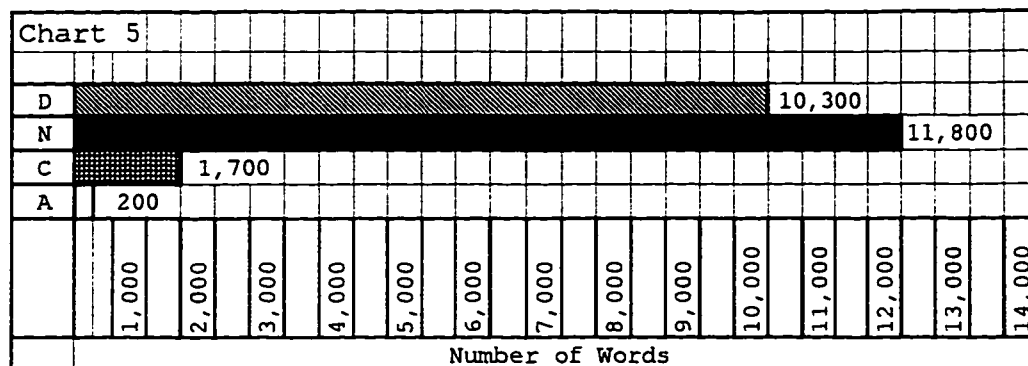
The conversation continues in this mode for several more pages resulting in nothing being decided about Launcelot and Laura except that they are a bone of contention and misunderstanding between Eleanor and Gilbert. There is no real action occurring here, only the teasing possibility that action might break out at any time, creating a "much ado about nothing" atmosphere.

Braddon must come through with action tid-bits occasionally to keep her readers from abandoning her text altogether; that is exemplified in this sample by the arrival of houseguests to liven up Priory existence and the decision by Gilbert to allow Laura to marry Launcelot. Generally, however, the sample is characterized by smoke and mirror illusion in its subject matter and its narrative techniques.

Sample Three

The pace differential between John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory is sustained in the final sections of the novels as the ratio of narrative to descriptive material resembles the pattern of Sample Two. Braddon has increased John Marchmont's Legacy's descriptive material by 5% and authorial

comment by 1% at the expense of narrative material. Connective material has remained the same as in Sample Two.



Installment 13 immediately follows the climax of the story, Olivia's revelation, just as Edward is at the altar with Belinda, that Mary is still alive, that Paul has had her hidden away and Olivia only knew about it after the fact but has kept her silence out of jealousy. Braddon abruptly jump-shifts the scene between installments so that the reader moves directly from the closing words of Olivia's announcement--"I hope that God may forgive my sins because I have been mad!" (John Marchmont's Legacy 367)--to Edward's sitting next to his wife as she sleeps in a safe place. The interval of action between these points is only slowly revealed to us as flashbacks in Edward's memory during this lengthy (6,300 word) descriptive passage. Braddon's prose echoes Edward's feeling of what is currently termed "surrealism" as Mary retells the story of her captivity, illness, and the birth of their son. She has thought Edward dead from the train wreck and so has been dangerously depressed. The chapter's explanation of the past serves as exposition much along the lines of expository passages at the

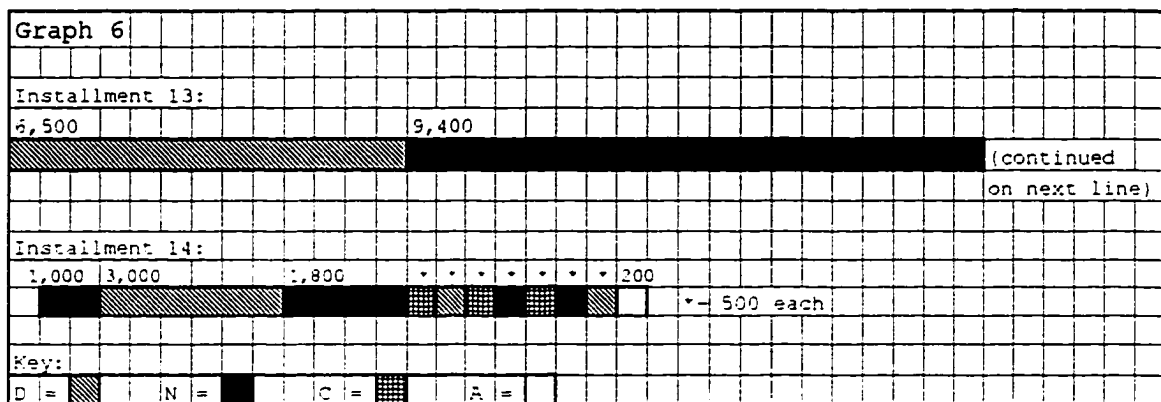
beginning of the novel and its pace is accordingly deliberate. Since Mary was the passive player during her captivity, is static while recounting it, and the narrative viewpoint is external to Mary. Mary's detailed and slow-paced description comes in a dialogue between her and Edward during which the reader is never directly allowed into her thoughts or feelings. Thus, this "external" recounting lends the passage an air of description rather than of narrative storytelling. Immediately after this dramatic highpoint, Braddon's writing also serves the function of allowing the reader to re-marshall his/her emotional energies after their excessive expenditure upon the climax.

Throughout this descriptive delay, we readers wonder what will happen to Paul. We fully expect a confrontation between the usurper of Marchmont Towers and Edward as an action scene that will accelerate the pace again. We also have been rooting for Belinda and wonder what will become of her now, so there is a sense of expectation when this chapter closes and the next one, the second half of the installment, begins. Braddon does indeed switch to narrative mode. She changes viewpoints to follow Paul around as he wraps up some loose ends before he can make his escape in a 9,300-word narrative.

Paul is in motion upon several levels that the narrative attempts to convey: physically he is moving between several locations in his buggy, mentally he is moving from his role as confident usurper to that of anxious fugitive, and emotionally he is fighting against a debilitating sense of ultimate failure that threatens to bring him to a standstill. What saves this

passage from being classified as descriptive is this sense of motion, the interactions he has with Mrs. Brown and his sister Lavinia, and his surfeit of interior monologue as he recalls the period of his trickery. Also, the narrative viewpoint is here is very much from inside Paul's thoughts, which are chaotic and conflicting, mimicking the external action.

Thus, the installments' schema looks like this:

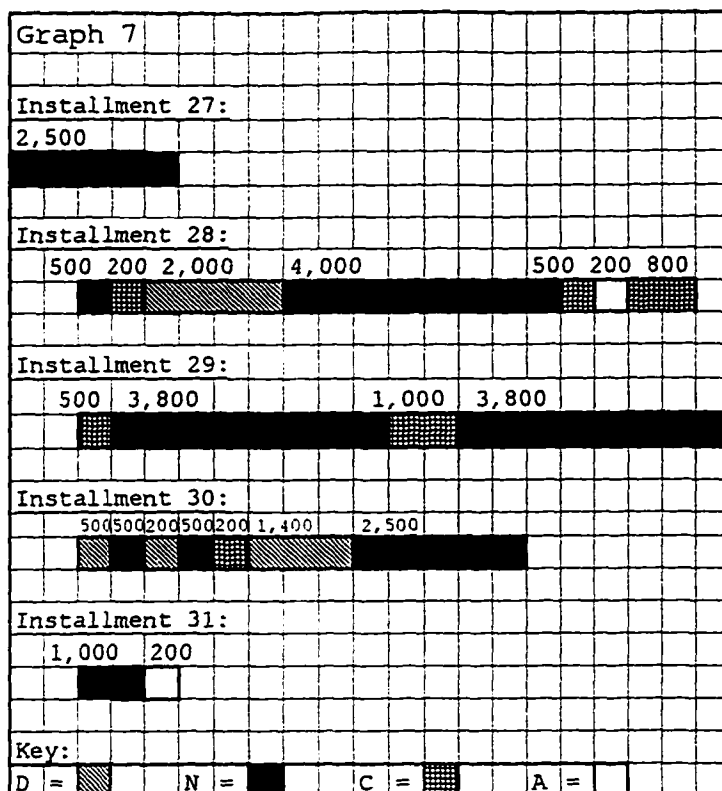


Braddon cannot let the pace drag yet, because she has these loose ends to tie up in her final installment, so 13 ends with Lavinia driving Paul back to the Towers to gather what he can before he leaves. She keeps in the narrative mode through the first few pages of the next chapter, the beginning of Installment 14. At the Towers, Paul parts from Lavinia and orders his valet to pack. Abruptly interrupting this motion, Braddon suddenly switches to a 2,800 word description of the luxurious decorations he has superintended in the various rooms of the Towers. This foregrounding of the rare art and costly furnishings intensifies the reader's sense of horror and seals Paul's characterization as dissolute when Braddon returns to a

rapid narrative of his setting fire to all of the curtains. The raging inferno that follows is the last large piece of narrative in the book. Braddon only uses 300- to 400-word narrative interlardings after this, one at Mary's death and the other when Edward returns to Belinda.

The remainder of Installment 14 is a string of interruptions with D, N and C material succeeding each other until Braddon's usual authorial comment closes out the book. There must be three connective episodes for sufficient time to be elided between the fire and Mary's death and the death and Edward's return to Belinda. This makes the story's conclusion feel hurried, as if Braddon were just tying off loose ends in a conventional way to be DONE.

eleanor's victory has a slightly more elegant structure at its very end, perhaps because Braddon ties up some loose plot threads in the penultimate installment rather than the final one. In this novel, our sample begins slightly further back structurally than in John Marchmont's Legacy due to the attempt to keep the sample sizes equal, even though the story lengths are not. Our sample begins with the second half of Installment 27 and runs through the short Installment 31 and charts thus:

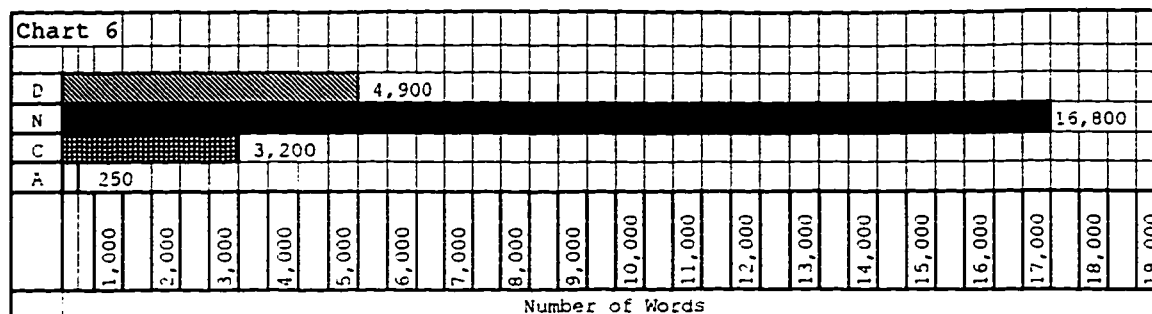


The frequency of interruption is 19% as in sample two.

Why the final installment was only 5,000 words rather than the customary 8,000 to 9,000 is unclear. Since it was customary for final installments to be placed far back in a periodical (early installments were positioned close to the front, then, at a certain point in time, yielded to newer serials by moving further back in the periodical until they were well after feature articles at the end of their run), perhaps the installment's length was much more flexible for writers. Another possibility is that this was standard practice for Once a Week, the periodical of publication for eleanor's victory.

In any case, the overall ratio of writing modes was nearly the same as in Sample Two. The only difference is that 3% of the descriptive material has been allocated to connective, as

seen here:



A twenty five hundred word narrative passage with a four hundred word connective tag constitutes Chapter 52 which is the second portion of Installment 27. The narrative relates the Lennards' disorganized household as it prepares to remove to Paris, while the connective section covers the actual journey. Installment 28 begins with a two thousand word external description of Mrs. Lennard, especially her "delinquencies," which changes into narrative format when Mrs. Lennard assumes the role of narrator and recalls her past life to Eleanor in lively terms. She turns out to be Laura Mason's mother and the cause of Gilbert Monckton's first disillusionment.

The installment ends with two connective passages serving to forward the time by a few days and to apprise the reader of Gilbert's attempts to contact Eleanor through the Times advertisements. Since the novel's focus has been away from Gilbert for quite awhile, this brief connective passage reminds us of the continuing estrangement, thus momentarily elevating the tension level, and apprises us of Gilbert's desperate remorse, lending a piquancy to the situation.

These connective segments are broken briefly by authorial

commentary upon love. Braddon observes that "even wise men do not always fall in love wisely" (eleanor's victory 229) and cites some apt examples from Bulwer-Lytton's novels. (Another pat of butter? Certainly!) The break divides the connective material so that there is a clear distinction between the time/location shift and the recounting of the concurrent events in another location during the same time period.

Installment 29 incorporates two lengthy narratives interrupted by a momentary connective section which serves to elide one week's story time and to allow Eleanor to reveal herself to the Lennards as Gilbert Monckton's wife, a fact she has heretofore withheld. The first of these narratives sets up the occasion for the second. These narrative sections are composed of three smaller inter-related episodes. The first contains the brief recognition scene at the dinner, with Bourdon's appointing five o'clock the next afternoon for a more lengthy meeting. That second encounter comprises the majority of this narrative section. In a lively dialogue, Bourdon reveals Darrell's theft of the genuine will and offers to sell it to Eleanor. When she protests that she cannot meet his price, he allows her a week to scrape it together, appointing his abode as the next meeting place. This second meeting is replete with vivid and detailed examples of what an alcoholic says and does in the throes of the delirium tremens, Eleanor's brief crying jag, and an animated search for the missing papers. This narrative, as well as the chapter and the installment, concludes with a whirlwind of activity compactly relayed in

about eighty words:

Eleanor unfolded the paper, but she only read the first few words, "I, Maurice de Crespigny, being at this time, &ct," for before she could read more, the door of the outer room was suddenly opened, and Richard Thornton hurried through into the bed-chamber.

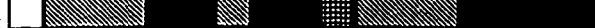
But not Richard only, behind him came Gilbert Monckton, and it was he into whose outstretched arms Eleanor flung herself.

"You will believe me now, Gilbert," she cried. "I have found the proof of Launcelot Darrell's guilt at last." (3:275-276)

This brief passage is the climax of the novel in the broadest sense, but Braddon has saved something back for the following, penultimate installment just as she did in John Marchmont's Legacy. However, she reverses the structural order from John Marchmont's Legacy and ties up loose ends before the final confrontation between Eleanor and Launcelot. This confrontation between the hero(ine) and the villain cannot be circumvented as it was by Paul's suicide in John Marchmont's Legacy. Braddon's audience in Once a Week demanded this melodramatic convention.

Installment 30 is divided into three descriptive and three narrative segments with a brief connective one serving to transport the principal characters back across the channel. Although previously charted, it behooves us to see this

1,400	600	200	600	200	1,400	2,200
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structure again: . The three descriptive segments recount how Richard and Gilbert happened to arrive when they did, to reveal the actual contents of the will, and to apprise us of Launcelot's behavior in England while our focus has been in Paris. The two briefer narratives chronicle the reconciliation of Gilbert and the Lennards and Gilbert reunion with Eleanor. The final narrative is the confrontation back at the de Crispigny estate which gives rise to the novel's title. It seems that Eleanor's "victory" is not to be over Launcelot Darrell but over her own "unnatural" and "unwomanly" desire to avenge her father's death.

