

**BRIEF SENSATIONS: A CRITICAL STUDY OF MARY ELIZABETH
BRADDON'S SHORT FICTION**

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, there has been an upsurge in critical attention on the life and oeuvre of Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Most of the critical output, however, relates to Braddon's sensation novels *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861) and *Aurora Floyd* (1862) (with a minority on her domestic novels and plays), and focuses on Braddon's representation of a woman's position in nineteenth-century society. This thesis is therefore the first extended piece to explore her short fiction – which includes short stories, edited collections and novellas – in detail and so contributes significantly to our understanding of Braddon's life and oeuvre. The thesis begins with an exploration of Braddon's multiple selves and how she (re)constructs her image throughout her life, and proceeds by an examination of short fiction's critical position in both contemporary and modern discourse. Following this each chapter is dedicated to a separate subgenre of her short fiction – that of theatrical, supernatural, crime, domestic and children's literature – and how each of these literary subgenres is another constructed performance, like her 'multiple selves'. All of these chapters position Braddon and her writing within her contemporary Victorian context, whilst also examining how her contributions developed each of the subgenres considered. This is achieved by a comparison of Braddon's short fiction with that of other authors of the period, thus our understanding of how Braddon impacted on the larger literary marketplace and influenced other writers will be examined. Furthermore, her short stories will be positioned in relation to her oeuvre as a whole, demonstrating that she did not consider the short story as inferior to the novel, which illuminates our knowledge of the hitherto marginalised genre of the Victorian short story.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

'BKE': 'Before the Knowledge of Evil', in *Sensation Fiction: Part 1, Diaries, Notebooks and Literary Manuscripts of Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835-1915)*, Reels 1-10, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas, Austin

LL: Literary Lives: The Literary Lives of M. E. Braddon, by Jennifer Carnell

TFB: Tillotson Fiction Bureau, Boxes 1-6, Bodleian Library, Oxford

TG: Time Gathered, by William Babington Maxwell

SF: Sensation Fiction: Part 1, Diaries, Notebooks and Literary Manuscripts of Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835-1915), Reels 1-10, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas, Austin

SV: Sensational Victorian: The Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, by Robert Lee Wolff

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INTRODUCTION

It is vaguely appreciated that short stories matured as a genre during the Victorian Age. Their own growing popularity was related to the development of general-interest periodicals and a substantial need to fill columns of white space with agreeable reading matter. (Orel, 1986: 1)

Harold Orel's observation indicates that despite the maturation of the short story as a genre, the novel was the preeminent genre of fiction in the nineteenth century, and, arguably, still remains the dominant focus of modern academics. This is especially true when considering the oeuvre of prolific writer Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The existing scholarship on Braddon has mainly concentrated on her pair of bigamy novels – *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) and *Aurora Floyd* (1863) – though her sensation fiction more generally has gained attention over the last two decades, while her other work has been critically neglected. In fact, the full extent of Braddon's other work has not been quantified in any detail: Chris Willis notes that she wrote 'over 80 novels and a huge number of articles and short stories' (Willis, 1998: 1); Natalie and Ronald Schroeder mention Braddon had a 'productive career ... she completed more than eighty novels and scores of other works' (Schroeder and Schroeder, 2006: 20); and Saverio Tomaiuolo observes that she 'wrote a large number of short stories' (Tomaiuolo, 2010: 9). In fact, Braddon's short fiction makes up a considerable portion of her oeuvre: alongside her almost ninety full-length novels, she published more than two hundred short pieces, which have not yet gained critical interest. The previous quotations also highlight another problem: when categorising Braddon's work, all other genres she works in – including, short fiction, essays, children's literature, historical fiction, travel writing, autobiography, poetry and plays – are grouped together; no distinction is made

between the different genres, reiterating the idea that all other types of literature are inconsequential in comparison to the novel.

Contrasting with Charles May's suggestion that there are many 'conventions of the short story ... its highly patterned structure, its lack of character development, and its thematic limitations' (May, 1989: 62), Braddon's short fiction is wide-ranging in content and technique, revealing her at her most original and inventive. Kate Falvey supports this by noting that '[a]s does her longer fiction, her stories demonstrate her versatility and fluctuate in style, theme, and literary intent' (Falvey, 2007: 48). Braddon experiments with genre conventions, plot expectations and narrative, along with detailing topics which, whilst also explored in her novels, have a sharper impact in a confined space. Short fiction's focus on one main concern in each tale means it is an apt form to expand on thematic possibilities and critical evaluation of generic fiction. Each subgenre can be examined from a variety of angles by taking a group of short stories together, presenting a logical structure for this thesis and justifying consideration of these tales as a whole; the application of generic classifications provides a means of including 'lower' texts and marginalised authors (Beller, 2007: 'Too Absurdly Repulsive'). The reasons for the relative obscurity of Braddon's short works in critical discourse so far, and their homologous treatment, may be due to their resistance to easy grouping or classification (many of the tales are literary hybrids that transcend subgenres); their numerous places of publication (many of which remain undiscovered); or Braddon's use of multiple pseudonyms (that undermine authorial reliability). Yet it is this originality and variety that make them so exciting and deserving of critical consideration.

The aim of this thesis is to expand scholarly engagement with Braddon's oeuvre by identifying, cataloguing and examining the 'scores of other works' she wrote (Schroder and

Schroeder, 2006: 20). In order to achieve this general aim, my thesis focuses specifically on Braddon's short fiction, including some of her other neglected genres, such as her children's literature, whilst also paving the way for more work to be done on her wider oeuvre, such as her non-fiction. This leads to two distinct outcomes: firstly, a wider recognition that there are more genre variations to Braddon's oeuvre than mere sensation fiction (although her short fiction extends her sensation fiction influence, it also represents her breaking free from it); and secondly, that Victorian short fiction is worthy of analysis, so modern critical responses to Braddon's oeuvre should move beyond their current limited scope and reflect the diverse writing that Braddon contributed to literary, gender and cultural studies. Tomaiuolo has made considerable headway in accomplishing this first outcome with reference to Braddon's novels in his recent and aptly named study *In Lady Audley's Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (2010). This text examines Braddon's Gothic, Detective and Victorian Realist novels, strengthening the argument that her entire oeuvre examines social, political and ideological issues. The complexity of Braddon's oeuvre means that grouping her short fiction for discussion is not easy. To treat the stories chronologically would obscure the common elements that link them over a period of nearly fifty years, so I replicate Tomaiuolo's structure of one subgenre per chapter, examining Braddon's theatrical, supernatural, crime, domestic and children's short fiction to fulfil both aforementioned outcomes.