Installment 31's descriptive mode paints a rosy future for all involved, for even Launcelot, after he is "cleansed" by Eleanor's sacrificial generosity in not exposing him, becomes a successful painter, and little children's voices sound out by and by at the Monckton Priory. Braddon's last paragraph is pure authorial commentary in the best approved Victorian manner:

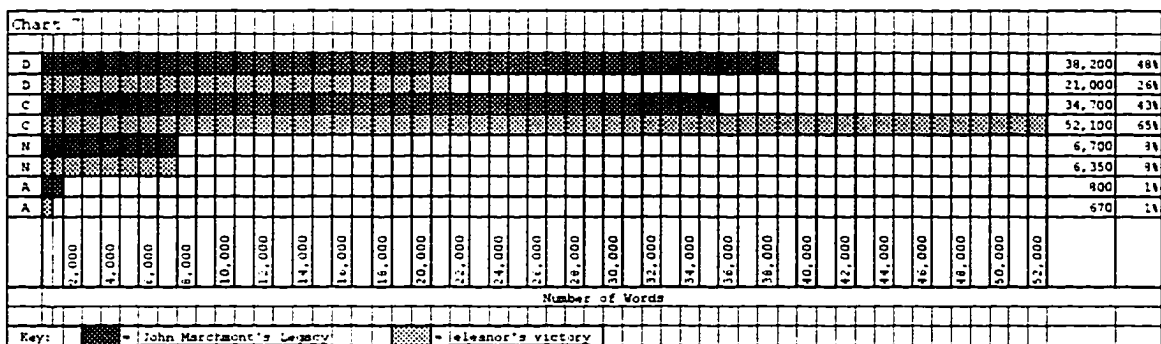
And, after all, Eleanor's Victory was a proper womanly conquest, and not a stern, classical vengeance. The tender woman's heart triumphed over the girl's rash vow; and poor George Vane's enemy was left to the only Judge whose judgments are always righteous. (3:312)

Discussion of the implications of this passage certainly constitutes fodder for other scholars or other times, for now it is time to widen and direct the focus toward what analysis of

the entire works reveals about the rhetorical structural differences between more serious fiction and melodramatic fiction.

THE LARGER PICTURE

Earlier in this chapter the raw figures for the combined samplings were charted showing the D, N, C and A modes in relation to each other and each novel. The following graph serves to refresh the memory while representing the totals in the same way each segment was presented.



The total average frequency of interruption projected for John Marchmont's Legacy is 38 and for eleanor's victory 39 which would seem to indicate that the novels differ much less in this area than had been expected. However, the fact that eleanor's victory is 9% shorter than John Marchmont's Legacy requires an adjustment in our figures. The adjusted projection reveals that the projected frequency difference is more accurately a projected average 38 for John Marchmont's Legacy and 43 for eleanor's victory.

Overall, readers can expect to have the rhetorical mode of the "popular" novel change more frequently than in the "serious" novel. The most telling statistic is the average duration of each mode. In John Marchmont's Legacy the average duration of descriptive passages is 2,388 words to eleanor's victory's 1,214 words. The average duration of narrative is higher in eleanor's victory with 2,709 to John Marchmont's Legacy's 2,479. The connective and authorial commentary materials are very nearly even.

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The pattern is best seen if we divide the duration category into those over one thousand words and those one thousand words and under. When this is done, the results show that the Descriptive passages clearly dominate John Marchmont's Legacy and the Narrative are overwhelmingly prevalent in eleanor's victory, reflecting the overall total of Descriptive to Narrative ratio in the sample summary chart above.

Descriptive:

	<u>Under 1,000</u>	<u>Over 1,000</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>John Marchmont's Legacy</u>	5 episodes	14 episodes	
19			
<u>eleanor's victory</u>	10 episodes	5 episodes	
15			

Narrative:

	<u>Under 1,000</u>	<u>Over 1,000</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>John Marchmont's Legacy</u>	6 episodes	7 episodes	
13			
<u>eleanor's victory</u>	5 episodes	15 episodes	
20			

Perhaps the most useful conclusion supported by these statistics is that Braddon's attempt to "elevate" the sensational into a more artistic sphere manifests itself in a more balanced weaving of Descriptive and Narrative elements. Overall there is only a 5% difference in Descriptive to

Narrative material and the frequency and duration of interruptions is lower, indicative of a smoother, more deliberate pace. The fact that the Narrative episodes over one thousand and under one thousand words in John Marchmont's Legacy are very nearly equal also strengthens this supposition. Perhaps she felt, or was told by Bulwer-Lytton, that audiences of a "higher" taste would more easily tolerate, if not appreciate, this balance so that each narrative episode should or could be preceded and/or followed by descriptive material that "fleshed out" the events and demonstrated that the action arose from their characteristic patterns of thinking or behaving. In short, the narrative passages might be considered to be driven by the descriptive ones rather than merely interrupted by them.

Conversely, Braddon was probably well acquainted with the tastes of her less discerning readers and instinctively kept the majority of her Descriptive passages under one thousand words, just brief sketches of persons, places, and situations rather than a finished drawing. The 39% difference between Descriptive and Narrative in eleanor's victory's elements, the 2 to 1 ratio of under to over one thousand words of Descriptive material and the 1 to 3 ratio of under to over one thousand words of Narrative material infers that Braddon knew she was expected to deliver motion, performance with dispatch. She had utilized the sensation form with its heavy dependence upon melodramatic structures successfully in the past and continued to rely upon this "familiar territory" for the Phase One money maker.

CHARACTERIZATION

In her April 13, 1863 letter, Braddon recalls that Bulwer-Lytton had once told her that "the strongest & safest point in a story or a play is domestic interest--that is to say the position of a man & wife as compared to that of lovers" ("Devoted 12) and that her focal point has always reflected this advice.

This is sound reasoning, since any untoward action on the part of a husband or wife would involve harsher social penalties and produce more far-reaching consequences. The single person's behavior was strictly regulated by social codes. Their actions were overseen by watchful and careful relatives in a sort of apprenticeship style. The stewardship of "The Family" would extend to guidance in education, career choices, and matrimonial choice-approval, with such a degree of control that it was often reinforced through legal channels in the form of entails to estates, marriage settlement contracts, and legacies. Disowning a child had very real meaning and its threat curbed many an impulse. The married couple enjoyed much more freedom with regards to their living style and much less direct interference from "The Family" in their daily decisions. It was expected that the husband had passed into the realm of sobriety from whence he directed and protected his wife, correcting any of her faults as necessary. The wife in turn governed her household servants and children by the husband's proxy leading by good

example in a well-regulated household. Thus each marriage partner was called upon to exercise great personal responsibility in the ordering of their lives since so many other's lives depended upon their choices. In this age when the wealthy lived almost in public due to the omnipresence of servants, domestic failings were quickly communicated to an interested audience and just as quickly atoned for or "wrapped up in clean linen" as much as possible. Poor choices led to domestic disturbance to varying degrees; the higher the degree, the more society became aware of it and reacted. Serious breaches in conduct resulted in social doors firmly closing, a sort of death in life.

Still, the position of wife or husband provided the autonomy necessary for making poor choices on a more frequent basis and for the friction of people under the threat of exposure, especially for wives who were so very dependent upon the good graces of their husbands.

Braddon's letter "ventures to hope" that Bulwer-Lytton will think John Marchmont's Legacy better written than Lady Audley's Secret or Aurora Floyd, noting that they are both sold "I think at the highest rate to be screwed out of a publisher for the class of book I can write" ("Devoted" 13). She had, in fact, scored somewhat of a coup with regard to the serialization of eleanor's victory by getting about 4 guineas per page for it from Once a Week. Customarily, novelists received from between £2 and £4 per page for serial rights, with the higher amounts going to the author with more drawing power (Hatley 16).

Sometimes the first one or two installments received a higher rate than subsequent text and some editors were more generous than others, but Braddon's 4 guineas was fairly out of the ordinary. Once a Week was trying to reverse its circulation figures' slippage so it hooked its wagon to Braddon's star, despite that fact that editor Samuel Lucas had voiced its condemnation of "popular novelists such as Mary E. Braddon or Harriet Beecher Stowe or Charles Kingsley, and he chided the Dickens-Charles Reade-Wilkie Collins school of fiction for 'writing with one eye on the Victorian theater'" (Hatley 12-13). Apparently he learned to hold in abeyance his vexation while paying £750 for the months eleanor's victory was boosting his circulation, embellished with the fine engraved illustrations that Once a Week always lavished upon its readers.

Braddon tells Bulwer-Lytton that at £2,000 each John Marchmont's Legacy and eleanor's victory will earn her enough money "to keep me & my mother for the rest of our lives, & I will then [emphasis in original] try & write for Fame & do something more worthy to be laid upon your altar" ("Devoted" 13). She fears,

I shall never write a genial [emphasis in original] novel. The minute I abandon melodrama, & strong, coarse painting in blacks & whites, I seem quite lost & at sea. Perhaps this is because I have written nothing but serials, which force one into overstrained action in the desire to sustain the interest. ("Devoted" 13)

So it seems that early in her experiment Braddon has nagging doubts about either her ideas and abilities or her medium or both. Always she is feeling the pressure of earning money and the compromises that this necessitates. The strain of serving the competing masters of audience, editor, Bulwer-Lytton and herself had to hinder rather than aid her.

In John Marchmont's Legacy, Braddon devotes the majority of her character-drawing energy into the development of Olivia Marchmont as a tortured soul and, thus, a complex character. The misery of her unrequited love for Edward grows as she perceives his attentions gradually converging upon Mary, bringing her strict sense of Christian duty into violent contact with her raging jealousy. When, in this fierce struggle, her jealousy overpowers her sense of duty, she verbally lashes out at Mary which causes her to run away from home twice. The first time proves to be the catalyst for Edward's marrying Mary out of hand. The second facilitates Paul Marchmont's kidnapping of Mary. Both of these occasions are major turning points in the novel.

This same struggle prompts Olivia to remain silent when, tardily, she discovers Paul's treachery, and her eventual mastery of her jealousy enables her to come forth in time to prevent Edward from committing bigamy. This dramatic act of self-abasement, which provides the novel's emotional climax, although highly dramatic, does not tax reader credulity, because Braddon has been careful to draw Olivia as a person who always does the right thing and who is highly invested in Christian and

Victorian middle-class values. She is incapable of remaining silent while the object of her affection unwittingly commits a sin against both church and state.

Olivia's character is much more carefully presented throughout the story than the next most developed player, Paul Marchmont. Early on Braddon presents his genteel poverty as a vexation to his artistic soul and the burden of supporting his mother and younger sister as a drain upon his energies. Paul has the type of mind and the sensibilities that are deeply wounded by the sordid reality of his situation, and, given a chance, he will rebel; however, he will only nudge a situation rather than contrive it and strike opportunistically rather than deliberately. These traits provide the motivation for his unctuous manner towards Olivia, the person in power at the Marchmont estate, as well as a strong incentive for sequestering Mary when the perfect occasion presents itself.

But Braddon is less successful at Paul's character than Olivia's. Perhaps this stems from her technique of allowing her readers only small glimpses into Paul's life and actions until the very end of the novel. This may have been part of her effort to create and enhance an air of sinister mystery and nebulous danger about him, but it backfires upon her when he is exposed. His blaming of Mrs. Brown for his discovery and his packing hurriedly for flight are within the realm of his character as are his attempts to provide for his mother and sister. We can even accept his complete astonishment at being caught at all since we have had earlier proofs of his mental

arrogance; however, the fact that he sets fire to Marchmont Towers in a spirit of "If I can't have it nobody can" belies his previous reverence for beauty. Even more out of character is his locking himself in with the intention of suicide by smoke inhalation. Paul Marchmont is a survivor above all things. A more plausible action would be for him to take what portables he can and run to the Continent.

The suicide by fire would be more a genuine act for Olivia as drawn. Instead, she, cleansed by her confession and truly transformed into a charitable penitent, returns to her father's parish, becoming an "angel of the hearth." Braddon was probably capitulating, as she tended to ultimately to do, to the society's demand that she uphold a conventional status quo. Paul's villainy must be punished and Olivia's repentance must be rewarded even at the cost of character verisimilitude. This may be exactly where Braddon misses her chance to become a novelist of the first rank, for in too many cases--especially with Lady Audley's Secret, John Marchmont and with The Doctor's Wife--her caving into convention negates her efforts to represent human complexity in an original and artistic manne, informed by her own world view.

Neither Paul Marchmont nor Launcelot Darrell have the fortitude to commit murder to attain their goals, and both have but to "wait it out" a little while. Launcelot never really has to face the question of murder, since Maurice de Crespigny's exit will be a natural process, but Mary's disposal requires more finesse than substituting a document. Whether he actually

kills Mary or keeps her hidden, Paul has the age-old problem of the corpus delecti.

When considered in terms of critical thinking, Paul's solution ranks higher than Launcelot's, because it involves more psychological manipulation than physical, it originates in the seizing of an unexpected opportunity in an efficient manner, and it ultimately leaves him an "out" if discovery seems imminent early on in the plan. Thus, Paul's characterization rises above the level of melodrama as exemplified by Launcelot's.

Central to the sub-genre of melodrama, especially as practiced on the Victorian stage, is the premise that the villain's crime, one of property or lust, or both if available, cannot be laid too subtly for the audience to guess. It is only the hero and heroine who, though uneasy in the presence of the villain, remain unconscious of his designs until they are boldly carried into effect. It is not hard to guess that Launcelot is going to forge a will, but it is less obvious what Paul's plans entail.

The other characters in John Marchmont's Legacy are clearly two-dimensional; they age rather than grow, they embody stereotypes of stalwart hero and delicate heroine or scheming woman and vacillating weak man. Their motivations are simplistic, their actions predictable; but Olivia had a chance, a chance to be memorable and truly tragic, a chance removed at the last minute.

In Letter No. 7, January 17, 1864, Braddon writes to Bulwer-Lytton:

I have thought very much over what you said in your last letter with regard to a novel in which the story arises naturally out of the characters of the actors in it, as contrasted with a novel in which the actors are only marionettes, the slaves of the story. I fancied that in "John Marchmont" the story was made subordinate to the characters but even my kindest reviewers tell me that it is not so and that the characters break down when the story begins. (Wolff "Devoted" 19)

Perhaps some of them do not break down "when the story begins" but they do by the ending. Previously she has communicated her disappointment with eleanor's victory to Bulwer-Lytton. In letter 6, September 19, 1863 she asks:

if I may send you my last cargo of romantic fiction, in the shape of "Eleanor's Victory" & whither I shall send the same. [Bulwer-Lytton was apparently away from home and on the brink of another removal.] I don't think you will like "Eleanor" as I always felt a kind of depression in writing it. I couldn't rise to the Archetype hovering dimly before me. The story is not what I meant it to be, & I feel bitterly disappointed in it, in spite of the very great indulgence of some of my critics.... (Wolff "Devoted" 17)

Indeed, eleanor's victory never even came close to the presentation of a character of any depth. They are uniformly

two-dimensional marionettes whose strings show quite distinctly. Eleanor, the titular emotional engine of the story, is no different as a woman in her mid-twenties than she is when we meet her at fifteen. Even if the subordinate characters can be allowed to serve occasionally as props or scenery, it is injurious to the novel for Eleanor to be such. We do not believe in her final "victory" and tend to close the book with a sense of nausea at it. Eleanor has not grown emotionally so that she can rise above her less attractive, if not more genuine, response to her enemy; she has merely given into social pressure from her husband and Launcelot's mother. This capitulation is so sudden and unprepared for that it appears to negate all that we have previously believed about Eleanor's constitution in general and her sense of loyalty to her father in particular.

LANGUAGE

The final criteria here is the comparison of the degree of hyperbole used in the segments' language as an indication of melodramatic tone. Both the language of the narrative voice and of the characters demonstrate that eleanor's victory owes much to Braddon's stage experience, whereas John Marchmont's Legacy reflects the more normally pitched tone commonly associated with better writing. For example, in eleanor's victory readers are treated to such melodramatic passages as the following in which George has read Mrs. Bannister's laying-down-the-law letter

instructing him about the disbursement of her funds:

George Vane burst into tears as he finished the letter. How cruelly she had stabbed him, this honourable, conscientious daughter, whom he had robbed certainly, but in a generous, magnanimous, reckless fashion, that made robbery rather a princely virtue than a sordid vice. How cruelly the old heart was lacerated by that bitter letter!

"As if I would touch the money," cried Mr. Vane, elevating his trembling hands to the low ceiling with a passionate and tragic gesture. "Have I been such a wretch to you, Eleanor, that this woman should accuse me of wishing to snatch the bread from your innocent lips?"

"Papa, papa!"

"Have I been such an unnatural father, such a traitor, liar, swindler, and cheat, that my own daughter should say these things to me?"

His voice rose higher with each sentence, and the tears streamed down his wrinkled cheeks.

Eleanor tried to kiss away those tears; but he pushed her from him with passionate vehemence.

"Go away from me, my child, I am a wretch, a robber, a scoundrel, a -----"

"No, no, no papa," cried Eleanor; "you are all that is good, you have always been good to me, dear, dear papa."

"By what right, then, does this woman insult me with such a letter as that?" asked the old man, drying his eyes, and pointing to the crumpled letter which he had flung upon the ground. (1:33-34)

This is the language and action of the popular, melodramatic Victorian stage transposed into the novel form. If Braddon had reserved its hyperbole just for George Vane's utterances, this language could have been seen in the light of characterization, a contrast between his deluded sense of theatricality and self-importance and other's more mature and less flamboyant conversation. But even her staid lawyer Gilbert Monckton uses theatrical language in his farewell letter to Eleanor in Volume III:

"From the hour of our return to Tolldale, Eleanor," wrote Gilbert Monckton, "I knew the truth--the hard and cruel truth--very difficult for a man to believe, when he has built up his life and mapped out a happy future under the influence of a delusion which leaves him desolate when it melts away. I know the worst. I watched you as a man only watches the woman upon whose truth his every hope depends, and I saw that you still loved Launcelot Darrell. By a hundred evidences, small in themselves, but damning when massed together, you betrayed your secret. You had made a mercenary marriage, looking to worldly advantages to counter-balance your sacrifice of feeling; and you found too late that the sacrifice

was too hard for you to bear!" (1:152)

The narrative voice of the novel is not immune to overlyemotional language either. In the passage depicting Eleanor's long night-time wait for her father, the narrator waxes poetic:

Her thoughts rambled on in strange confusion until they grew bewildering; her brain became dizzy with perpetual repetitions of the same idea; when she lifted her head--her poor, weary, burning, heavy head, which seemed a leaden weight that it was almost impossible to raise--and looked from the window, the street below reeled beneath her eyes, the floor upon which she knelt seemed sinking with her into some deep gulf of blackness and horror. A thousand conflicting sounds--not the morning noises of the waking city--hissed and buzzed, and roared and thundered in her ears, growing louder and louder and louder, until they all melted away in the fast-gathering darkness. (1:148-49)

Theatre goers would have been quite familiar with this as a representation of the onset of "brain fever." Upon the stage brain fever's earliest manifestations would have been represented by the heroine's raising the back of her right wrist, hand drooping downward, to her forehead. She would then totter and grab for a support, if originally standing, or slump in her seat. Depictions of more advanced cases would entail repeated rolling of the head upon the bed pillow and frequent

changings of cool, wet rags upon the brow. Muttering or incoherent speech and clutching at clothing or bedcovers would accompany the head tossing, in between frequent swoons. The perpetual bane of heroes and heroines and a most useful tool for garnering audience sympathy, it was the ultimate proof of strong emotional attachment. The vivid images of her physical manifestations of emotional anguish--the burning, heavy head, loss of equilibrium, loud ringing in her ears, and physical weakness leading to unconsciousness--are suggestive of more serious ailments such as stroke. Eleanor cannot just become dyspeptic and headachy, she must manifest life-threatening symptoms to suitably underscore the situation and mood of the narrative.

What each of these passages hold in common is that the degree of expression used to communicate the information is "in extremis," as if strong emotions must of necessity be represented by the strongest words of the language. George Vane's theatrical gestures of upraising his hands as if in supplication, his streaming tears and flinging of the crumpled letter upon the ground echo the tragic Lear as do the potent words "wretch," "traitor," "liar," "swindler," "scoundrel" and "cheat." The narrator aids and abets the faux tragedian through the use of extravagant adjective/noun combinations such as "princely virtue," "sordid vice," and "passionate vehemence in Vane's implied thoughts. These phrases over-qualify each noun in the extreme, insinuating that his qualities know no paltry middle ground of just run-of-the-mill virtue or vice. The

degree of tragic difference between Lear and Vane is, of course, infinite, but George is magnanimous enough to place the blind majesty only one level behind himself in the schema of persecuted fathers. George's language, therefore, must be as nothing if it is not at all. There is no degree of moderation in any of his utterances which always sound as though they were being declaimed to the furthestmost tier in the balcony.

Gilbert Monckton's dramatic language is less of a life and death matter than George Vane's but it seems uncommonly strong and poetic for a solicitor who does not argue before the bench. Granted that the passage quoted above is a private correspondence to an erring (at least in his mind) wife, but since he has heretofore kept a close check upon his tongue, aloof from intimate expressions to her, the language in his missive has Act III Scene vi written all over it. "From the hour of our return to Tolldale, Eleanor" he begins with a distinctive lilt of poetic meter. He now knows the "hard and cruel truth" and has been living with a "delusion" which leaves him "desolate," words that admit no ameliorating shading of degree. The rather phlegmatic, collected lawyereese of Gilbert has given way to verbal extremes.

In the space of a few sentences he has been reduced from the blissful, trusting husband to the suspicious watcher with all of its attendant sordidness, the barrister arguing the case, the jury of twelve men good and true and finally to the judge with his black cap pronouncing dread sentence upon the felon. Thus, his personal assessment of his wife's motives has been

conflated into a crisis of societal proportions through his language.

It is clear, then that the beginning of eleanor's victory is generally characterized by a surfeit of incident and language. The plot actions are temporally compacted, highly colored, and overtly menacing to its heroine. There has been a peep-show abruptness to the reader's acquaintance with both the Paris scene and the character whose presence permeates the entire text and who is, potentially, as fine a comic creation as any of Dickens's egotists.

In sharp contrast is the language of the following passage from John Marchmont's Legacy, in which a tardily-forwarded missive arrives for Edward during his stolen honeymoon announcing that his father is gravely ill and begging for his immediate return to the family abode as his mother and elder brother are just now on a Continental tour. Edward rushes off promising to come back to Mary just as soon as possible, but becomes the victim of an accident. Braddon describes it thus:

There had been one of those accidents which seem terribly common on every line of railway, however well managed. A signalman had mistaken one train for another; a flag had been dropped too soon; and the down-express had run into a heavy luggage-trail blundering up from Exeter with farm produce for the London markets. Two men had been killed, and a great many passengers hurt, some seriously. Edward Arundel's case was perhaps one of the most serious

amongst these. (186)

This description displays much restraint on the part of Braddon. She could have made the passage into an entire chapter of its own with vivid depictions of screeching brakes, grinding and rending metal, lurid firelight (Braddon's favorite adjective for light seems to be lurid), hideous and pitiful screaming, choking smoke and dust, scattered livestock bleating and blundering about, and searing pain in various body parts. However, her almost reportorial style here lends the accident a much more truthful and solemn tone. It is just an unfortunate occurrence caused by human error, not the workings of divine fate. Edward is caught by blind, dumb luck, not wicked machinations.

This is by far the most violent of actions that has taken place in the story so far, yet it is given the least amount of space in presentation. By placing this unassuming paragraph at the end of the chapter she has actually increased its power. The reader is in no way prepared for this sort of happening. If Paul Marchmont had showed up out of the blue, as we are half lead to believe will occur, we would not have been surprised; rather we would have had our credulity stretched, but the train wreck, completely believable and underplayed as it is, brings the reader up quite short, both because we have been conditioned to like Edward and because we know that Mary is literally all alone now and we worry about her.

Again Braddon uses understatement to communicate a key turning point in the story when, at the end of chapter 19, this brief message from Paul to Olivia arrives:

My Dear Mrs. Marchmont,--I have made the
necessary discovery. Miss Marchmont is to be found
at the White Hart Inn, Milldale, near Winchester.
May I venture to urge your proceeding there in search
of her without delay?

yours very faithfully,

Paul Marchmont

Charlotte-street, Fitzroy-square

Aug. 15th (192)

Paul's letter is business-like, sparse, yet full of innuendo, considering the plot situation at this point. Its very brevity and delicate phrasing highlights Paul's opportunistic villainy. He is perfectly content to bide patiently while watching closely for openings and to prompt Olivia to do his dirty work in the most delicate and properly formulaic terms. Braddon is practicing modulation of her language to reflect both the subtlety of characterization and dramatic tension called for here.

Braddon tells Bulwer-Lytton that she knows that she has "been working too hard & can scarcely hope to improve while my work is so close that I dare not throw away a page of copy, though it may be the veriest bosh in Christendom" (Wolff "Devoted" 18). And yet she wonders if her problems are more uniquely her own or if other writers experience similar difficulties in their work.

I must tell you one of my troubles for I want to know if it is a natural literary symptom. I am

terribly apt to take a disgust to the novel I am writing, & to devote all my thoughts to a novel I mean to write when free of present engagements. This unwritten novel always seems to me destined to become my magnum opus Je le couve, as Michelet would say. I brood upon it night & day. I can see the scenes. I compose the dialogue, oh, such lovely passionate outbreaks--I can never write anything half as good, for that Archetype is a perfect eel in the matter of slipperiness. There he goes gliding through the turbid waters of the brain, such a beautiful shining rainbow-hued creature. You try to grasp him, and Lo he is gone. He has a rooted antipathy to pen & ink. Out walking in the dismal London streets, sitting in a railway carriage, reading other people's books, playing the piano, lying in bed, there he is always, my perpetual companion. I sit down to my desk, & then presto, the creature is gone, not so much as a quarter of an inch of his silvery tail remains. If some new Dircks & Pepper would only invent an intellectual photographic apparatus--by means of which the Ghost of the Ideal could be siezed [sic] upon. (Wolff "Devoted" 18)

The "disgust" that Braddon admits to is more clearly seen in eleanor's victory. It is fairly clear that she has lost interest mid-way through Volume 2 and has hurried through her "money maker" as fast and best she could. The "disgust" doesn't

show nearly as much in John Marchmont's Legacy, where she is trying to do something better with the characterization and language, but this authorial boredom may be another reason for her bowing to convention just after the climax. It takes energy to craft the kind of ending that holds steadfast to Olivia's character, and most of her energy was being expended upon the outcasts and The Doctor's Wife which were both in serial publication at this time.

Perhaps another reason that Braddon's more romantic fiction, like eleanor's victory, is beginning to become somewhat tedious can be explained in Letter 5, in which she confesses that she is having difficulty believing in love and in deep feeling in general.

I have begun to question the expediency of very deep emotion, & I think when one does that one must have pretty well passed beyond the power of feeling it. It is this feeling, or rather this incapacity for any strong feeling, that, I believe, causes the flippancy of tone which jars upon your sense of the dignity of art. I can't help looking down upon my heroes when they suffer, because I always have in my mind the memory of wasted suffering of my own....Is anybody ever constant to any emotion? ("Devoted" 16)

This is the first solid evidence that we have of Braddon's disillusionment with the romantic frame of reference she has always attempted to present. (The first hint may have been her usage of the term "genial novel" in letter 3.) Did she mean a

romance where she captured the supposed purity of a great love or the awareness of the sublime in the human spirit? Was this what she was equating with the idea of Art? We can only infer from her responses that Bulwer-Lytton was teaching and supporting the Victorian idea that Art had to turn away from the mundane and attempt to strive ever towards the depiction of the sublime. Anything less would be popular writing--read poor quality, second rate--rather than literature. Perhaps she saw the world as incompatible with the idealism of the principles being espoused, though not necessarily lived, by British society.

Happy the Amy Robsarts & the Haidees who die before their first illusions are worn threadbare! I think the faculty of writing a love story must die out with the first death of love. We cease to believe in the God when we find that he is not immortal. ("Devoted"

16)

Was she simply unable or unwilling to challenge the idealism straightforwardly? As a Victorian female who understood the idea of Art in terms of abstract TRUTH and POETRY, Braddon had to accept the advice and direction of her mentor and critic, Bulwer-Lytton, no matter how much her instincts may have chafed and her experiences differed. Had she been allowed to control her circumstances more, she might have better utilized this disillusionment in the development of her comic characters, whose depiction more closely resembles that vital living presence with overtones of the universal that most writers and

critics posit as approaching Art. Had she cultivated this ironic, knowing sense about the world, she might have rivaled Dickens's Sam Weller, Mr. Micawber, or Mr. Bumble. Also, as a working writer supporting a family upon her proceeds, she had to accept the dictates of Mudie's which required the sacrifice of Art to readability for a very broad swathe of indifferently educated persons. She had to "resort to broad & coarse blacks & whites, & to get sensation in lieu of poetry or truth" [emphasis in the original] ("Devoted" 17).

Her list of dependents was just about to add another name. Braddon mentions in Letter 4 that she is going to the country to finish eleanor's victory, which must be done by a certain date. She asks if she and her mother can see him sometime after [emphasis in the original] the tenth of June. Braddon did not want her mentor to know about her liaison with Maxwell; Bulwer-Lytton's good opinion was extremely important to her. Professor Wolff speculates that she is designating a date after which she will have delivered her second child by Maxwell, a conclusion supported by roughly estimating recovery from the previous birth and the gestation period. By these same means, since we know the date of her fourth child, we can estimate that the third one arrived in late summer/early fall of 1864.

Perhaps some of her sense of disillusion stemmed from her acrimonious break-up with Gilby, her first mentor who turned so viciously on her. Surely a great deal of it had to come from the liaison with Maxwell with its attendant financial and social pressures. Probably some of the smooth Irishman's lilt had worn

off the liason with childbirth.

Braddon had been an idealistic girl who devoured romantic novels before casting her lot upon the provincial stage, the stereotypical quixotic gesture. She must have come to terms with the differences between process and product within the theatre in her three years there. The divisions between real life and performance are readily apparent even to the most starry-eyed walk-on player. But, had perceiving these differences in the world of novels and their production taken somewhat longer?

She employs stage metaphor in Letter 5 to describe herself as a "patcher up of sham antiquities...a dauber of pantomime scenes, all Dutch metal, glue & spangles" ("Devoted" 16). She contrasts her pretense to a "Grecian sculptor" and a "great painter" but did she still really believe in these, or had the grindingly commercial underbelly of publication shaken her faith? Probably, it had, but she is not yet willing to give up the ghost of the dream, especially as long as her mentor and the critics are holding it up as the prize golden apple. Perhaps she simply must believe in the dream or the hope of the dream to cope with the pressures bearing down upon her.

In any case, the experience she gained from the first phase of her experiment manifested itself most clearly in the second phase when she succeeds in shifting her prose from the melodramatic pace, characterization, and language style towards that of more serious, and therefore, artistic, novels. Even the "money maker" of this time demonstrates movement towards

restraint and her desire to make plot arise from character when she employs a sure hand in excising the melodramatic underplot of the "lower" work, the outcasts in order to revise it into henry dunbar. Ever thrifty, she reserves this underplot for later use as "Lost and Found" in a compilation of shorter pieces.