When considering Braddon's short fiction as a whole, the only people to significantly document this genre are her biographers, Robert Lee Wolff and Jennifer Carnell. Wolff has catalogued a significant amount in *Sensational Victorian: The Life and Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (SV, 1979); nevertheless, his main focus was her novels, leaving her short fiction sporadically traced and documented. Carnell's *The Literary*

Lives of Mary Elizabeth Braddon: A Study of Her Life and Work (LL, 2000) expanded Wolff's catalogue to include more original references to her poetry, plays, non-fiction and short fiction, specifically separating these other literatures into their composite genres, demonstrating how versatile and far-reaching Braddon was as a writer. Nevertheless, Wolff and Carnell relegated Braddon's short fiction to appendices, again suggesting modern critics view it as inconsequential in comparison to her novels, although their main focus was to provide an historical approach to Braddon's acting, writing and editing careers, which has been invaluable to Braddon scholars. I use both of these appendices as a starting point for my own research.

To deepen scholarly knowledge of Braddon's short fiction, in another appendix, Wolff lists in Braddon's edited magazine, *The Mistletoe Bough*, the short stories that are attributed to her, but published anonymously. Carnell supports Wolff's conclusions and adds other potential tales to this list, strengthening the case for her authorship. This list is attached in Appendix One of this thesis; however, despite the efforts of two Braddon experts justifying their inclusion in her oeuvre, they will not be incorporated here because of their continuing ambiguous authorship. Instead, only stories where authorship is proven will be considered: stories published under her name, one of her known pseudonyms, or manuscripts that have appeared in the Wolff or Braddon collections in her own handwriting.¹ When tracing the original publications of Braddon's short fiction, even Carnell's catalogue is incomplete, so I have found original publications where possible. Consequently, Appendix Two contains a new catalogue of Braddon's short fiction,

¹ Including short fiction that is undoubtedly written by Braddon should remove any potential complications that may arise if future scholars trace any tales to another author. This has recently happened with *The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories* (2000), because the title story, it is now known, was originally written by Wilkie Collins but was republished in an unauthorised version in America under Braddon's name, and so was subsequently misattributed to her.

including previously undiscovered original publication details of Braddon's tales, which are marked by an asterisk, while also indicating how often the tales have been republished, in order to evaluate her short fiction's continuing interest for general readers and growing popularity with scholars. With this in mind, I can now present the main research questions of this thesis. I begin by discussing Braddon's multiple selves and how she performed many roles over the course of her life, which is reflected in the multiple subgenres of fiction she adopted. I then provide a discussion of the history, influence and value of the Victorian short story, so that Braddon's contribution to this critically neglected genre can be contextualised. Braddon's own stories will then be discussed in relation to her output, her republishing value and influence on modern scholarship, concluding with an overview of the thesis chapters.

In consideration of why Braddon's short fiction should be examined, it is worth noting that because she was, and still is, mainly known as a novelist, her short fiction provides an unexplored space for critical analysis. Commenting on the difference in reception between novelists and short story writers, Glennis Stephenson notes:

The Female [sic] novelist of the nineteenth century may have frequently encountered opposition and interference from the male literary establishment, but the female short story writer, working in a genre that was seen as less serious and less profitable, found her work to be actively encouraged. (Stephenson, 1993 [1997]: 9)

Stephenson confirms that short fiction was marginalised in contemporary criticism, so it offered Braddon a largely ignored literary landscape for experimentation with social, political, familial and literary conventions (which now provides modern scholars with rich and diverse material to engage with). Thus, the main focus of this thesis is the extent to which an examination of Braddon's short fiction offers scholars a deeper understanding of,

not only her oeuvre as a whole, but also of the importance of her contribution to the genre of short fiction. In support of this main research discussion several interconnecting arguments will be pursued, including an evaluation of the Victorian short story as a literary genre and its current critical standing. Was Braddon disparaging towards short fiction because it was considered less prestigious than novels? Was she attempting to popularise the genre further, creating opportunities for other female writers to showcase their talents? Was this an attempt to prove the capabilities of a much ignored female authorship? Was it liberating to work in a genre that was critically side-lined? Or did short stories provide creative freedom in contrast with the tightly structured three volume novel? The positive and negative aspects of Braddon's publishing short fiction in her own journals will also be debated: was it convenient because she could fill the magazines she edited when needed, or were they financially rewarding so she could keep all profits? I will also consider whether Braddon's short fiction challenges or conforms to Victorian generic conventions, and whether Braddon as a Victorian woman writer, chose to support the case for women's rights or if she pandered to her middle-class readership's expectations. Braddon's novels reveal a writer who changed with the times; she kept abreast of new and innovative literary techniques and social conventions, while also proving she walked a fine line between respectability and subversion for her entire life. Braddon's short fiction certainly confirms this innovative and fresh approach to writing, while inviting a reappraisal of her oeuvre as a whole.

Braddon's Multiple Selves

[Mary Elizabeth Braddon] taught us young children to love innocent mirth ... but a good while elapsed before we knew that she had other more important tasks and that she belonged to the public as well as to us.

(Maxwell, 1937 *TG*: 279)

Though this quotation demonstrates the division between the public and private life that female professionals faced in the Victorian era, Braddon's prolific writing career and controversial lifestyle subjected her to public scrutiny and censure more than most other female professionals. Most of the biographical and critical sources available (to be outlined in my Literature Review), situate Braddon as a wife, mother, actress, writer and editor, illuminating how her public and private personas intertwined. For instance, Beth Palmer has undertaken a Butlerian analysis of Braddon's author-editor persona (different from author and editor roles individually), stating it was a self-conscious performance that manoeuvred between normative and transgressive femininity (Palmer, 2011: 2). Palmer 'uses female author-editors to explore the gendering of the editorial role as performative and intimately related to the performativity of the sensation genre itself' (p.8). My argument extends Palmer's, through an analysis of Braddon's multiple selves, to illustrate how Braddon's constructed image is reflected in *all* of her generic fiction. However, instead of being performative, I argue that each of her multiple selves and generic fictions are performances; she conforms to generic conventions to explore, enact and re-work multiple subgenres to establish her short fiction authorial identity. Braddon's constructed identity is based on the intersection of multiple collective identities, as well as her public/private personas. According to modern social psychology collective identity is based on relationships within a group or social categories to which one belongs (Luyckx,

Schwartz and Vignoles, 2011: 3-4), and so each person's identity is multiple and multifaceted, each aspect intersecting and interacting with the others to produce a composite self. This relates to Braddon's position as an actress in a company, as a professional writer/editor in the publishing press, and as a wife/mother within her family because they are all performances.

However, the concept of identity construction is mutable and, thus, not all personas are perceived simultaneously. This is due to the public/private personas of Victorian women. Braddon felt 'everlasting shame & confusion' when pictures of her were sold to the public and so she effectively stage-managed her image throughout her multiple careers to safeguard herself from public scrutiny (Braddon in Wolff, 1974: 133). Therefore, identity theory is inextricably linked to Braddon's multiple careers; there is no sense of one overriding identity which is fixed to one geographical location or constructed image; Braddon can deconstruct and reconstruct her collective identities in every new phase of her life. However, each of Braddon's personas is influenced by historical changes, the literary marketplace's demands and the author's own values and actions. An examination of these different identities and how they influence Braddon's construction of her multiple generic short fiction forms the main research question of this section, which is answered by critically examining Braddon's constructed personal and professional identities through contemporary cartoons, photographs and articles.