The "sense of disgust" appears in the later chapters of the outcasts, but is confined to winding up the underplot. The main storyline doesn't show much evidence of hurrying up to be DONE, nor does the higher novel The Doctor's Wife. Any disappointment experienced near the end of the novel is more the fault of Braddon's again giving into convention instead of remaining true to Isabel's and Roland's characters rather than to a mad dash to "The End" by the author.

CHAPTER 5

Phase Two

henry dunbar

and The Doctor's Wife

Mary Elizabeth Braddon had begun writing the outcasts late in Phase One to fulfill a contract with The London Journal, another weekly publication catering to the sensational "penny numbers" crowd. John Marchmont's Legacy was just over half completed and eleanor's victory was winding down. Beginning on September 12, 1863, the outcasts ran for 29 weeks, overlapping the end of Marchmont and the first installments of The Doctor's Wife, the higher novel for Phase Two. The most informative approach to this lower novel is to examine what Braddon chose to leave out when she edited it into a novel that she named henry dunbar and which was published, as were her next three novels, under the imprint of Maxwell and Co. It will be necessary here to sketch out the major plot developments installment by installment so that we can most clearly see the changes Braddon is required to make later.

the outcasts--Synopsis

The serial begins with what would later become the underplot, the exploits of one Jocelyn Gilbert who is the down-and-out artist nephew of the Earl of Haughton. The entire first installment follows his attempts to sell a painting of his son Georgy to buy some food, the exposition of his disastrous marriage to an alcoholic named Agatha, his stealing away in the middle of the night to make a new life for himself and his son,

his eventually joining a circus troupe and how he causes a tattoo to be placed on his son's wrist. This "mark on Georgy's arm" is the initials GJ and an earl's coronet placed there because he worries that:

If he were taken from me now, in his early childhood, he might alter as he grew to manhood, and the chances are that, after years of searching for him, I might meet him and not recognize him. More than this, the day may come--I don't say it ever will, but it may--in which that boy will be the heir to a great fortune. If this should ever happen, it will be necessary to prove his identity. ("Lost and Found" 189)

He wants the mysterious dark clown Herr von Volterchoker to "set such a mark on him as will never fade or alter," to which request the clown assents. After this intriguing opening, the story of Georgy and his father is not taken up again until the end of Installment 5, is abandoned again in Installment 6 and only seriously forwarded by events in Installment 7.

The alternate story line begins in Installment 2 with the introduction of the banking house of Dunbar, Dunbar, and Balderby. We are introduced to the pivotal characters of Mr. Balderby, junior partner in the bank, Clement Austin, a confidential cashier, and the old clerk Sampson Wilmont who has been with the firm for some fifty years. We find out that the elder partner, Mr. Percival Dunbar, has died and that his son Henry is due back from India to take over leadership. Thirty-

five years before, Henry had masterminded and carried out with the help of Joseph Wilmont, Samson's younger brother and also a clerk for the bank, a forgery involving some £3,000. Henry had been hustled off to India to avoid scandal while Joseph had been transported for the crime. The second chapter of this installment introduces Margaret Wentworth who is supporting her father, James, by giving music lessons. He is a shady character, unbeknownst to his daughter. He is, in reality, Joseph Wilmont returned from Australia, the proverbial "ticket-of-leave man." Margaret is the product of a post-crime marriage which has suffered the loss of the wife/mother.

Braddon pursues the Dunbar plot line for three and one-half installments through the commission of this story's crime, the murder by drowning of Joseph Wilmont while in the company of Henry Dunbar, and Mr. Dunbar's arrest for it. The focus then switches briefly to the subplot, to introduce a major character, Humphrey Melwood, Jocelyn's foster brother. Installment 7 returns to the Dunbar plot for the three chapters devoted to the trial--Henry gets off--Margaret's discovery that her father and the murdered man are one and the same, her attempt to see Henry Dunbar at his country estate, and her continued accusation that he is a murderer.

Installment 8 follows the Jocelyn story through the riding accident death of his cousin Sidney, the present earl, the birth and death of the earl's premature son and subsequent death of his grieving wife, and through Georgy's mysterious disappearance from the circus just as his father has inherited the title and

estate.

Installment 9 returns to the Dunbar mystery where Clement Austin has become acquainted with Margaret, by accident of course, and begins to help her in her efforts to ferret out Henry Dunbar. Laura Dunbar, Henry's daughter who was sent back to England as a young girl and is just becoming reacquainted with her father as an adult, falls in love with the new Earl of Haughton, Jocelyn, who lives in the neighborhood as a bachelor. Installments 10 and 11 deal with Jocelyn's covert attempts to find Georgy and outline his certainty of escape from alcoholic Agatha. He married her under a false name and has taken care that she is unaware of his change in fortune. Jocelyn at first resists Laura's love but falls eventually. Ergo, Braddon has intertwined the two stories like Siamese twins. At this point there is dark mystery in the dowers of both the potential bride and groom. Shortly the groom will add murder to his bridal presents because the hapless Agatha literally stumbles on the happy couple as they are riding and can only be hushed through drastic measures. The actual perpetrator is foster-brother Humphrey who tips Agatha over a rocky waterfall the night before the marriage is to take place, but Jocelyn has urged him to and rewards him for the deed. As such he is at least a conspirator and at most, an accomplice before and after the fact.

In Installment 12 the wedding is dampened by literal rain as well as the appearance of Agatha's corpse as it is carried through the churchyard to an inquest. Herr von Volterchoker appears on the scene to the discomfort of Henry Dunbar, who

hustles him off before anyone else can see him. Evidently he has some secret of Dunbar's and begins blackmailing him. The bride and groom depart on a Parisian honeymoon.

Installments 13 and 14 deal with the inquest and an unofficial investigation as conducted by Herr von Volterchoker into the dead woman's identity. By now we are deeply inside Volume 2 so the pace is fairly slow and complications far outstrip clarifications. The spotlight shines steadily on the Henry Dunbar plot thread from Installments 15 through 22. Only two chapters sprinkled far apart along the way touch on Agatha's murder directly. Two others take place in Paris, where the honeymooners try to track down an early portrait of Henry Dunbar that the artist never turned over to old Percival because the latter had judged it too poor an effort for the price asked. The painting is eventually found and bought. Back in England, the point of view is through Clement Austin's eyes much of this time as Margaret pulls farther and farther away from him because of her obsession with Henry Dunbar.

Things begin to move faster in Installment 23 when we get Humphrey's confession to Laura of his crime and the confirmation of Jocelyn's prior marriage. We are eight chapters into Volume 3 and only six installments from the conclusion, so Braddon must wind up the Margaret-Henry portion fairly quickly. She has already planted the seeds of doubt concerning Henry's identity and set up an escape route through his large purchase of unset diamonds so that now all Braddon has to do is bring Margaret face to face with the elusive Henry who has been tied to his

room because of a badly broken leg.

Installments 24 through 27 relate Margaret's confrontation with, her mysterious disappearance and the investigations of a detective who Clement has hired. The chase leads to the seaport of Hull where the detective pursues the ship that Dunbar is escaping on and tries to arrest him. But the man is Herr von Volterchoker who has on his person some of the uncut diamonds, apparently a blackmail payment from Wilmont. Volterchoker is really Stephen Vallance, much-sought-after criminal in his own right. The villain falls into the sea during the shipboard chase and sinks due to the weight of his moneybelt full of diamonds. Joseph has escaped with the help of Margaret who recognized him as the faux Henry Dunbar.

Installment 28 contains the final chapters of the Jocelyn story in which the Earl sickens and dies, presumably from guilt, but manages to have Georgy found and brought before him to be officially recognized as the next Earl and given into the care of his step-mother.

The final installment wraps up the Dunbar case. Margaret returns the remaining diamonds by messenger with a note begging Clement to forget her since she is the daughter of a criminal. She wants him to return the diamonds to Laura, their rightful owner. Two years pass before Clement can find Margaret. Joseph has died truly penitent. Margaret finally agrees to marry Clement and remove to a "pretty Clapham villa."

the outcasts--Discussion

Before considering the changes Braddon made while separating these two, some discussion of the outcasts as the "base" text is in order. There are three very interesting parallels between the main and subplot that are effaced when Henry Dunbar and "Lost and Found" are read in their own incarnations. The key issue of identity, which might be seen as the serial's overriding motif, informs each of these parallels.

First, each plot thread has a murder that is accomplished by drowning the victim. In the main plot, Henry Dunbar is drowned in a sluggish river by Joseph Wilmont, who switches identities with the dead man. In the subplot, Humphrey Melwood, urged by Jocelyn, pushes Agatha over the waterfall to enable Jocelyn to marry Laura Dunbar. Thus, both murdered persons' positions are usurped by another. Henry's identity as wealthy banker and father of Laura is usurped by Joseph in an active manner, while Agatha's identity as Countess Haughton (Jocelyn's wife) is usurped passively by Laura.

Secondly, assumed names abound. Jocelyn Gilbert's real, full name is Philip Dudley Palgrave Jocelyn. He assumes the surname Gilbert (his mother's maiden name) while he is a poor artist and the alias of Jervis while he travels with Cadger's Troupe. Joseph Wilmont has assumed the name of James Wentworth on his return from Australia and appears under the identity of Henry Dunbar for the majority of the text. Herr Von Volterchoker is the alias of Stephen Vallance, a.k.a. Blackguard Steeve, who has blackmail-worthy secrets involving both Jocelyn and Joseph Wilmont. He knows Jocelyn from the circus and has

identified Agatha as his lawful wife. He is the one who has stolen Georgy away and placed him in a foster home. The criminal recognizes Joseph Wilmont at Laura's wedding because they have served time together in penal servitude. This is how he comes into possession of the diamonds that eventually pull him down to the third watery grave in the novel.

The final parallel is Braddon's device of using two painted portraits and a photograph as the keys to establishing a true identity for three of the characters, one in the main plot and two in the subplot. The photograph is of Jocelyn taken 12 months after his marriage to Agatha Pickshaw and still kept by old Mr. Pickshaw, which confirms that Jocelyn Gilbert and the Earl of Haughton are one in the same. The painting of Georgy that Jocelyn sold to a pawnbroker in Caslope-street leads to the boy's recovery, while the tattoo validates his identity. The other painting is the one done by Mr. Kerstall of the young Henry Dunbar but never delivered to the family. Laura and Jocelyn run across it on their Parisian honeymoon. A painting is culled from a dusty heap of canvasses but looks nothing like the man calling himself Henry Dunbar. The old artist insists that it is the one they are seeking but Laura and her husband refuse to accept it. They are prejudiced by the younger Mr. Kerstall's statement that his father's memory is gone and leave believing that Henry's portrait does not exist. It is obvious to the reader that the portrait is genuine and the man a counterfeit. This episode paves the way for the first line of a later chapter, "The man who called himself [emphasis added here]

Henry Dunbar was lying on the tapestried cushions of a couch that stood before the fire in his spacious sitting room" (henry dunbar 307), which is the first direct confirmation readers have that the switch has taken place.

Once the two plot lines are separated, these parallels, or doublings, have their melodramatic nature diminished substantially. While still conjoined, they stretch reader credulity. The sheer coincidence of Volterchoker's knowing the secrets of both poseurs is the most extreme example. Victorian multi-plot novels in general, notably Dickens's, and sensation novels in particular, Miss Braddon not excluded, are notorious for their reliance on coincidence, but this example is egregious by any standard. Criminal aliases are more supportable in the time before fingerprints and routine photographic identification than they are now, but almost anyone, now as then, can "go by" a name much different than the one they are born with and get around quite easily, which has proven to be the case in a horde of cases.

Less improbable is that people can be and are murdered by drowning; however, it remains a highly dramatic modus operandi due to the ease with which it can be made to look like an accident or completely concealed altogether. Also reasonable is the motive for each murder. Personal gain in some manner is the most likely reason for domestic murders such as the ones portrayed here. Joseph's gain is augmented by the delicious revenge he gets for the Dunbars' betrayal. Humphrey's motive is the love of his foster brother above and beyond any material

advancement. Jocelyn avoids the shame of his loathsome wife while gaining a more suitable partner in his love object. Whatever our level of skepticism while reading the outcasts, perusal of either henry dunbar or "Lost and Found" without knowing of their original connection would probably not prompt a strong negative reaction on the grounds of improbability.

Braddon has mixed together here the primary ingredient of sensationalism--the middle class world threatened by a secret crime like murder--and the elements necessary for melodrama--a noble title, lost and found loved ones, a dark villain pulling strings behind the scenes, near-bigamy, impossible love, self-sacrificing heroines, fabulous wealth and despondent poverty, alcohol and suicide. She had spun the kaleidoscope and come up with a symbiotic tale for her London Journal readers. And yet, could she have had in mind the separation of these two when part way through the writing? This seems plausible, since only three of the novel's chapters, numbers 26, 32 and 33, from Installments 10 and 12 respectively, require more than superficial restructuring during the revision process. The remainder can be quite easily sorted into either the new novel or the short story as can be seen in the following chart:

Division of the outcasts into henry dunbar and "Lost and Found"

henry dunbar

"Lost & Found"

6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13

1,2,3,4,5

16,17,18

14,15

22,23,24,25,Part of 26

19,20,21

31, Part of 32 & 33

Part of 26,27,28,29.30

Part of 32 & 33

34	
	35, 36, 37
38, 39, 40	
	41
42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50	
	51
52, 53	
	54, 55
56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62	
	63, 64
65, 66	

Braddon's disentangling the installments centered around the love story between Laura Dunbar and Earl Jocelyn, the marriage of mercantile wealth and the peerage, in which the mercantile daughter was also beautiful and noble in character while the peer was athletic and not impoverished, which was not often the case in reality. The bonus was that they were even in love with each other. Braddon realized that she would have to conjure up clones for both of these main characters in order to retain their services in the two new pieces. Three other clones were also needed so that each new tale had a handy criminal to be the blackmailer and to provide the requisite paternal figure and rejected suitor for the Laura clone. Braddon had a little bit of fun with names when she cloned the Earl by assigning two of his four names to each of the subsequent characters. These clones will be easier to see here:

<u>henry dunbar</u>	<u>the outcasts</u>	"Lost & Found"
Philip Dudley Palgrave	Jocelyn	
/	(a.k.a. Jocelyn Gilbert and \	
/	Jocelyn Jervis)	\
Philip Jocelyn		Gervoise Dudley Palgrave
(a.k.a. Jocelyn Gilbert		(a.k.a. Gervoise Gilbert
& Jocelyn Jervis)		& Gervoise Jervis)
	Laura Dunbar	
Laura Dunbar	<---- clone=	Ethel Hurst

Henry Dunbar	Henry Dunbar <---- clone= Sir Langley Hurst (Uncle to Ethel)
Arthur Lovell	Arthur Lovell (rejected suitor) <---- clone= Stephen Hurst (Cousin to Ethel & eventual 2nd husband)

Major Vernon	Herr von Volterchoker =clone ----> Herr von Volterchoker (a.k.a. Major Vavasor, Stephen (a.k.a. Herr Vokes & Vallance, Blackguard Steeve) slippery Walker)
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In "Lost and Found" Sir Langley Hurst has nothing to be blackmailed for and so virtuously drops from sight after his niece marries. Herr Volterchoker is only required to disappear after Georgy is found rather than to drown as Major Vernon must in henry dunbar. The Arthur Lovell/Stephen Hurst character begins as a possible rival for the noble suitor, merely Sir Jocelyn in henry dunbar but Earl Haughton in "'Lost and Found'." Lovell recedes into the background while Hurst provides Ethel with unflagging service in finding Georgy and is rewarded by becoming her second husband after a decent interval. The "evaporating" Sir Langley and Arthur Lovell represent two now unnecessary roles in the separated stories. Each has had two roles to play in the outcasts but the cleaving has reduced these roles so that the minor one is quickly and easily lost. It became unnecessary for Volterchoker to die once blackmail pigeon number one, Henry Dunbar, is removed entirely. Humphrey's confession has already robbed him of blackmail pigeon number two, Earl Haughton. In both the outcasts and "Lost and Found"

it is the foster parents that betray Volterchoker by returning Georgy for the reward, so there is absolutely no need for the dark clown/criminal at the end of "'LOST AND FOUND'." Braddon's disposition of him is almost an afterthought stuck on to the very end of the story:

And what of Herr von Volterchoker? The end of his career it is not given this chronicler to record. Foiled of his hoped-for prize, he fell back into the ranks of vagabondism, to sink lower and lower in the social scale, until he descended to that last depth to which none need care to follow him. Few among the dangerous classes are better known or more closely watched by the police, who hopefully await the hour when Herr von Volterchoker, alias Vokes, alias Slippery Valker, and a few other names of dubious import, shall become amenable to penal servitude for life. ("Lost and Found" 307)

This ending feels contrived and jarring, as it follows the previous paragraph recounting Lady Haughton's four-year widowhood and remarriage, the "happily ever after" ending of choice. In the outcasts it is Margaret and Clement's marriage that provides the happy ending. Major Vernon has met his watery death some two installments previously. Was Braddon really worried that her readers would fret about the villain's fate or did she just want to end the tale on a note of mystery?

Braddon also clones an entire chapter for use in henry dunbar. "The Gentleman Jockey who rode Devilshoof" is one of

the turning points in the outcasts. In it, Sidney, Earl of Haughton and cousin to our protagonist, is the ill-fated rider. His wife's witnessing of his fatal fall is the cause of her premature labor and subsequently the death of both her and the male child. This all clears the way for the sudden change in Jocelyn's fortunes. It is a lively chapter, in which Braddon displays her considerable talent for describing things "horsy" with the "knowing eye" and "unladylike cant" that her detractors abhorred. Apparently it was too hard for her to give it up, for she duplicated it for use in henry dunbar, substituting Laura for the Countess as the woman who watches from the carriage and victory for Sir Jocelyn rather than death for both Earl Haughton and the black stallion Devilshoof (changed to an unnamed chestnut mare for henry dunbar).

This chapter in henry dunbar serves to highlight the love between Laura and Sir Jocelyn and allow Major Vernon his first recognition of Joseph Wilmont. Only the latter is of any real importance, but it is certainly less of a turning point than the death of the Earl in the outcasts. Braddon's description of the race is noticeably more lighthearted than the tragic one in the outcasts. This, along with its happy outcome, tones down the melodramatic components. The scene becomes an everyday, normal outing with only Laura's anxieties taking on the air of melodrama. Events prove her fears overblown rather than magnifying them into near prophecies or portents of doom as events do for the Countess's fears.

This scene is also inserted much later in henry dunbar

than in the former, an entire volume later, which also indicates another devaluation of sorts. Events that happen in the first and third volumes of a triple decker are routinely those of major significance while those in the middle volume are often used as padding. The steeplechase chapter in the outcasts occurs squarely in the middle of Volume 1 while it is squarely in the middle of Volume 2 of henry dunbar. Its structural purpose here is also decidedly subordinate to its purpose in the outcasts. In henry dunbar, the steeplechase is a plausible place for the Major to see Wilmont/Dunbar, but any number of public occasions would have served as well. The Major could have simply caught a good glimpse of Wilmont/Dunbar as he was out horseback riding or leaving or entering his estate gates, devices which Braddon used many times in other novels. The impression we are left with is that Braddon simply saw an opportunity to double her mileage out of the previous passage and she really liked the scene.

In all likelihood Braddon began the outcasts with an almost off-handed attitude since it was to be merely "neatly turned out" rather than anything to write about seriously to Bulwer-Lytton. The characters and their situations are pure stage fodder. The Cadger's traveling troupe is untypically generous and Jocelyn's poverty severe. Agatha is such a debased wretch that she sells her child's clothes for gin. Jocelyn's solution to the family's difficulties is to abandon her with a histrionic letter blaming her for every ill, taking to the open

road with the child. The most telling melodramatic element is that Georgy is an impossibly well spoken three year old as demonstrated by this passage from Chapter 2:

"She's been out; and then she came in, and she was cross and like--you know, papa--like she always is after she's been out a long time; and she beat me because I spoke to her; and then she lay down on the bed, and she's been asleep ever since. I tried to wake her, but she wouldn't wake. Why is she so cross to me, papa, and so different from you?"

The words themselves are not beyond this age level, with the possible exception of the word different; rather it is the syntax and level of abstract thinking which are inappropriate. Even though Braddon attempts to represent the run-on speech patterns of a toddler through her punctuation choices, she fails to realize that grasping the concept of one parent's behaving differently than another would probably not be communicated this distinctly. The child would probably not have related the story of the mother's return quite as succinctly either. Most toddlers, even bright ones, require some cueing to communicate the string of occurrences Georgy does. His language, like his noble character, are highly rendered and varnished in the stage manner.

So Braddon could dash this portion of the story off of the top of her head as it were and have all of the September installments filled while she was winding up eleanor's victory and slogging through the middle of John Marchmont's Legacy.

Almost as if she were trying to incorporate all social strata of Victorian society, Braddon selects the solidly mercantile middle class and the artisan/blue collar workers as the focus for what became the dominant plot in the serial. Margaret is a dressmaker in this version who meets Clement because she makes dresses for his mother. Tellingly, Margaret slightly ascends the social scale in henry dunbar where Braddon makes her a music mistress, a more genteel occupation. Herr von Volterchoker's clone for the henry dunbar version also rises slightly from vagabond performer to former military officer. The title of "Major" probably was not conferred through normal military channels, but it indicates that this villain is used to moving in slightly better circles to select his targets than the more lowly Herr. Reinforcing this status difference is the way British xenophobia would have reacted to a German man as compared to a British major.

The conventional, hyper-corrective, bourgeois world constitutes the central nexus for the sensation school since its infection by crime is much more shocking than in either the upper or lower segments of society. Even more shocking is that the murder and impersonation/fraud go undetected for so very long because the protections of the middle class enable Wilmont to cover it up so well. All through the trial, the authorities are unable to conceive that the wealthy Mr. Dunbar could or would murder Wilmont. What possible motive could he have? Wilmont is continually able to evoke the protections of his status to avoid meeting "awkward" people, like Margaret, or to

have his actions questioned in any serious way.

Gradually this bourgeois story takes over the serial. Perhaps Braddon was experimenting with Bulwer-Lytton's advice even in this lower novel and striving, even if only slightly, to have this plot depend on characterization rather than incident. The effort spent developing Margaret's and Joseph's characters (even as he imitates Dunbar) is certainly head and shoulders above that used to depict Jocelyn or his foster brother Humphrey who never attain more than two scant dimensions. By the January installment she had finished John Marchmont's Legacy so she could devote more time to the outcasts. This time was spent on the bourgeois story in a run of nine chapters to only one for the subplot.

Perhaps she was getting mail and verbal feedback that people were more interested in this storyline than the other. Evidence does exist that she received much fan mail and was subject to influence in the development of her stories. A letter dated August 22, 1864, from a C. J. Devon, reads in part:

I am counting the days till the Sept. no. [of Temple Bar] reaches our remote regions. I am SO sorry for Roland and Isabel but I am sure you are right and it would never do to sacrifice public opinion for the sake of ideal character, tho' you make them so REAL, one feels sure they are living, and loving and suffering somewhere. If they may not be happy TOGETHER, I only trust Roland doesn't marry Lady Gwendoline, that would be TOO much. (Wolff Collection

transcription)

This missive concerning The Doctor's Wife demonstrates not only that Braddon's serials were eagerly anticipated, but also that her fans communicated their desires. How much weight Braddon gave to these expressions cannot be determined from the available source material. It seems likely that she took some of them into consideration, however briefly, since she was always credited by contemporary critics and modern scholars with being closely in tune with her audience. She not only knew that Bulwer-Lytton could further her career, but she also knew instinctively that her readers directly fueled it and that she must often subordinate her aspirations to their demands.

When it came time to put the outcasts into triple-decker format, Braddon made a conscious and deliberate decision to excise the more melodramatic subplot so that the focus would be directed squarely at the middle class crime and to tone down the melodramatic overtones of those characters she had to clone from the original. This dramatically demonstrates her interest in learning from Bulwer-Lytton's advice and her efforts to raise the standards of even her penny fiction. Some English reviewers thought that she was trying to dupe the public by changing the title and "dressing it up a bit" but her sales of the French translation were quite strong. Her June 24, 1864 letter to Bulwer-Lytton reads refers gratefully to his approbation of henry dunbar:

...I was quite reconciled to its being cast aside
into any limbo which you may reserve for such

tribute. Judge then how pleased I am to think you should have read the book and derived an hour or two's amusement from it. I cannot but think that your having done so is a proof, not of any merit in my story, but of the freshness of your mind, which after a long literary & political career, is boyish enough to be interested in the sloppily told story of a murderer's adventures. I must tell you that to my surprise I found the Parisians like "Dunbar" better than anything I have done, & the translator has doubled his terms (which even when doubled are very small) on the strength of its success. Here critics turn up their noses, say the plot is impossible, the story badly told, & so on. But your letter sent me at once into the Seventh Heaven of delight. If you are pleased, that--meaning the airiest snap that a Parisian grisette ever gave her fingers in Carnival time--for the critics. ("Devoted" 20-21)

By the end of March 1864 when henry dunbar was published, Braddon was only three installments into her most ambitious book, The Doctor's Wife. The same letter refers to it:

I venture to hope that you will like "The Doctor's Wife," which I shall have the pleasure of sending to you before the end of October better than anything I have yet done--though still unutterably far away from what I want to do, when I read your books, & a few others of the same caliber. There is more attempt at

character painting in it, and I have given it more thought than anything else. ("Devoted" 21)

She was affording herself the luxury of this book's being the only one under construction between March and August, which clearly shows in its quality.

THE DOCTOR'S WIFE

The story of a hasty and unwise marriage, The Doctor's Wife begins with a young country doctor on a holiday to see his friend in London. His friend Sam Smith, now styled Sigismund Smith, began reading for the Bar but has fallen into writing penny numbers which he found "a great deal more profitable and a great deal easier than the law" (Doctor's 19). It is through the "sensation author" that George meets Isabel Sleaford, the daughter of the family with which Smith boards. Isabel is always absorbed in a novel. She lives in the dreamy unreality of romance as a counterbalance to or escape from her step-mother and four half brothers' boorish behavior and the despotic and furtive conduct of her father, of whom the entire household is afraid.

George is stricken with Isabel immediately. This first acquaintance is doomed to be brief, for while George and Sigismund are out the next day visiting the National Gallery and having a French dinner, the Sleafords are abandoning the house. When the two men return, the only things left are their luggage, miscellaneous rubbish and the serving girl who advises them, "they're all gone; they went at six o'clock this evenin'; and

they're going to America, missus says; and she packed all your things, and she thinks you'd better have 'em took round to the greengrocer's immediant [sic], for fear of being seized for the rent, which is three quarters doo [sic] (Doctor's 80).

A brief note from Isabel implores, "Dear Mr. Smith,--Don't think hardly of us for going away so suddenly. Papa says it must be so. Yours, ever faithfully, Isabel." Reading it over his friend's shoulder, George reacts, "I should like to keep that letter," George said, blushing up to the roots of his hair. "Miss Sleaford writes a pretty hand" (Doctor's 81). So the stage is set for a sad misalliance between the stolid, practical country practitioner and the beauty-starved, soulful young woman.

George's life falls back into old routines until his father dies, leaving him the practice. People hint that it is time to marry but George doesn't seem interested in the local belles. A letter from Sigismund brings the intelligence that Isabel has not gone to America but is a nursery-governess at a house only eleven miles away. George begins his courtship immediately but finds himself, "hesitat[ing] and doubt[ing]," while he "argued and debated with himself, after the manner of every prudent home-bred young man who begins to think that he loves well, and sadly fears he may not love wisely" (Doctor's 170). A picnic outing decides the issue when George, caught up in his passion and "emboldened by the sparkling Burgundy," proposes.

Isabel's tragic flaw seals her fate:

Isabel listened with a most delightful complacency; not because she reciprocated George's affection for her, but because this was the first little bit of romance in her life, and she felt that the story was beginning all at once, and that she was going to be a heroine. She felt this; and with this kind of grateful liking for the young man at her side, through whose agency all these pleasant feelings came to her. Did she love him? Alas! she had no better knowledge of that passion than the knowledge she had gathered from her books, and that was at the best so conflicting in its nature, that it was scarcely wonderful if her reading left her adrift on a vast sea of conjecture. She thought that it was pleasant to have this young man by her side, beseeching her, and worshipping her in the most orthodox fashion. There was something contagious in George Gilbert's agitation to this inexperienced girl, who had not yet learned the highest lesson of civilization--utter indifference to the sensations of other people. Her hand trembled a little when he took the shy fingers timidly in his own; and she stole a glance at him, and thought that he was almost as good-looking as Mr. Hablot Browne's portrait of Walter Gay; and that, if she had only a father to strike her and turn her out of doors, the story of her life might be very tolerable, after all....

"This is what it is to be a heroine," she thought.... She didn't like him, but she liked him to be there talking to her. The words she heard for the first time were delightful to her because of their novelty, but they took no charm from the lips that spoke them. Any other good-looking, respectably-dressed young man would have been quite as much to her as George Gilbert was. But then she did not know this. It was so very easy for her to mistake her pleasure in the "situation;" the rustic bridge, the rippling water, the bright spring twilight, even the faint influence of that one glass of sparkling Burgundy, and above all, the sensation of being a heroine for the first time in her life--it was so terribly easy to mistake all these for that which she did not feel,--a regard for George Gilbert....

"I'll work for you, Isabel, as no man ever worked before. You shall never know what poverty is, darling, if you will be my wife."

"I shouldn't mind being poor," Isabel answered dreamily.

She was thinking that Walter Gay had been poor, and that the chief romance of Florence's life had been the quiet wedding in the little City church, and the long sea-voyage with her young husband. This sort of poverty was almost as nice as poor Edith's miserable wealth, with diamonds flung about and

trampled on, and ruby-velvet for every-day wear.

"I shouldn't so much mind being poor," repeated the girl; for she thought, if she didn't marry a duke or a Dombey, it would be at least something to experience the sentimental phase of poverty.

George Gilbert seized on the words.

"Ah, then, you will marry me, dearest Isabel? you will marry me, my own darling--my beautiful wife?Oh, Isabel, if you could only know how happy you have made me! if you could only know--"

She looked at him with a startled expression in her face. Was it all settled, then, so suddenly--with so little consideration? Yes, it was all settled; she was beloved with one of those passions that endure for a lifetime. George had said something to that effect. The story had begun, and she was the heroine. (Doctor's 196-202)

This passage is quoted at length because it is the absolute key to understanding Isabel's character, which drives the novel from this point forward. She is completely unaware of the harm her acquiescence is leading to. Her reality and George's are completely at odds. His practicality briefly gives way to the romantic, but Isabel's romanticism never gives way to a hint of reality. Suddenly, she doesn't quite know how or when it happens, she is engaged to George and becomes swept along in the tide of attention that accompanies such an event.