This first image of Braddon not only establishes her initial multiple persona – ‘Mary Seyton’ the actress – but it also indicates how she learnt to construct her identities separately and utilise each when needed (Figure 1). Braddon moved to Beverley aged seventeen, which is where she started acting. As her son notes she chose this career ‘to be self-supporting and if possible to earn money sufficient to relieve my grandmother’s anxieties’ due to her father’s lack of family commitment (*TG*: 274). Taking to the stage created a controversy within her family and society because acting was a ‘profession that still held illicit associations with prostitution and immorality’ (Braun, 2009: 236). By becoming an actress, Braddon literally became a performer, adapting herself to the different roles she needed to play, like Lady Audley, initiating her skills at adapting her multiple identities. In this image, her actress persona derives from the acting company she belonged to and is signified by the ‘W. & D. DOWNEY



Figure 1: Braddon as Mary Seyton, pre-1860 PHOTOGRAPHERS’ at the bottom of the picture; the photograph is professionally produced and is therefore a public identity that Braddon constructs to promote herself. She wears a rich, fashionable dress and a pearl necklace to represent herself as a young, beautiful actress who takes pride in her profession, while her turned head maintains a degree of propriety. This image indicates Braddon’s skill at adapting her image for each role she plays, a vital skill when performing different personas both on and off stage

(Braddon's acting career will be analysed in detail in Chapter One). Thus, from an early age, Braddon was able to fragment herself into separate identities and use them to her advantage when presenting an image of herself to the public or in private.

At this point, she was also being commissioned to write by a wealthy patron and she moved to London. Her adoption of a writing career suggests she preferred to occupy the liminal space between the public (becoming a household name) and the private spheres (writing at home); she was not afraid of blurring the boundaries of Victorian conventions. To create her authorial persona and to maintain respectability she adopted the gender-ambiguous pen name, 'M. E. Braddon', which was intended to prevent critical censure arising from the discovery of her sex, indicating another split in her identity. Braddon was not alone in this fragmentation of her self. Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell also created split personas to justify their public and private lives: Brontë, who used the male pseudonym Currer Bell, wrote to Margaret Wooller in 1854, explaining that Arthur, her husband, 'often finds a little work for his wife to do, and I hope she is not sorry to help him' (Brontë in Peterson, 2009: 150), while Gaskell referred to herself as having many 'Mes', 'another self' and 'warring members' within her, in a letter to Eliza Fox in 1850 (Gaskell, 1850 [1966]: 108). Alongside creating 'Mary Seyton' and 'M. E. Braddon', Braddon also constructed 'Lady Caroline Lascelles', 'the Author of *Lady Audley's Secret*', 'Babington White', 'Miss Braddon', 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon' and 'Aunt Belinda' – as well as signing her name 'Mrs Mary Maxwell' in letters to friends before she was married. Thus, Braddon's extensive theatrical experience of playing prescribed roles allowed her to manipulate and maintain her popularity and influence over her publishers, the circulating libraries and the general reading public.

Her sensational authorial persona is represented in the Victorian periodical press. Amid harsh criticism and hard labour, Wolff notes Braddon must have been ‘relieved to open *Beeton’s Christmas Annual* for 1864 [to] find Thomas Hood poking amiable fun at her in two “sensation-novels”’ (SV: 194): ‘*Quintilia the Quadrigamist; or, The Heir and the Hounds*’ (Figure 2) and ‘*Maurora Maudley; or, Bigamy and Buttons*’

(‘Four Illustrated Sensation Novels’, 1864: 77-81). These two cartoon strips (which adapt Braddon sensation plots) reflect the socially constructed authorial identity of Braddon in the 1860s: that of an immoral, socially unacceptable woman who condones bigamy. These cartoons mock her work, but in an affectionate manner, so do not condemn her like other outspoken critics. Yet this year was also significant for Braddon because,

after moving in with Maxwell in 1861 – becoming step-mother to his five children while having six of her own out of wed-lock – controversy arose. It became apparent that Braddon and Maxwell were not married and so Braddon was living a bigamous existence, just like the heroines she depicted in her fiction. To conceal their unorthodox union

Figure 2: ‘*Quintilia the Quadrigamist*’, 1864, *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*



Maxwell ‘allow[ed] word to get into the newspapers that ... “Miss Braddon, the novelist, was recently married to Mr. Maxwell, the publisher”’ (SV: 104). These notices were contradicted, however, by Richard Brinsley Knowles who informed the papers that his sister-in-law and true wife of Maxwell was still living, thereby exposing Braddon’s ‘wife’ and mother persona as a façade. Maxwell’s original messages can further be seen as a publicity stunt, or a performance, to generate sales for Braddon, suggesting that it is Maxwell who image-manages her life; she remains in the private sphere while he enters the public ‘circus’.

As an extension of her authorial identity, Braddon began editing her own magazines, giving her the security to establish herself as a professional ‘woman of letters’ (Robinson, 1995: 109). Nevertheless, it takes multiple people to produce the impression of a periodical’s unified corporate voice (Hughes and Lund, 1991: 9), so Maxwell founded *Belgravia* and the *Annual*, and Braddon edited them from November 1866 to February 1876, she then edited the Christmas fiction annual *The Mistletoe Bough* from 1878. By this joint effort, Braddon hoped to achieve the personal and professional respectability that had until now eluded her, validating her authorial identity in the public’s eye because the journals gave her another stage from which to voice her distinguished and confident literary persona. As *The Star* notes: ‘Miss Braddon has long been credited with rare skill, tact, and capacity in editorship; but never before have her best qualities been so judiciously shown as in her approaching *Mistletoe Bough*’ (‘Literary Notices’, 1879: 4), indicating her success in this medium. Furthermore, as Linda Peterson asserts: ‘[i]n adopting a masculine professional model ... Martineau [and other women professionals] meant to demonstrate that women writers could compete in the marketplace, negotiating the intricacies of the “communication circuit,” and contribute national service as readily as could men of letters’

(Peterson, 2009: 93). I would challenge this: Braddon did not adopt a masculine model, but reordered the marketplace to suit her feminine approach to writing, editing and publishing, using her periodicals to her advantage. She abandoned contributor anonymity, recognising the authors who supported her, thus giving her an authoritative position in the Victorian publishing market.

As a visual representation of her editorial position, *The Mask* published a cartoon of Braddon in 1868 entitled 'Miss Braddon in Her Daring Flight' (Figure 3). In this image Braddon is literally a circus performer, wearing a tutu and jumping through hoops named after her novels held by Maxwell, obviously referring to Braddon's previous profession as

an actress and her prolific writing career. '[T]he cartoon', Jennifer Phegley notes, 'portrays her as a puppet rather than an autonomous individual [however] Braddon is supported and carried forward by a Pegasus, the mythological figure of poetic inspiration, bearing her magazine's name. Thus, the cartoon seems to suggest that Braddon's magazine might ultimately facilitate her

Figure 3: 'Miss Braddon in Her Daring Flight', 1868, *The Mask*



success in spite of the critical circus that surrounded her' (Phegley, 2004b: 120). Furthermore, Braddon is large and central, while Maxwell is smaller and set to one side, reflecting the imbalance in their positions. Braddon retains control because the magazine portrays her editorial persona just as she desires: she is the ringleader, rather than the performer, because she has the power, fame and financial success.