Braddon is attempting to foreground two important

attributes here, Isabel's almost willful ignorance and her malleability, which prompt her to both of the disastrous romantic liaisons she experiences and their concomitant calamities. They, rather than any conscious attempt at coquetry, are responsible for Isabel's actions, and they cause her to be the most misunderstood by those around her, who expect a girl of her age and station in life to have a more pragmatic attitude towards what George is offering her. In other words, the societal view is that if she isn't in real love with him, she must at least find him attractive enough for what he can be to her and not repulsive in his person or habits. Therefore, her subsequent behavior towards Roland Lansdell is deemed even more reprehensible, by society in general and George's faithful retainers in particular, because she owes George and should display the proper sense of duty. After all, he treats her well and loves her as much as his placidity allows, so what right has she to expect more?

Braddon displays a lightness of touch here that has manifested itself only briefly in previous works. She manages to sustain this lightness until the final half of Volume III before giving in to either time/work pressures, her own tendency to "mentally give up" on a piece as expressed previously to Bulwer-Lytton, to tacit or overt societal demands for a sort of absolute and swift "punishment" for Isabel, and/or to her own nagging doubts about her own talents, or some combination of these or other factors. In any case, she manages to sustain the tension between Isabel's chimera and reality for the majority of

the novel.

After their marriage, Isabel feels smothered by the drab life she must lead. She has no useful occupation so her hours continue to be filled with reading novels. She longs for some beauty and poetry to brighten the days, which appears in the form of Mr. Raymond's wandering friend Roland Lansdell. Roland is of the landed gentry, a dilettante politico, soon bored by the effort who has turned out a slim volume of Byronic poetry which Isabel has memorized thoroughly. His wanderings around Europe have also become tedious, so he returns to the Graybridge vicinity to occupy his long-vacant estate and decide what to do/be next. Jilted by his cousin Gwendolyn, he is jaded on the subject of love but finds himself attracted to Isabel much in the same manner as George had been, for her misty, pensive, ingenuous attitude. Her hero worship of him keeps her at a charming arm's length which he misunderstands. They begin to meet at Thurston's Crag to trade volumes and discuss fiction and poetry. People begin to talk.

Compounding Braddon's difficulties was her desire to transmute Flaubert's story into a "suitable" form for English audiences. She could not allow Isabel to actually commit adultery yet she is obligated to deal with the issue, which presented several difficulties. As Professor Wolff puts it in Sensational Victorian:

Emma Bovary's plight aroused sympathetic vibrations in the heart of every romantic young woman condemned to provincial respectability and deprived of romantic

adventure. But Victorian English convention makes it impossible for Isabel to follow Emma's example, to run off with Lansdell, or to have an affair with him. This forced Braddon into inconsistencies, as she labored so conscientiously to portray real character. (162-163)

Braddon has to change Isabel from a "credibly appealing romantic girl" into someone "simple enough to believe that [Roland] would continue to love her indefinitely without expecting any sexual return," and be "appalled at the discovery that he wants to run off with her" which strains credibility for some readers. She also has to turn George Gilbert from a seemingly "intelligent, agreeable, and attractive" young man into a "dull, unresponsive, and insensitive provincial" after his marriage. Lansdell, a man of the world, has to be "at times so respectful of Isabel's chastity that he seems either ready to give her up or to confine himself to mawkish expressions of admiration" and finally, "weak and vacillating" (163).

Braddon is painfully aware of her inadequacies in her summer 1864 letter to Bulwer-Lytton. She complains to him that the critics, especially the minor ones, will "hang" her no matter what she does--"I speak now of that set of critics who have pelted me with the word 'sensational,' & who will gird at me so long as I write a line" (Wolff, "Devoted" 23). But her major concern is that the pivotal scenes she is writing will not bear the weight of her intentions:

My story gets very critical in the August number

& the scenes which should be the best & most powerful are I fear weak. I am so afraid of making Roland Lansdell unmanly, or ungentlemanly. I want him to be a gentleman whatever he is--but I want also to show the wide difference between a man's love & a woman's sentimental fancy, which is utterly out of the region of a man's comprehension unless he is the author of Zanoni or David Copperfield. (Wolff, "Devoted" 23).

Her September 7th letter continues to relate her struggles with the novel:

It is very, very kind of you to give me a good word about the "D.'s Wife," and I full well know how valuable any such word must be. I am especially anxious about this novel; as it seems to me a kind of turning point in my life [emphasis added] on the issue of which it must depend whether I sink or swim. I am not a bit tired of writing, & feel rather as if I had scarcely begun yet in real earnest,.... But I feel every day more ignorant & life seems so short, & literature so long. (Wolff "Devoted" 25)

In the end, she resolves the love triangle by having George catch typhoid fever and die after two weeks of declining strength. Isabel nurses him faithfully and begins to realize the errors of her perceptions about love. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to her, Roland has been severely beaten by her father's paying off a previous grudge against Lansdell. Only hours after George has died, Mr. Raymond comes to take her to

see Roland on his death bed. They are reconciled emotionally so that he can die in peace and she can be fully punished by losing both of the men. She is enabled by Roland's leaving his estate to her to do lifelong penance in the form of charity work.

When Bulwer-Lytton read the final book form as it appeared in October, he did not like the ending and suggested that it was a mistake to kill off George Gilbert. He expressed as much to Braddon, particularly objecting to Gilbert's having died as a result of the accident of disease rather than a situation "arising from any element in the character of any of the personages in the novel" and insensitively adding that she needed to write a novel of character. Wolff comments, "It must have been especially daunting that he should now have advised her to write a "novel of character," when this was exactly what she thought she had been doing, and had indeed actually done.... In her answer to Bulwer-Lytton's criticisms, she showed herself modest, cool, and thoroughly professional, betraying no sign of the disappointment she must have felt" (Sensational 166).

Her reply to Bulwer-Lytton reads in part:

I must entirely concur in all you say about the close of the "D.W." I was cruelly hurried in writing it, and only towards the last decided on what I should do with George & Isabel. I always meant Sleaford to kill Roland, but to the last I was uncertain what to do with George. My original intention was to have left him alive, & Isabel reconciled to a commonplace life doing her duty

bravely, and suppressing all outward evidence of her deep grief for Roland. Thus the love story would have only been an episode in a woman's life-- succeeded by an after existence of quiet work and duty. I think, now it is too late, I might have done much better with the story in this way, but I am so apt to be influenced by little scraps of newspaper criticism, & by what people say to me. And I sometimes fancy I am rather like one of those most unprofitable race horses that "shut up at the finish."
(Wolff "Devoted" 25-26)

So Braddon seems to accept his criticism that her efforts were negated by the ending, but she challenges his notions about George's death, arguing "that question about the inadmissibility of accident in art is always terribly perplexing to me. Why not admit accident in a story when almost all the great tragedies of real life hinge on accident?" (Wolff "Devoted" 26).

Indeed, a strong case can be made for the fact that his death is not accidental, but arises from George's characterization as a devoted healer, as illustrated when he returns to his rounds too soon after catching a "low fever" from his humble patients. Isabel watches him leave the gate knowing that she does not love him but also knowing that:

he was good, she knew that there was something praiseworthy in what he was doing to-night, --this resolute visiting of wretched sick people. It was not the knightly sort of goodness she had adored in

the heroes of her choice: but it was good and she admired her husband.... (Doctor's 87)

His placidity then prompts his initial refusal to let Isabel consult the other doctor in town, saying that he'll take care of himself. He is more anxious that she prevent herself from becoming infected than with his own care. His actions are so completely in accordance with his character that Braddon has the option to go either way with the illness. It is just as plausible for him to die as to live according to the fictional world of The Doctor's Wife.

Most modern readers would agree with Braddon that this "accident" is more dramatically compelling than the fatal beating that Roland receives. In fact, most modern readers would bridle at the sheer coincidence involved in the grudge and Isabel's being the unwitting enabler of her father's revenge. In reality, Sleaford's character has been under-developed so that this episode pops out of the texture of the novel as a whole. Roland's death may be what Braddon had intended all along in order for Isabel to become the "sadder but wiser" woman; however, her use of Sleaford as the shadowy nemesis that suddenly confronts Roland smacks of similar melodramatic elements that she so carefully excised from the outcasts. When pressed, Braddon falls back on the familiar, a tendency that she again displays in Phase Three of the experiment, as we shall see.

Whatever her disappointment with the novel in general and Bulwer-Lytton's apparent obtuseness in particular, Braddon was

partially buoyed up by two reviews that praised the book. The Saturday Review and the Spectator had both been either lukewarm or even hostile to her previous work. The Saturday critic seemed to understand what Bulwer-Lytton did not when he declared the book was "in the fullest sense a novel of character," a "path of art new and comparatively untried" for Braddon concluding with the statement:

what will most gratify her true friends and admirers is to see her talents applied in a new and more wholesome direction, and reaching a point of moral elevation which; despite perhaps a little over-strain of fancy, shows her to be capable of real excellence in the highest and purest walks of art. (Rev. 572)

The Spectator's reviewer also pronounced the book a novel of character whose interest focuses on "the inner life of a girl gifted with a romantic imagination, but whose outer surroundings are of the most ordinary kind" saying that Braddon had "displayed quite unexpected power," His judgment is that "Miss Braddon has at last contributed something to fiction which will be remembered" and that with:

a little more pains, a little more time, a little more of the lovingness with which the author has painted single scenes, and Isabel might have belong to that small list of heroines which is quoted in conversation as if those who composed it were real figures,--to the Flora MacIvors, and Emmas and Becky Sharps. (Rev. 1215)

Perhaps the real problem here is that Braddon was putting too much emphasis on what Bulwer-Lytton thought and not enough trust in the critics. She was trying to serve too many masters in the form of publishers, public, critics, and mentor rather than relying on her own good instincts and the development of her abilities. This may have been the first inkling that Bulwer-Lytton was not infallible in his literary judgment. We can only speculate as to whether Bulwer-Lytton's finally disapproving of the book sprang from his inability or refusal to recognize its superiority in parts, choosing to dwell on the conclusion's shortcomings almost exclusively. We can also only surmise whether or not Braddon admitted to herself even a slight possibility that Bulwer-Lytton was not as utterly discerning as she had believed him to be. In any case, we can be certain of her great disappointment and sense of frustration at the entire situation.

Even as she was wrestling with the end of The Doctor's Wife she was launching another novel in St. James's Magazine and had contracted for yet another to Temple Bar. These were to be the final pair in her experiment, only a clod and Sir Jasper's Tenant. She called the former "a hand to mouth affair, & done to keep my hand in & earn money" and the latter the best she could do to "build a decent house out of secondhand bricks." (Wolff "Devoted" 27,28).

CHAPTER 6

Phase Three and Concluding Remarks

The one surviving letter from Bulwer-Lytton to Braddon that falls within the time period under consideration is dated December 13, 1864, thus written just after Bulwer-Lytton has read and commented on The Doctor's Wife. Her serial only a clod is in its fifth installment in St. James Magazine and she is just beginning to write Sir Jasper's Tenant which will begin appearing in Temple Bar in February. He begins by expressing gladness that she is going to "launch" another novel, continuing:

Of course you do well to consult the Element of popularity with your own public. But that Public is a large one and comprises intellectual readers. I do not doubt that whatever you do will carry with it the increased [illegible] of confidence you have acquired and that with the incidents given to strong interest or as it is stupidly called sensation, you will find yourself perforce combining improved views of character and graces of style.

A great novel writer must necessarily be a popular writer--with or without striving for it. And nowadays in England it seems hopeless to expect aid from critics if one sacrifices a certain portion of the popular element for the sake of choicer merits. But so long as invention does not flag an author like

you will keep up the high standards of that perhaps
without knowing it. (Wolff "Devoted" 29)

Braddon's previous lament that the "reeled-off" henry dunbar has sold as many copies as The Doctor's Wife may have prompted Bulwer-Lytton to offer these observations as a sort of strengthening tonic. He seems to be expressing his belief that her strong powers of invention will allow her to defy the critics and public somewhat as she strives to improve these "choicer merits" of "improved views of character and graces of style." Nevertheless, Bulwer-Lytton is quite aware of the advantages his financial stability and established literary reputation give him which are not afforded to Braddon. Competition for the "public shilling" in serials is fierce.

Her next two letters are full of speculation concerning the directions her two main competitors' serials are taking. Wilkie Collins's Armada was appearing in The Cornhill Magazine in direct competition with her own Sir Jasper's Tenant in Temple Bar while Dickens's Our Mutual Friend was also appearing in monthly parts. Braddon was only in competition with Dickens as far as every writer was in competition with every other writer on every level for the money to be won from the public; however, her competition with Collins was quite direct as expressed in Letter 12:

My next story [Sir Jasper's Tenant] is to begin
in Temple Bar in January... & is to be sensational,
for Wilkie Collins in Cornhill will be a most
powerful oponent [sic] & I can only fight him with

his own weapons--mystery, crime, &c. You see I am obliged to sink my own inclinations in deference to the interests of the magazine. (Wolff "Devoted" 26)

As Wolff wryly comments, "one senses that her regret was rather perfunctory" (Sensational 167). Perhaps Braddon saw this as a convenient excuse to forego the effort of a strenuous third year of an experiment that did not seem to be producing the desired results. Her focus seems to be turning outward after two years of inward scrutiny so that the demands of the reading public and the interests of her publishers, mostly Maxwell at this time, have eclipsed Sir Edward in importance, though only temporarily, she assures him.

Surely returning to the familiar dictates of sensation novels was a relief, a vacation from the previous strain. Braddon makes it clear to Bulwer-Lytton that she never intended much for the "lightly regarded" only a clod and that Sir Jasper's Tenant was never meant to be a novel of character. Each was to be suitable for its particular serial venue although the latter received the lion's share of effort since it vied with Armada.

only a clod is the bildungsroman story of Francis Tredethlyn whose life is transformed by a large and unexpected inheritance. His former commanding officer in Van Dieman's Land becomes his enemy back in England when Francis marries Ensign Harcourt Lowthers beloved Maude Hillary. Of course, money plays a vital role in every complication and solution achieved throughout the novel. Coincidences and misunderstandings

provide the tension, while the action revolves around the struggle for sympathetic connection between husband and wife, a struggle made manifestly more difficult by Harcourt Lowther and his scheming brother. The extremely low degree of crime is restricted to a "false marriage" that turns out not to be false after all and the attempt by Harcourt to debase Francis by leading him into expensive and evil company which results in Harcourt's being ruined and dying an alcoholic rather than his intended victim.

There are no corpses, no lost or secret documents, no mental illness stronger than simple jealousy, no grinding poverty to overcome; in other words, this is Braddon's first attempt at an exclusively domestic drama, and as such it depends on the mysteries of social mores, upper-middle class money machinations, psychological stratagems, and emotional blackmail rather than threats from criminal sources, external or internal. It is true that Harcourt and his brother are scoundrels in their dealings, but they do not stoop to outright criminal acts to finesse their opponents. In the character of Maude Hillary Tredethlyn she even manages to "grow" her character from a spoiled rich young lady into a woman of sympathies without resorting to melodramatic incidents.

Sir Jasper's Tenant depends on wicked twin sisters and concealed identities for its driving force and a murder to bring everything to a crisis. The title character is one George Pauncefort, an English traveler who has been in Africa for fifteen years and has rented Sir Jasper Denison's hunting box

"The Hermitage" on condition that he will have strict privacy in it. His manner is melancholy and reserved. He is really George Pierrepont, nephew of a wealthy Yorkshire squire who has been deserted by his wife, Caroline, with the aid of her twin sister Leonora Fane and her seedy husband the Captain. Of course George has subsequently inherited the property and yearly supported his runaway wife with a stipend sent through bankers, but he has never recovered from the shame and has wandered the world under his false name seeking mental relief in obscurity.