As a contrast to the public representations of Braddon's multiple selves, early in 1865 W. P. Frith painted Braddon's portrait (Figure 4) and her son notes it 'is generally considered to be altogether charming ... I look to it for inspiration and courage in moments of depression' (TG: 184).

Figure 4: Miss Braddon: The Celebrated Novelist and Author of Lady Audley's Secret, Aurora Floyd etc. etc., 1865, William Frith

Braddon wears a black full length dress with white trim and is holding a handkerchief, making her appear modest, while she stands in her study with her writing desk and published books. This portrayal of Braddon prioritises her, not as a daring sensation fiction author/editor, but as respectable writer. The image of a toiling female professional echoes



Richard Redgrave's *The Poor Teacher* (1844), but Braddon is looking at the audience, while Redgrave's teacher looks down; Braddon has more confidence being sure of her position in society (even at this early stage), unlike the marginalised teacher. Braddon mixed the traditional and unconventional roles of women in the nineteenth century, while revealing the practical and realistic nature of authorship; women writers were not working in circuses, or indeed in the public sphere, but inside the family home, where they should be safe from critical attack because they maintained their matronly duties. As Maxwell notes: 'one of the amazing things about her was that she got through her immense amount of work as if by magic ... She had no stated hours, no part of the day to be held secure from disturbance and intrusions. She was never inaccessible' (*TG*: 281). Maxwell would have his reader believe that Braddon always put her family first, never neglecting her motherly duties while she was writing, indicating that providing for her family and maintaining her matronly identity were important to her, like Margaret Oliphant who also had to support her three children by her writing after the death of her husband (Stade, Karbiener and Krueger, 2003: 262). Contrasting with Colleen Denney's reading of Braddon's portrait as 'trustworthy' (Denney, 2009: 43), I would argue that this is a highly constructed image where her stance is difficult to analyse: she seems to be smiling slightly, for an unknown reason, and there is an apparent welcoming of the audience, as though she is moving from her work to a social engagement, or vice versa. This picture therefore enhances her status as a writer and as a woman, endorsing authorship as an acceptable 'down-to-earth' female profession (p.47).

To further Braddon's constructed image as a wife and mother, in *Sensational Victorian* Wolff prints photographs of Braddon from her later life, such as this picture of Braddon, Maxwell, four of their five children and two of Braddon's step-children from 1872 (Figure 5). This photograph would suggest that Braddon was a respectable Victorian wife and mother, as well as a professional author/editor, although this picture still precedes Braddon and Maxwell's marriage – they were not legally united until 2nd October 1874. Braddon is again wearing a black cloak with white lace, depicting her as a respectably



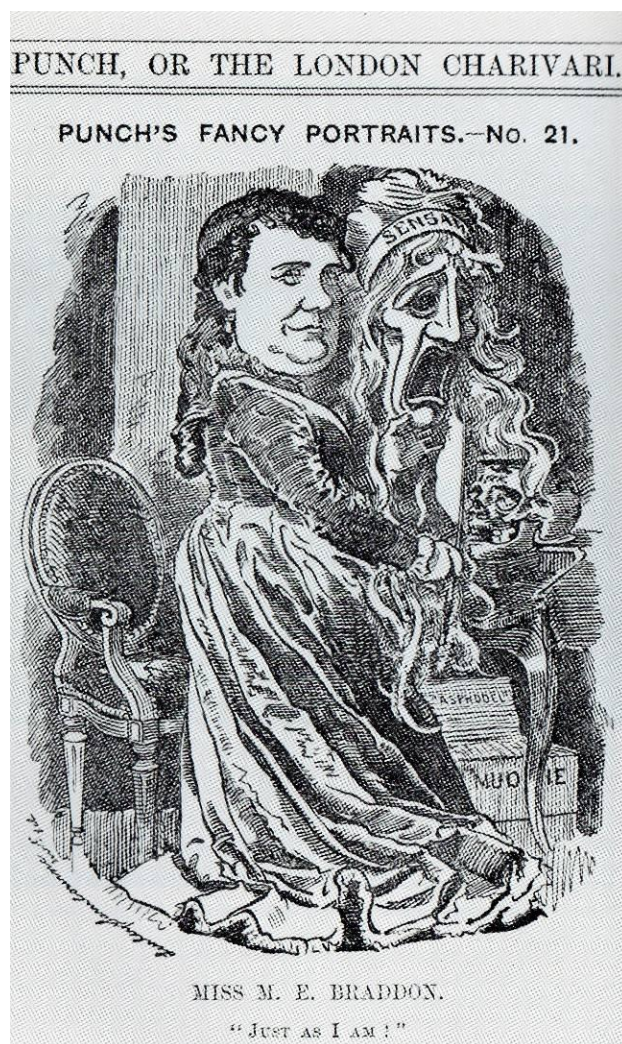
Figure 5: 'Braddon and Family', 1872, reprinted from *Sensational Victorian*, Image 26

ageing woman of society, however Braddon 'look[s] bloated and exhausted' because she has only just recovered from an illness (Sussex, 2010: 98).

Despite her established multiple identities as an author, editor, wife and mother by the 1870s, in *Punch's* 1881 cartoon (Figure 6) the critics once again prioritise her sensation fiction identity. Braddon is wearing her usual long dark dress and is in her study, much like the previous photographs. At the bottom is a box labelled 'MUDIE', a reference to the

circulating libraries that sustained Braddon's popularity over the years, and 'ASPHODEL' is her latest novel. Nevertheless, she is holding a mask entitled 'SENSATION' with long blond flowing hair, which she can put on and remove whenever she needs to, suggesting that behind her sensation literature façade is 'just' an ordinary woman, to reference the subtitle of the illustration, 'Just As I Am' (a Braddon novel published in 1880) – although of course the image of Braddon as an ordinary Victorian woman is 'just' another constructed persona as well. Braddon's stance is once again enigmatic, is she turning to face the audience defiantly, or is she about to turn and hide away? Her facial expression appears smug, yet masculine, and it is not clear if she is removing or putting on the mask. This mask once again alludes to Braddon's theatrical career, and the quill and skull ink pot either reference the shocking events of her texts, or imply Braddon had to write with her life-blood to maintain her high volume of fiction; the public image of Braddon was that she was still 'just' a sensation writer who relied on this constructed identity to maintain her popularity and fame, undermining her status as a credible author.

Figure 6: 'Punch's Fancy Portraits', 1881, *Punch*



Despite the continuing sensational image constructed by the journals, Braddon maintained her respectable wife and mother images in her photographs of the 1880s and 1890s. In Figure 7 Braddon appears in a plain yet luxurious dress, with girlish ringlets in her hair and a book in her hand, while in Figure 8 a bonneted Braddon is leaning on a book on a desk; her matronly identity is beginning to merge with her author/editor personas and thus the three are intertwining and interacting with each other. In all of these photographs Braddon's facial expressions are difficult to read, emphasising her ambiguous multiple selves. This image is compounded by *The London Journal*, where her private identity is also observed:



Figure 7: 'Braddon in the Eighties', reprinted from *Sensational Victorian*, Image 43

Figure 8: 'Braddon in 1895', reprinted from *Sensational Victorian*, Image 53



The most charitably disposed person could not say that Miss Braddon ever wears nice clothes. She likes solid colours, and affects velvet. Her gowns have many furbelows about them. She wears large diamond earrings with evening dress. Miss Braddon is a first-rate housekeeper.

(‘How Literary Women Dress’, 1896: 192)

This description emphasises her vulgarity: ‘solid colours’, ‘velvet’, ‘furbelows’ and ‘large diamond earrings’ sound overdressed and gaudy, contrasting with the sombre image that she has constructed as her career progressed, particularly with her favoured black dress. Nevertheless, the article’s concluding sentence stressing her housekeeping capabilities saves her somewhat tarnished image by referring to her constructed family identity, especially as she was now married to Maxwell. At the end of the nineteenth-century, E. A. B. in *The Academy* wrote that: ‘Miss Braddon is a part of England; she has woven herself into it; without her it would be different. This is no mere fanciful conceit. She is in the encyclopaedias; she ought to be in the dictionaries’ (E. A. B, 1899: 431). This tribute is far removed from the criticism she received at the start of her life – that of being a performer or using her notoriety to maintain her fame – indicating that, by the end of her career, Braddon had firmly established her respectable widow, mother and professional personas.

This overview of Braddon’s multiple selves serves to establish her as a woman who constructed multiple identities, both personal and professional, as a strategy for negotiating, safeguarding and maintaining her various public and private roles. My thesis will now examine how Braddon utilised this knowledge to construct herself as a generic writer. Each new subgenre is another performance in which she adopts its conventions to construct a new identity as a theatrical/supernatural/crime/domestic/children’s writer, to establish overall her short fiction writing career. To illustrate this, each chapter begins with an overview of the subgenre’s traditions, to show how Braddon conformed to or deviated

from its traditions in order to construct her own identity through performing these conventions. Notably, her supernatural and detective fiction demonstrates her adopting firmly established subgenres to break into a new mode and to position herself as a short fiction writer; while her theatrical, domestic and children's short fiction infuses autobiographical aspects and social criticism into her work, meaning her short fiction pushes the boundaries between challenging and accepting society's conventions.

The Art of Short Fiction

Short fiction has a long-standing history with distinct conventions that allow an author creative freedom. As an art form it pre-dates the novel through its origins in oral history, being 'founded upon [the] art of storytelling wherein the listener [is] influenced [by] the nature and the telling of the tale itself' (Whitehead, 2011: 80). The symbiotic relationship between reader and author gives the genre fluid and experimental characteristics. These features differentiate it from other literary genres and show its continued influence even after it developed into written narrative. Critical histories of short fiction begin to diverge when the genre established itself. May suggests that '[t]he most common critical remark made about the short story is that it began as a unique genre in America in the early nineteenth century, particularly with the works of Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville' (May, 1989: 62). Margaret Doody questions this judgement, writing that short fiction 'had been used to good effect by earlier women writers such as Aphra Behn and Eliza Haywood' (Doody, 2010: 77), backdating the emergence of the genre to the late seventeenth to early eighteenth centuries. Sarah Whitehead's attribution of its oral origins may even pre-date Doody's definition, because Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (c.1387-1400) contains

individual oral narratives that work together, creating a collection of short stories that dates the genre as early as the fourteenth century.

Contrastingly, Valerie Shaw establishes the genre as a mainstream form much later in the nineteenth century: ‘the short story could not begin to catch on in England until one-volume novels started to displace the multi-volumed and serialized fiction which dominated the market until the mid-nineties’ (Shaw, 1983: 5). H. G. Wells’s introduction to *The Country of the Blind and Other Stories* (1911) supports this argument by stating that the 1890s was the heyday of short stories: ‘people talked about them tremendously, compared them, and ranked them. That was the thing that mattered’ (Wells, 1911 [2004]: 4). Orel also designates the late nineteenth century as the period when short fiction grew in recognition equally among the general reading public and scholars. He notes three factors that influenced this rise in popularity: ‘a broadening of the educational base [due to the Elementary Education Act 1870, the Education Bills of 1876 and 1880, and the Secondary Education Commission of 1894], mechanization of printing, and the development of mass-circulation periodicals specializing in fiction’ (Orel, 1986: 184). This rise in magazine culture was directly related to the ‘repeal of stamp duty in 1855, [which was] prefigured by the abolition of the tax on advertisements two years earlier and capped by the abolition of the tax on paper six years later’ (Koss, 1981: 1). Consequently, the short story as a mainstream form was firmly established by the late nineteenth century in Britain because it was a more suitable genre for the newly literate masses. This opening debate about when the short story established itself as a literary genre highlights the form’s ever changing and contradictory nature, which suited Braddon’s own fluctuating literary style and so provided a perfect space to help establish her reputation.

This unstable formation is mirrored in the influence of different cultures on the genre: ‘the short story is not solely a British and American product; it is an international art form, and Continental as well as Oriental’ (Gullason, 1978: 25). Cultures as diverse as the Far East, with Scheherazade’s retelling of the *Arabian Nights* (c.800), to France’s influential Honoré de Balzac and Guy de Maupassant, and Alexander Pushkin and Ivan Turgenev in Russia, have all had a major impact on short fiction as an art form. Each culture has utilised the genre for different purposes, making the identification of its one point of origin almost impossible. Shaw sums up the diversity of the short story as follows:

[t]he short story ... varies according to the period in which it is being written, but it has a unique ability to preserve and at any time recall its mixed origins in fable, anecdote, fairy-story and numerous other forms. Because individual short stories keep revealing affinities with their forerunners, it is almost impossible to stabilize a definition of the genre; no summary phrase can encapsulate the diversity of the possible story types, lengths, and approaches. (Shaw, 1983: 20)

This study will now consider the multiple names, length, price, reception and pace of the nineteenth-century short story in order to define the genre specifically, while also contextualising Braddon’s overall contribution to the genre.