Braddon reveals this gradually throughout volumes one and two while she brings new love into George's life via Sir Jasper's rather emotionally neglected daughter Marcia. The central complication arrives with the merry widow, Mrs. Harding, who has made Sir Jasper's acquaintance at a German spa the year before and who has pressed a carelessly proffered invitation into a stay through the Christmas season. Of course she is none other than George's runaway wife for all she calls herself Blanche Harding. Or is she? Readers suspect she is really Leonora and not Caroline, which turns out to be the case. Leonora has been impersonating her dead sister to collect the annual stipend.

The novel's subplot concerns their scapegrace younger brother, his gambling debts, and his murdering a man who is blackmailing Leonora. Here Braddon has clearly reverted to the sensationalistic formula and stereotypical characters of her earlier works in the novel intended to be the "higher" of the pair. Her writing style in this novel is certainly of a better

sort than in eleanor's victory or the subplot of the outcasts and the characters of Sir Jasper and even the wicked Leonora display a complexity that echoes the quality of Sigismund Smith and Lady Audley. But the novel does not display the subtlety of plot design that even henry dunbar does, while only a clod's few melodramatic elements are more restrained than John Marchmont's Legacy's.

Even if she is unaware of it, Braddon's entire writing style has become more polished, so that even a novel she doesn't take pains with is substantially better than her previous efforts. This phenomenon most likely owes itself to several factors. The knowledge and practice she gained from her experiment certainly contributed a great deal to her overall improvement; however, the differences in the serials running her "lower fiction" must be said to have played a role as well. The St. James's Magazine, in which only a clod ran, attempted to reach a more sophisticated audience than Once a Week or The London Journal, as their price differential indicates. The former periodical cost one shilling while the latter two were either one or three penny productions. Although the fiction in St. James's was considered inferior to other shilling publications, it is clear that it was attempting to appeal to persons of more disposable wealth than its humbler companions. Braddon would have felt it incumbent on herself to aid and abet this attempt and so adjusted her text to the appropriate tone.

Another practical reason for neatness and popular success was that St. James's was, at this time, owned by John Maxwell

and she was on the editorial staff. Therefore, personal interests in the form of magazine profits were also compelling. Even if she did not think too deeply about only a clod, it actually sold better in its triple-decker format than The Doctor's Wife and received positive notices in The Saturday Review. The anonymous reviewer praises her storytelling as "brisk" and "straightforward" saying that the novel is "compact and consistent." In his estimation "it is no small or common talent to be able to construct an interesting tale, and then to tell it in good language, and without affection or egotism" (rev. 639). The Athenaeum's reviewer notices some of Braddon's grammatical and mechanical errors but owns that "Maude Hillary is very good, and the description of her final reconciliation to her husband on the Cornish moorland rises into noble pathos" (rev. n.p.). The Spectator calls it "readable" and "amusing" but chafes at the novel's more improbable elements, finally saying that "on the whole Only a Clod will not increase its authors reputation, but we do not know that it will lower it" (rev. n.p.). Even in their criticism of the novel, these usually hostile voices are much less cutting than normal and even go so far as to mildly praise her overall capacity. We can conclude, therefore, that this "carelessly tossed off" novel demonstrates the seasoning that Braddon has acquired through practice and careful effort.

The reviews of Sir Jasper's Tenant were somewhat mixed. The Athenaeum found her scene painting good and her characters "drawn with a kindly touch of sympathetic human feeling, feeling

which keeps up the reader's interest in their welfare, and is one main element in Miss Braddon's popularity" (rev. 537). It also praised her powers of observation and natural selection, especially in the production of lifelike conversation. The Saturday Review finds these characters "boring" and the impersonation "trick" only slightly better than the "bigamy trick" concluding that "Miss Braddon is strong enough and inventive enough to discover a new fashion which may be better than either" (rev. 521). The Spectator is less kind. They call the novel "inferior not only to The Doctor's Wife, which we regard as by far the most powerful of all she has written, but to the older and more sensational stories" she had written (rev. 174). Sir Jasper's character is interesting after a fashion but still a character from an old comedy rather than a character from real life. The Examiner's critic is the most vociferous in attacking the novel calling it "Kitchen Literature," whose vulgarity is "not superficial but deep-seated" (rev. 697). From there, his remarks become even more cutting, concerning the plot, her characters, and her grammar.

Braddon even admits to Bulwer-Lytton that she has made a grave error in construction when she had George Pouncefort relate the story of his early life to Marcia in a letter and in his characterization in general:

I heartily concur in all your objections--and I feel now that Pouncefort letter was an entire mistake.... In fact it is altogether a case of inexcusable carelessness--and I hope it will be a

warning to me in the future. I much regret the error, for I had hoped Pauncefort might have pleased you--Though I know he was the most shadowy reflection of one of yr own characters--and I find my hand too weak to hold him--even for a moment.(Wolff "Devoted" 34)

Fundamentally, there is little difference in quality between only a clod and Sir Jasper's Tenant, despite her artificial designation of the former as "lower" and the latter as "higher." Indeed, when these books were read for the first time in a blind test, I was inclined to rate only a clod higher, due to its lack of melodramatic elements and especially since the criminal element was almost non-existent, an opinion seemingly reflected by the reviewers quoted above.

Possibly a portion of Braddon's strategic errors can be attributed to her contest with Wilkie Collins. She may have given too much attention to the competition which pressed her into some of these errors. She seems to be quite interested in Collins and Dickens just as she is beginning Sir Jasper's Tenant, as demonstrated by her discussion points of strategy with Bulwer-Lytton in Letters 14 and 15. Her opinion is that Collins is being "too openly & inartistically sensational & he is telling his story rapidly whereas his peculiar art heretofore has been the slow & gradual development of his plot"(Wolff "Devoted" 30). In letter fifteen she almost crows:

Wilkie Collins is in the wrong track, isn't he? That woman in the red Paisley shawl--the sudden & most

inartistic deaths of a small family that need never have been born so far as the book is concerned strike me as unworthy of the hand that so neatly put together that delicious puzzle "The Woman in White." Three numbers & no female interest--surely a mistake so far as Mr. Mudie's constituency is/are concerned. (Wolff "Devoted" 31)

Had Collins's serial proved to be a more worthy opponent, and/or if she had not exhausted herself over The Doctor's Wife and felt such keen disappointment in its reception by Bulwer-Lytton, if she had not been pressed for time and felt her mind "apt to get rather foggy" from moving around two sets of characters at the same time, if money had not been a pressing matter, perhaps Braddon would have risen to the occasion better. These circumstances all told on the last phase of the experiment tremendously.

Her interest in Dickens's work touches on more fundamental writing difficulties than those she sees in Collins's novel. She and Bulwer-Lytton have apparently been discussing Dickens's powers of imagination and how they sometimes are allowed too free a reign. She professes herself one of his "most enthusiastic admirers" but she:

cannot help thinking that he is getting into a muddle with this story, & that it will be below "Little Dorrit." I cannot believe in any of the characters and I can perceive in this book the force of what you say about the very wealth of Dickens's imagination

sometimes carrying him too far into regions whither his more practical readers refuse to follow or are unable to follow him. (Wolff "Devoted" 30)

Letter 15 continues her observations:

Dickens seems to have let his sensational cat completely out of the bag, but I hear he has plenty more of his story to tell. It seems to be very far below "Great Expectations" as a work of art and has but been unilluminated by any such genial light as Joe Gargery shed over all that picture. (Wolff "Devoted" 31)

In Letter 14, Braddon has touched on one of the fundamental problems a writer of Victorian serial fiction faced, an author's need to exercise and express creative imagination in constructing a fictive world as it encounters reader resistance expressed in terms of "believability" or "verisimilitude." Braddon has encountered this imaginary boundary line throughout her career to this point, with far less reader toleration (or is it really mostly critical toleration?) than her male counterparts. Dickens and Collins seem to be able to introduce highly imaginative occurrences, strange coincidences, and highly-colored descriptions of people, places, and goings on that bring down on Braddon and her female contemporaries howls of disgust and charges of either lack of talent or immorality. Whether or not she consciously sees a difference in the boundary lines cannot be proven from her correspondence with Bulwer-Lytton, but that she sees Dickens crossing this boundary as set

for him demonstrates that she is quite aware of its existence and that she is concerned about it in relation to her own work. This boundary was, in part, made up of contemporary beliefs concerning the nature of the human mind and of behavioral motivations that could not be directly addressed, especially sexuality.

Dickens, Collins, Braddon and their contemporaries worked under the handicap of Victorian cultural taboos concerning the expression of sexual desires, yet sexual tensions were the impetus for many of the conflicts within and among the members of society from which writers drew their characters and situations. Since this sexual tension, even in the form of sensuality, could not be explored or expressed in open terms, writers had to take their cue from mainstream mores and attribute excesses of feeling or behavior to other causes in a sort of displacement mechanism which sometimes manifested itself in that sense of hyperbole discussed in Chapter 3. For example, in David Copperfield, Uriah Heep's carnal desires for Agnes must be presented in the form of greed for her father's wealth and power over her well-being, so his character is overly unctuous and his person is described in terms reminiscent of imps or devils such as red hair and spindly legs. His calming of horses by blowing in their nostrils mimics demonic spell casting. Similarly, Count Fosco's sexuality is disguised under the rubric of the gourmand. He is urbane to the point of oiliness, unruffled in heated confrontations. His clothing and viand selection seems to take precedent, serving to paint him as a

shallow sybarite. Additionally, both of these men, as villains, seem to possess varying degrees of ability to divine the future in order to outwit their respective virtuous foes. It is almost as if their acknowledging, at least to themselves, their own sexual motivations enables them to have a more accurate picture of the motivations of those who refuse to even consider these possibilities. In other words, their own honesty enlightens them to a degree of empowerment that borders on omniscience, but Dickens and Collins must couch this empowerment under socially acceptable metaphors, the most acceptable of which is the guise of "evil" and the next most acceptable of which is "brutishness" as best exemplified by Bill Sykes in Oliver Twist.

Another metaphoric framework for sexuality/sensuality was achieved through the use of supernatural forces, even if they were later debunked as naturally occurring phenomenon. Wilkie Collins is particularly fond of this device as exemplified in The Woman in White and The Moonstone where his heroes encounter seeming apparitions and mystical Hindus. Linking sexual/sensual images to descriptions of supernatural phenomenon diffused them sufficiently for presentation while still providing the desired titillation. The safest way of diffusing sexual tension, however, was turning it into farcical situations or manifesting it in buffoons like Mr. McCawber or Dick Swiveler. Braddon's failure was in presenting her sexually/sensually charged images and motivations without enough proper displacement in her early works such as Lady Audley's Secret and Aurora Floyd; moreover, her sexual beings were women around whom

her stories revolved and for whom she was garnering reader sympathy. Collins and Dickens were very careful to portray their female characters as devoid of sexuality; even the trollop Nancy and other "fallen women" are not sexual instigators like Aurora or predators like Lucy Audley. A morally positive hyperbole, for example Mary Marchmont, was always more acceptable than morally negative ones like Olivia Marchmont, but it had to be couched in acceptable terms, which rule Braddon flouted in Lucy Audley by making her a beautiful wax doll, the very image of a Victorian "angel of the hearth" and when she allowed Aurora Floyd to get away with bigamy. Braddon's hyperbole was simply too uncomfortably close to the inadmissible truth of human sexuality for comfort and too well-written to be dismissed on that score. Her novels called into question the cherished belief that human beings were closer to God and the angels because they could control their "animal urges" and anyone who so challenged this societal self-perception smacked too much of Darwinism.

Where Collins channeled his sexual/sensual hyperbole into supernaturalism and Dickens channeled his into his comic and "evil" characters, Braddon generally failed to channel hers into a "proper" vessel for diffusion, except in the case of Sigismund Smith in The Doctor's Wife. Sigismund, Braddon in loose disguise, is the sensation writer through whom almost all of the hyperbolic elements can be funneled and dissipated. Braddon utilizes the description of his stories as a foil for the prosaic meeting and courtship of Isabel and George. He all but

disappears half way through the novel when Isabel realizes that Roland wants her to be his mistress, thus bringing the sexual question out into the open. Her immediate refusal forestalls any further need for Sigismund's self-poisoning heroines or absurd self-deprecating chatter about his profession, so he is only loosely referred to at the novel's close.

Concluding Remarks

Mary Elizabeth Braddon expressed herself a failure in Letter 18, in October 1865. She writes to Bulwer-Lytton:

I begin to see the weakness of my mind. I fear I shall never describe much less create a great or good man--and yet heaven knows I admire the great & the noble in the works of others--and am deeply touched by all great & beautiful pictures--But my pen is most at home in painting a character of the Sir Jasper or Holyroyde stamp. I can write about villains & villainesses by the mile--with what my critics would call "a fatal facility." Then again I am impressed too much by externals and in thinking of any of my characters I see their attitudes--the scenery &

atmosphere about them--every detail of pictorial effect--and perhaps forget altogether the subjective side of the question. I doubt if I shall ever write an artistic novel--or a novel that will satisfy you. But I hope and believe I may write a much better novel than any I have written yet--and succeed in pleasing you. (Wolff "Devoted" 34)

Perhaps by the strictest criteria, her self-judgment is valid, but the criteria require some examination.

Her toughest standard was the good opinion of Bulwer-Lytton. Several times she expresses a desire to "satisfy" him in regards to her writing. Since we do not have access to his letters directly commenting on her work, we can only guess at their contents from her replies, which may not present an accurate view. Judging from the materials available, Braddon tended to be quite self-deprecating in her correspondence with Bulwer-Lytton. Whether this was indeed her candid view of her material or her way of behaving in an overtly political manner to an older, more successful writer/mentor, or whether her lingering hero worship from childhood reading thus colored every communication, we must judge for ourselves. Her reaction to his criticism of The Doctor's Wife is an indication that she is beginning to break away from the tight dependence on his opinion as commonly occurs when a mentee has reached a certain degree of maturity. Braddon never goes as far as open rebellion against her mentor. Rather, she seems to examine the situation with a new sense of reality, thank him for his contribution politely,

and resume her career with a slightly altered perspective. From feeling as if "satisfying" him were the most important and telling criterion for judging her work, her aspirations evolve into desiring to "please" him, a much more realistic goal. Braddon has matured enough to realize that she must trust her own instincts and consider several critical opinions in order to succeed in the game she has chosen to play.

The second criterion that Braddon looked to for approbation was the sales figures for her six novels. Accurate figures are not available, but from her own letters and from what Professor Wolff gathered, the novel that she, and many of her critics, considered her best work, The Doctor's Wife, sold fewer copies than any of the other five. Braddon takes this as a failure by strictly equating higher sales with quality of writing. In this she was either naive or idealistic since the reverse is often the rule. Then as today, "best sellers" are often of dramatically lower literary quality than is indicated by their gross earnings, since the sales are boosted somewhat artificially by promotional techniques and discounted volume sales to circulation organizations such as libraries or book clubs. Circulation figures can be just as poor a measurement instrument because, if available, they only reflect the primary recipient of the printed material which may pass through several hands subsequently.