Alongside the difficulty in tracing when and where the short story emerged as a genre, is the confusion over the multiple names used to describe the form. Critical accounts of its development use varying terminologies and even one critic can use several terms in one passage. For instance, Shaw’s previous quotation references ‘short story’, ‘fable’, ‘anecdote’ and ‘fairy-story’, while Walton Litz writes:

[t]he earliest representatives of the short story genre emerged from a curious amalgamation of sources and influences: the eighteenth century essay, the

traditional ballad and tale [and] the new emphasis in painting and drawing on the concentrated 'sketch'. (Litz, 1980: 5)

Litz's multiplication of terms in reference to 'short fiction' and its fragmented history supports the difficult summation of the genre because the boundaries between different genres are fluid. Several other terms are also utilised in critical histories of the genre – 'narrative', 'yarn', 'commentary', even 'novella', 'novelette' and 'foreshortened novel' have been used – demonstrating the ever fluid barriers that short fiction crosses. This study deliberately uses 'short fiction' because it is the most inclusive term, meaning all of Braddon's short stories, edited volumes and novellas can be utilised.

In reference to Braddon's short fiction specifically, this debate around terminology also complicates classification. For instance, the short story collection *Milly Darrell and Other Tales* (1873) has been referred to by contemporary reviews and modern academics in different ways: *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times* calls the stories 'sketches' ('Milly Darrell', 1873: 3); *The Era* names the same collection 'short, bright, animated novelettes' and continues by labelling them 'tales and sketches' ('Literature', 1873: 14); and Chris Willis describes the title tale on its own as a 'novella' (Willis, 1998: 5). This is not the only collection that confuses the definition of what can and should be considered 'short fiction': Braddon's edited collection *The Summer Tourist* (1871) comprises travel essays, a short story and poetry, once again blurring the barriers between the different subgenres of short fiction by placing them in a homogeneous group. Furthermore, it is not just the collections that confuse generic boundaries: *The Christmas Hirelings* (1894) has been referred to by Wolff as a 'novelette' (SV: 354), while Braddon labelled it a 'short story' in her diary, on 25th January 1892 (Braddon, 2003 SF: Reel 6), but in an undated letter she also claimed that she 'can name no favourite among existing novels of mine ... I can only name a few of

the stories that ran most easily off my pen ... Among these I recall ... “The Christmas Hirelings” – a little story written beside the fire in the long autumn evenings’ (*SF*: Reel 3). The use of the multiple terms in one sentence to describe *The Christmas Hirelings* reveals that Braddon herself did not have any definitive genre categories; the boundaries between novel, novella, novelette and short story were, and still are, fluid – much like her own multiple personas. For consistency, this study will classify the title tales in Braddon’s short story collections as novellas, because they occupy the first two thirds of the three volume text. This term falls under my all-inclusive definition of ‘short fiction’, but I will not engage with them in detail because they have been republished separately as novels and subsequently scholars have categorised and analysed them as such. As this study specifically examines short fiction as a neglected literary genre, the main focus will be the tales published in the third volume of the collections, along with individually published tales. The other novellas, such as *The Christmas Hirelings* and *The Good Hermione* (1886) will be included because they are situated in the liminal space between genres and have largely been ignored in critical discourse on Braddon’s fiction.

This rejection by literary critics of texts that border genre boundaries could possibly be due to the disagreement over the accepted length of short fiction. When Edgar Allan Poe read Nathaniel Hawthorne, he made the first real, though simple and straightforward, analysis of the difference between the two genres, defining a short story as a narrative that ‘can be read at one sitting’ (Poe, 1895 [2009]: 31). Length, or more specifically the ‘shortness’ of Victorian short fiction distinguishes it from the dominant three volume novel because that is the genre’s most salient feature; however, the length of a text that ‘can be read at one sitting’ varies considerably, so does not provide an accurate definition. Other critics have categorised the short story by a prescriptive word count, for instance 500 –

15,000 words (Gullason, 1978: 20); nevertheless, even these two definitions together do not give a clear sense of the length of short fiction. Charles Dickens's definition of the genre clarifies this issue by stating that a short story is 'anything told orally by a narrator within the story or as anything shorter than four serial instalments' (Dickens in Thomas, 1982: 3). This is the definition this thesis stands by because it provides a neat, though flexible, sense of length, while also demonstrating that 'the length of literary form has much more to do with commercial considerations than with theories of literature or aesthetics' (Allen, 1981: 7); short fiction was dictated by the periodical nature of the Victorian magazine culture, but this does not mean that the genre is limited in content because of its restricted space. Henry James is well known for his difficulty in keeping to the 'detestable number of 5,000 words' demanded by editors, describing this 'limitation of space for the short story [as] too little room to turn around' (James in Horne, 2007: 9), but his stories cover a wide variety of topics and leave little to be desired on any level by the reader, and the same can be said for Braddon's short fiction. Significantly, Dickens's definition also includes oral narratives embedded within a novel, for instance, in *Pickwick Papers* (1836-7) and *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838-9), meaning that Braddon's novellas *The Christmas Hirelings* and *The Good Hermione*, as well as her edited *Aladdin* collection, also fall under Dickens's definition. In each text the narrator uses meta-fictional techniques or a framing narrator to tell a story directly to the reader, relating these tales specifically to short fiction's oral traditions, while also strengthening the argument for their inclusion in this thesis. The combination of these elements is extremely useful in illustrating the versatility of short fiction and demonstrating the fluidity of generic boundaries that Braddon specifically distorts in her oeuvre.

This distortion of generic boundaries due to length is illustrated by the way Braddon's short fiction was advertised in the periodicals she edited and in the books of the lending libraries. In an article in *Fraser's Magazine*, the reviewer notes that:

the circulating library ... wont [sic] encourage short stories [because they rely on] the practice of hiring out new works at so much a volume. Now it is clear that if new works of fiction were limited to single volumes [like short stories would be] the traffic of the librarian would be cut-short at one-third of its usual amount. (‘The Art of Story-Telling’, 1856: 725-6)

It is precisely the length of short fiction that the circulating libraries objected to, because it was less profitable. In response to this, Braddon's short stories were advertised under the title of the longest novella. Figure 9 is an advertisement for Braddon's fiction available from train stations in 1886 that verifies this point. *Ralph the Bailiff*, *Milly Darrell*, *Weavers and Weft*, *Flower and Weed* and *Under the Red Flag* are all short story collections but they are advertised under the main tale's name with no reference made to the other short fiction available. This not only demonstrates the power and

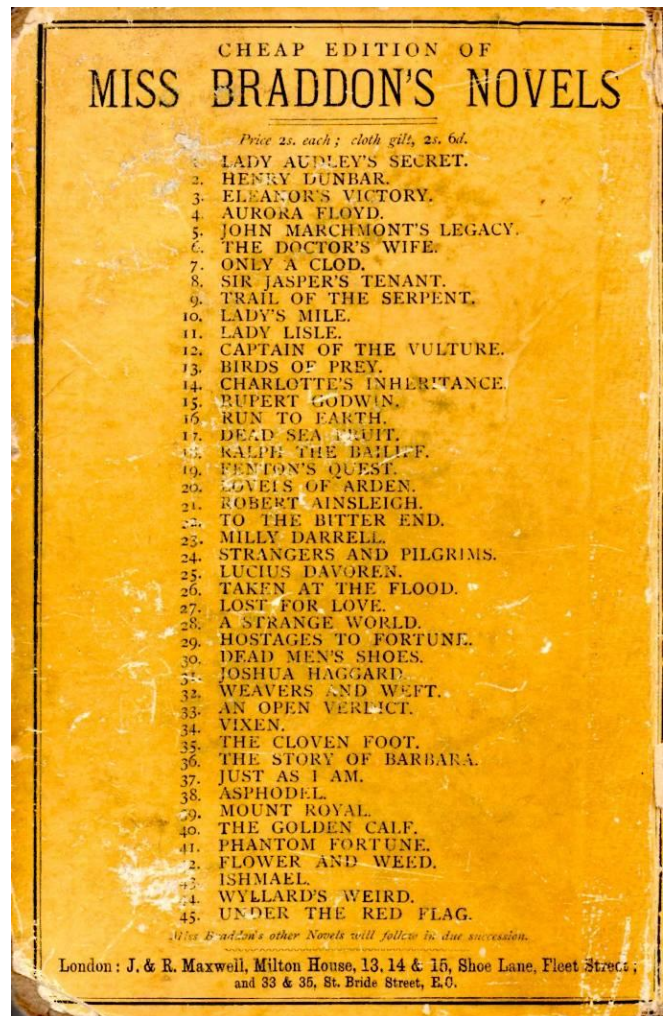


Figure 9: 'Cheap Editions of Miss Braddon's Novels', 1886, Back Cover to *Weavers and Weft*

control that the circulating libraries had over the market, and consequently Braddon's popularity as a writer, but also that short stories were not deemed worthy of their own advertisements: the list of titles misled readers into assuming they were novels. The article in *Fraser's Magazine* elaborates on this argument by noting that:

[t]he circulating librarian alleges that the public will not read short stories; that nothing short of a 'regular' novel will satisfy them; and that when short stories are collected into three volumes, with a single title, to make them look like a novel ... the said public consider themselves 'taken in,' and send back all such books with indignant remonstrances. (pp.726-7)

The two previous quotations from 'The Art of Story-Telling' imply that there are many negative aspects to short fiction and they have offered reasons why Braddon's collections were printed under one name: the circulating libraries were disguising the fact that they were short stories. The circulating libraries would have contemporary critics believe that short fiction was considered by its readers as a 'lesser' genre in comparison with the novel, possibly because the genre provide less financial return. Nevertheless, many other contemporary readers, writers and publishers championed the genre by reinforcing its positive elements. It is this contradiction in the short story's perceived standing that has adversely affected its current critical standing in modern discourse.

One of the earliest short story writers, Poe, defended the genre by defining short fiction's cohesive features: '[i]n the whole composition there should be no word written, of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one pre-established design' (Poe, 1895 [2009]: 117); short fiction focuses on one central character, theme or perspective, contrasting with the novel's multiple integrated threads, meaning an author could examine in detail any topic of interest to them or the general public. Despite his previously

mentioned difficulty with the prescribed word count of his publishers, James also noted on 13th July 1891 that by writing short stories – he wrote over one hundred – he can ‘do so many things ... touch so many subjects, break out in so many places, handle so many of the threads of life’ (James, 1947: 105-6). It is precisely because short fiction examines one topic in detail that authors are drawn to the genre. Furthermore:

[a] successful short story will thus necessarily show a more harmonious relationship of part to whole, and part to part, than it is usual ever to find in a novel. Everything must work with everything else. Everything enhances everything else, interrelates with everything else, is inseparable from everything else – and all this is done with a necessary and perfect economy.
(Hills, 2000: 4)

The fact that short fiction is economical and achieves a harmonious totality of effect means it is a much more difficult genre to write than the triple-decker novel; more precision is needed in its composition. The very genre of short fiction challenges the presumption that ‘short’ implies ‘easy’, which again makes the genre almost impossible to encapsulate or summarise.

The genre also provides another advantage, as Braddon’s son, William Babington Maxwell, notes:

[s]ometimes the happiness of the confident creator can be detected by his readers. This occurs, I think, more often in short stories than in books of full length. It may perhaps be because here the necessity of a sustained mood is of so much briefer duration. The fable in all the freshness and force with which it came to the writer can be transmitted through immediately. It should have then perceptible to sympathetic recipients, a clear sense of the confidence, the enthusiasm, the ardour of the blood that produced it.
(*TG*: 328)

Short fiction's immediacy and intimacy, even its very commerciality, are the foundations of its popularity as a literary genre for readers, writers and publishers of different periods. This argument is corroborated by a contemporary review that contradicts 'The Art of Story-Telling': 'we imagine there are thousands of readers who prefer a short smart, sparkling tale to the bewildering entanglements, the long descriptions, the long delayed *denouement* of the modern three-volume novel' ('Literature', 1873: 14). Furthermore, short fiction is allowed to be open-ended and indeterminate – qualities that are unacceptable to novel readers – because they are fast-paced, mobile, intense and have a high impact. The genre's directness also links specifically to its purpose: short fiction's 'province was the extraordinary; its aim, if not to astonish, was at least to surprise; its purpose to entertain' (Allen, 1981: 5); short fiction's condensed nature specifically intensifies the reader's experience. Overall, short fiction allows writers to quickly gain a reader's attention, to focus on one particular aspect of society or human nature and to explore new techniques, themes and images, specifically because it works in the margins of fiction. Like other Victorian writers, Braddon exploited these advantages, as well as using the genre as a matrix for her literary craft and as a space to identify, analyse and subvert her culture's orthodoxies.

Braddon's Short Fiction: Publication History

This section discusses short fiction's commerciality, considering whether the genre provided Braddon with a substantial income, and so could merely be seen as filler for her journals, or whether it was less financially rewarding and simply provided a freer literary genre to work in. Jennifer Carnell and Graham Law in *Beyond Sensation* (2000) made

ground-breaking headway in identifying the price paid by publishers for Braddon's novels, subsequent profits from American republication rights, and reprinting in volume form. From the 1860s to the mid 1900s Braddon began by publishing her short fiction in several of the established journals; progressing to editing her own periodicals she published her short fiction in these; finally, they were published widely across the country in newspapers. How Braddon managed to achieve this diverse publication history for her short fiction and its effect on her reputation as a writer will be considered.