The most accurate way to look at the experiment in light of sales is to see that as the experimental time frame wore on, her sales increased, with the exception of The Doctor's Wife

which sold fewer copies than henry dunbar. The telling thing here is that henry dunbar, which originally ran in a 3 penny magazine, was so improved by her revision that its triple-decker format sold far better than eleanor's victory. In fact, Braddon had raised its quality to that of her shilling magazine work like John Marchmont's Legacy or Aurora Floyd. Only a small portion of her readers recognized it from its first run as the outcasts, because her audience in the penny magazines was so segregated from her audience in the shilling journals as regards to monetary means and literary taste. Braddon had succeeded in toning down the "strong meat" into a dish more pleasing to more delicate palates.

As far as The Doctor's Wife is concerned, many novels of finer literary quality do not sell well in their original incarnations. It is only after a time that they become "classics" or they become candidates for re-evaluation, and, as was pointed out earlier in this work, Jane Tompkins argues that literary reputation, of individual works and/or authors, is either sustained or revived through a much more political process than literary historians or critics have heretofore recognized or admitted. That Braddon's literary reputation did not survive after World War I is not surprising considering the modernist revision of the literary canon taking place during that time. Nor is it surprising that her Lady Audley's Secret came back into publication and scholarly view during the feminist movement of the early seventies. What is important is

that scholars look beyond her early novels to judge the writer she was becoming during and after her experiment.

A certain portion of blame, if that is what we seem to be assigning, for the disappointment of The Doctor's Wife must be given to the fact that Braddon was not working with material of her own invention. The difficulties of boulderizing Madam Bovary for an English audience forced Braddon into awkward corners with her characters, and ultimately forced her to misstep when it came to the book's conclusion. Until the very end, the novel is successful in presenting the conflict of idealism and reality in human relationships. It is only when she is socially prohibited from using Flaubert's, or even her own instinctual methods of resolution that the book breaks down. Few of Braddon's other novels suffer such a complete collapse. When working with material of her own invention, Braddon is skillful at maintaining the fictive world's integrity throughout.

So we are back to the original question, "Can the Sensational be Elevated by Art?" Can you make a silk purse out of a sow's ear? Not as such. The material will always tell in the making of the object. A purse made out of a sow's ear will never be an elegant accessory, but it will be a durable one in its own right, an interesting one to some people, an artifact of times past. Braddon's "place" in literature is not on the same level as Dickens's or Eliot's, but she should not be relegated to obscurity along with Ouida or James Payn either. Her work is an artifact of the mid-Victorian period, whose place should be

with those authors who worked steadily to improve as writers while they mirrored and illuminated the human conditions around them, contending with all the practicalities and difficulties of publishing during the heyday of serialization.

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The following reviews were located in various archival reels of microfilm. The variance in page numbers between differing microfilm collections makes the citation of page numbers extremely confusing. The best method for locating these reviews is to look up the periodical by name and date on whatever microfilm, microfiche, or paper copy is available.

Rev. of The Doctor's Wife. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Athenaeum 15 October 1864.

Rev. of The Doctor's Wife. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Saturday Review 5 November 1864.

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Rev. of Henry Dunbar. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Athenaeum 21 May 1864.

Rev. of Henry Dunbar. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Literary Examiner 25 June 1864.

Rev. of Henry Dunbar. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Saturday Review 9 July 1864.

Rev. of Henry Dunbar. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Spectator 4 June 1864.

- Rev. of John Marchmont's Legacy. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Athenaeum 12 December 1863.
- Rev. of Only a Clod. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Athenaeum 27 May 1865.
- Rev. of Only a Clod. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Saturday Review 27 May 1865.
- Rev. of Only a Clod. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Spectator 24 June 1865.
- Rev. of Sir Jasper's Tenant. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Athenaeum 21 October 1865.
- Rev. of Sir Jasper's Tenant. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Saturday Review 21 October 1865.
- Rev. of Sir Jasper's Tenant. by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The Spectator 21 October 1865.

EXPERIMENTAL TIMELINE

PHASE I	November 1862	December 1862	January 1863
In Publication	AURORA FLOYD (35-36): TB	AURORA FLOYD (37→39/End): TB JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (1-3): TB	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (1-3): TB
In Preparation	AURORA FLOYD (37→39/End): TB JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (1-3): TB	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (4-6): TB -revising AURORA FLOYD for Vol. ?-	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (4-6): TB -revising AURORA FLOYD for Vol. ?-
Letters to/from Bulwer		Letter 1 (no date)	
Volumes Published			-AURORA FLOYD?-
Reviews	LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET: <u>The Times</u> , November 18 (previously reviewed in <u>The Athenaeum</u> , October 25, 1862)		AURORA FLOYD: <u>The Athenaeum</u> , January 31

PHASE II	November 1863	December 1863	January 1864
In Publication	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (35-39): TB <i>the outcasts</i> : lj – 7: Ch. 22, 23, 24 21: Ch. 28, 29, 30 14: Ch. 25, 26, 27 28: Ch. 31, 32, 33	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (40-41): TB <i>the outcasts</i> : lj – 5: Ch. 34, 35 19: Ch. 38, 39 12: Ch. 36, 37 26: Ch. 40, 41	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (40-41): TB THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (1-3): TB <i>the outcasts</i> : lj – 2: Ch. 42, 43 23: Ch. 44, 45 9: Ch. 44, 45 30: Ch. 46, 47 16: Ch. 46, 47
In Preparation	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (40-41): TB <i>the outcasts</i> (34-41): lj (Editing JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY for publication)	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (42→End): TB <i>the outcasts</i> (42-52): lj THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (1-3): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (1-3): TB <i>the outcasts</i> (53-57): lj -Editing <i>the outcasts</i> in preparation for publication
Letters to/from Bulwer			Letter 7 (January 17)
Volumes Published		JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY	
Reviews		JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY: <u>The Athenaeum</u> , December 12	

PHASE III	January 1865	February 1865	March 1865
In Publication	only a clod (17-21): stj	only a clod (22-24): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (1-3): TB	only a clod (25-27): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (1-3): TB
In Preparation	only a clod (22-24): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (1-3): TB	only a clod (25-27): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (4-7): TB	only a clod (28-30): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (4-7): TB
Letters to/from Bulwer	Letter 15 (no date)	Letter 16 (February 28)	
Volumes Published			
Reviews			

January 1863	February 1863	March 1863	April 1863
MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (4-6): TB	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (7-10): TB	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (11-13): TB <i>eleanor's victory: ow –</i> 7-Ch. 1, 2 21-Ch. 4 14-Ch. 3 28-Ch. 5, 6	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (14-16): TB <i>eleanor's victory: ow –</i> 4: Ch. 7, 8 18: 11, 12 11: Ch. 9, 10 25: 13, 14
MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (7-10): TB AURORA FLOYD?-	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (11-13): TB <i>eleanor's victory (1-6): ow</i>	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (14-16): TB <i>eleanor's victory (7-14): ow</i> Letter 2 (March 30)	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (17-19): TB <i>eleanor's victory (15-24): ow</i> Letter 3 (April 13)
FLOYD?-	-AURORA FLOYD?-		
FLOYD: <u>The Athenaeum</u> .			

January 1864	February 1864	March 1864	April 1864
MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (42→End): THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (1-3): TB s: lj – 43 23: Ch. 48, 49 45 30: Ch. 50, 51, 52 47	<i>the outcasts: lj –</i> 6: Ch. 53 20: Ch. 56 13: Ch. 54, 55 27: Ch. 57 <i>THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (4-6): TB</i>	<i>the outcasts: lj –</i> 5: Ch. 58, 59 19: Ch. 62, 63, 64 12: Ch. 60, 61 26: Ch. 65, 66 <i>THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (7-9): TB</i>	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (10-12): TB
THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (4-6) TB s (53-57): lj <i>e outcasts into henry dunbar</i> (January 17)	<i>the outcasts (58→66/End): lj</i> <i>THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (7-9): TB</i>	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (10-12): TB <i>henry dunbar</i>	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (13-16): TB

March 1865	April 1865	May 1865	June 1865
only a clod (25-27): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (4-7): TB	<i>only a clod (28-30): stj</i> SIR JASPER'S TENANT (8-11): TB	<i>only a clod (31-32): stj</i> SIR JASPER'S TENANT (12-14): TB	<i>only a clod (33-35): stj</i> SIR JASPER'S TENANT (15-17): TB
only a clod (28-30): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (8-11): TB	<i>only a clod (31-32): stj</i> <i>-editing only a clod?-</i> SIR JASPER'S TENANT (12-14): TB Letter 17 (no date)	<i>only a clod (33-35): stj</i> SIR JASPER'S TENANT (15-17): TB	<i>only a clod (36-39): stj</i> SIR JASPER'S TENANT (18-20): TB
		<i>only a clod: The Athenaeum, May 27;</i> <i>The Saturday Review, May 27</i>	<i>only a clod: The Spectator, June 24</i>

	May 1863	June 1863	July 1863	
16): TB	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (17-19): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> : ow -- 2: Ch. 15, 16 23: Ch. 21, 22 9: Ch. 17, 18 30: Ch. 23, 24 16: Ch. 19, 20	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (20-22): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> : ow -- 6: Ch. 24, 26 20: Ch. 29, 30 13: Ch. 27, 28 27: Ch. 31, 32	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (23-25): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> : ow -- 4: Ch. 33, 34 18: Ch. 37, 38 11: Ch. 35, 36 25: Ch. 39, 40	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (26-28): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> : (41-50): ow
19): TB	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (20-22): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> (25-32): ow Letters 4 & 5 (no date)	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (23-25): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> (33-40): ow	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (26-28): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> (41-50): ow	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (29-31): TB <i>eleonor's victory</i> (51-60): ow the outcasts (1-10) -revising <i>eleonor's victory</i>
				Blackwood's / novels with me

	May 1864	June 1864	July 1864	
	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (13-16): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (17-18): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (19-21): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (22-25): TB <i>only a clod</i> (1-10)
	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (17-18): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (19-21): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (22-25): TB <i>only a clod</i> (1-4): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (26-28): TB <i>only a clod</i> (5-10)
		{ Between June 24 and ————— }	—————	—————
	JOHN MARCHMONT: <u>Sharpe's</u> , May 1864 <i>henry dunbar</i> : <u>The Athenaeum</u> , May 21 (reply: May 28)	<i>henry dunbar</i> : <u>The Spectator</u> , June 4 <u>The Literary Examiner</u> , June 25	<i>henry dunbar</i> : <u>The Saturday Review</u> , July 9	

	July 1865	August 1865	September 1865	
	<i>only a clod</i> (36-39): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (18-20): TB	<i>only a clod</i> (40→End): stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (21): TB	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (22-25): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (26-29): TB THE LADY'S MILE
	<i>only a clod</i> (40→End) stj SIR JASPER'S TENANT (21): TB	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (22-25): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (26-29): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (30-32): TB THE LADY'S MILE
				Letter 18 (no d)
				SIR JASPER'S TENANT (33-35): TB THE LADY'S MILE
				SIR JASPER'S TENANT (36-38): TB THE LADY'S MILE

July 1863	August 1863	September 1863	October 1863
JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (23-25): TB ow — 18: Ch. 37, 38 25: Ch. 39, 40	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (26-28): TB eleanor's victory: ow — 1: Ch. 41, 42 8: Ch. 43, 44 15: Ch. 45, 46 22: Ch. 47, 48 29: Ch. 49, 50	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (29-31): TB eleanor's victory: ow — 5: Ch. 51, 52 12: Ch. 53, 54 the outcasts: lj — 12: Ch. 1, 2, 3 19: Ch. 4, 5 19: Ch. 55, 56 26: Ch. 57 26: Ch. [6, 7, 8, 9]	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (32-34): TB eleanor's victory: ow — 3: Ch. 58→End the outcasts: lj — 3: Ch. 10, 11 10: Ch. 12, 13 17: Ch. 14, 15 24: Ch. 16, 17, 18 31: Ch. 19, 20, 21
JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (26-28): TB (41-50): ow	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (29-31): TB eleanor's victory (51-57): ow the outcasts (1-9): lj -revising <i>eleanor's victory</i> ?-	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (32-34): TB eleanor's victory (58→End): ow the outcasts (10-21): lj	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (35-39): TB the outcasts (22-33): lj
		Letter 6 (September 19)	
		<i>eleanor's victory</i>	
	<u>Blackwood's</u> , August: General discussion of novels with mention of <i>AURORA FLOYD</i>	<i>eleanor's victory</i> : <u>The Spectator</u> , September 19; <u>The Athenaeum</u> , September 19; <u>The Saturday Review</u> , September 19	

July 1864	August 1864	September 1864	October 1864
THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (19-21): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (22-25): TB only a clod (1-4): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (26-29): TB only a clod (5-8): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (30-32): TB only a clod (9-11): stj
THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (22-25): TB (1): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (26-29): TB only a clod (5-8): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (30-32): TB -editing <i>THE DOCTOR'S WIFE</i> for volumes- only a clod (9-11): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (33-35): TB only a clod (12-14): stj
→	→ Letters 8, 9, and 10 →	→ September 19 →	
			THE DOCTOR'S WIFE
<u>The Saturday Review</u> , July 9			THE DOCTOR'S WIFE: <u>The Athenaeum</u> , October 15; <u>The Spectator</u> , October 22

September 1865	October 1865	November 1865	December 1865
SIR JASPER'S TENANT (22-25): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (26-29): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (30-33): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (34→End): TB THE LADY'S MILE
SIR JASPER'S TENANT (26-29): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (30-33): TB THE LADY'S MILE	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (34→End): TB THE LADY'S MILE	THE LADY'S MILE
	Letter 18 (no date)		
	SIR JASPER'S TENANT		
	SIR JASPER'S TENANT: <u>The Spectator</u> , October 21; <u>The Saturday Review</u> , October 21; <u>The Athenaeum</u> , October 21	SIR JASPER'S TENANT: <u>The Examiner</u> , November 4	

1863	October 1863
LEGACY (29-31): TB 19: Ch. 55, 56 26: Ch. 57 26: Ch. [6, 7, 8, 9]	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (32-34): TB <i>Eleanor's victory</i> : ow – 3: Ch. 58→End <i>the outcasts</i> : lj – 3: Ch. 10, 11 24: Ch. 16, 17, 18 10: Ch. 12, 13 31: Ch. 19, 20, 21 17: Ch. 14, 15
LEGACY (32-34): TB id): ow	JOHN MARCHMONT'S LEGACY (35-39): TB <i>the outcasts</i> (22-33): lj
<u>Spectator</u> , September umber 19: <u>The</u> ber 19	

1864	October 1864	November 1864	December 1864
186-29): TB	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (30-32): TB <i>only a clod</i> (9-11): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (33-35): TB <i>only a clod</i> (12-14): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (36→End): TB <i>only a clod</i> (15-16): stj
30-32): TB WIFE for volumes-	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (33-35): TB <i>only a clod</i> (12-14): stj	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE (36→End): TB <i>only a clod</i> (15-16): stj	<i>only a clod</i> (17-21): stj
)		Letter 12 (no date)	Letter 13 (Dec. 9) Bulwer to MEB (Dec. 13) Letter 13A Letter 14 (Dec. 14)
	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE		
	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE: <u>The Athenaeum</u> , October 15; <u>The Spectator</u> , October 22	THE DOCTOR'S WIFE: <u>The Saturday Review</u> , November 5	

1865	December 1865
33-33): TB	SIR JASPER'S TENANT (34→End): TB THE LADY'S MILE
34→End): TB	THE LADY'S MILE
<u>The Examiner</u> ,	

Key
<p>TB = Temple Bar lj = London Journal ow = Once a Week stj = St. James Magazine</p> <p>Numbers in parentheses are Chapter numbers. Weekly installments are broken down by date. For example: 3: Ch. 10, 11 indicates that Chapters 10 and 11 were published on the 3rd of the month.</p>