'Nineteenth-century Britain was uniquely the age of the periodical' (Vann and VanArsdel, 1994: 7); this simple statement summarises the power and control this format had over author, publisher and reader relations. The periodical press was 'the context within which people lived and worked and thought, and from which they derived their (in most cases quite new) sense of the outside world' (Shattock and Wolff, 1982: xiv-xv), and '[e]very journal, be it quarterly, monthly or weekly, had its formal house style, which becomes its dominant discourse' (Fraser, Green and Johnston, 2003: 78). This house style directly related to the social standing, gender and political persuasion of its intended readership. Thus, an analysis of the variety of the periodicals Braddon published in, as well as their economic value, provides an insight into how short fiction was perceived as an art form. 'Braddon wrote a number of "penny dreadful" short stories, which from September 1860 were published in the *Welcome Guest*, the *Halfpenny Marvel* [sic], and other cheap fiction magazines owned by the publisher John Maxwell' (Mullin, 2004 [2009]: online); the 'other cheap fiction magazines' being *St. James's Magazine* and *Temple Bar*. All of these journals were aimed at a familial, domestic audience and position Braddon establishing her career as an author by aiming for a lower-middle-class, educated readership. *The Welcome Guest* – which was founded by Henry Vizetelly and ran from 1858-64 with an average

circulation of 120,000 (SV: 317, 428) – was where Braddon published most of her short fiction for the first two years of her writing career. This journal was ‘priced at a mere halfpenny per issue. Edited by author, journalist, and illustrator George Sala [who became Braddon’s close friend], it combined serial fiction, short non-fiction items, and wood-engravings’ (Anderson, 1994: 142). This journal was popular with its readers and gave Braddon a convenient way into writing short fiction and longer serialised novels. Braddon’s writing for the *Welcome Guest* was praised by the *Brighton Herald* on 6th October 1860: the magazine ‘is enlarged and greatly improved. In the current number there is a story, “The Cold Embrace”, from the pen of Miss M.E. Braddon’ (‘Literature’, 1860: 4). Nevertheless, despite her short fiction’s appeal and *her* novels outselling *his*, Braddon was paid half as much per page as Sala for her contributions to *Temple Bar* (Edwards, 1997: 74). Thus, at the start of her career, Braddon’s writing did not provide her with financial security; she was not considered worthy of large payment, possibly because of her gender and inexperience.

This new style of writing – Braddon had previously written poetry and a commissioned novel – took her a few years to get used to: there is a break from 1861 to 1867 in her short fiction writing. During this time Braddon’s reputation as a writer was cemented by her pair of bigamy novels and these overshadowed her early fiction. As of 1867, however, Braddon re-engaged with short fiction and began editing her own periodicals – *Belgravia: A London Magazine*, *Belgravia Annual* and *The Mistletoe Bough* – suggesting that the novel did not completely satisfy her literary ambitions or economic needs. Braddon continued to publish her short fiction in her journals under her own name and other pseudonyms for almost the next thirty years. Producing her short fiction in her own periodicals was a double edged sword, though. On the positive side, Braddon retained

a high percent of the profit of her writing, but it also meant that her reputation as a sensation writer was extended: ‘*Belgravia* is a sensational magazine, and Miss Braddon is a dreadfully sensational novelist’ (Sala, 1868: 457). Contrastingly though, she could also break free from the limits of sensationalism into other genres, especially with the Christmas Annual *The Mistletoe Bough*, because it rejected sensational tales in favour of domestic ones. Nevertheless, as Orel’s opening quotation suggests, publishing in her own journals meant her short fiction could be seen as filler material when an issue was short on content. Braddon’s novels provided a steady financial income and heralded her as a worthy writer; she wrote two novels a year and ‘[s]he each time relegated one to the class of pure sensation fiction ... while giving the other her best artistic effort’ (SV: 148), however, her short fiction continued to be perceived as inferior by the contemporary literary critics.

Despite her short fiction’s lesser status, after a break in her novel writing due to illness between *Run to Earth* (1868) and *Fenton’s Quest* (1871), Wolff and Carnell surmised that Braddon began writing again in 1870: ‘[h]er earliest new efforts were two unimportant short stories, appearing in *Belgravia* in February and March 1870’ (SV: 229): these are ‘Mr. and Mrs. de Fontenoy’ and ‘The Splendid Stranger’, respectively. However, this is not the case: Braddon published five short stories in late 1869/January 1870 in *Belgravia*, either anonymously or under her pseudonym Babington White (see Appendix 2). There are several reasons for this discrepancy: Braddon had either already written these stories previously; had someone else continue to write under her name; or she was able to write short fiction during her illness because it was an easier and more accessible genre than novels. In a letter to Bulwer in 1872, Braddon reflected on her illness, revealing that she returned to ‘copy-spinning’ because she was concerned she would never write again (Braddon in Wolff, 1974: 148). This technique allowed Braddon to regain her ‘imagination’

and rhythm so she could continue writing (p.148), while the short story was her chosen genre when she resumed her pen, demonstrating her preference for the genre, even if the tales were still published in her own magazines.

Nevertheless, in the late 1870s Braddon published 'Dr. Carrick' (1878) and 'The Shadow in the Corner' (1879), one crime and one supernatural tale, respectively, in *All the Year Round*; this periodical, run by Dickens, was 'a family magazine of a "respectable" nature [costing] twopence per issue' (Wynne, 2001: 15-27). By publishing in a different journal, especially one which had an excellent reputation – Braddon 'inhabited the borderland between "highbrow" literary culture, represented by quarterlies and monthlies such as the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's*, and the popular literature enjoyed by readers of "lowbrow" weekly penny magazines' (p.23) – Braddon's short fiction was not just filler for her own journals; it was worthy of publication based on its own merits which helped her to attain the credibility she desired. This is confirmed after Braddon ended her editing career and began publishing her short fiction in other prominent periodicals across London from the early 1890s: *The Pall Mall Magazine*, *The Illustrated London News*, *The Strand Magazine* and *Cassell's Magazine*. Taking *The Strand Magazine* as a case study, Braddon's publication of 'The Good Lady Ducayne' in February 1896 places her at the pinnacle of her short fiction writing career. As a periodical edited by George Newnes, *The Strand Magazine* 'addressed its fiction, articles, and illustrations to a predominantly middle-class market; by 1898 it had sales of 200,000-400,000 copies per number' (Anderson, 1994: 141). This, therefore, meant that Braddon's tale was published just before the periodical reached record breaking numbers, placing it as her most 'successful' short story, if success is measured by publication records. This also suggests why 'The Good Lady Ducayne' is Braddon's best-known story in academia now, although there are several

other reasons: the tale was published near the end of her short fiction writing career, so it is her most accomplished tale because she had honed her skills; because it is a vampire text that predates *Dracula* (1897); because it was published in one of London's most successful magazines it has been easily accessible to modern critics; or because it was published under her own name there has been no confusion over original authorship – it is easily recognised as her own work. These diverse possibilities reveal that the circumstances of Braddon's original publications are crucial to understanding her popularity as an author and this is confirmed by Braddon's newspaper ventures.

From 1873, Braddon began syndication with Tillotson's of Bolton in a deal that was 'original in the sense that it created the first syndicate of British provincial newspapers systematically covering most of the country for new work by an author with a reputation already established in the metropolitan book market' (Law, 2000: 43). The newspapers Braddon published in at this later period of her career, more specifically from the 1890s onwards when her other publishing outlets had declined, were the *Manchester Weekly Times*, *Bolton Weekly Journal and Guardian*, *Leigh Journal and Times* and *Sheffield Weekly Telegraph*. There are two opposing ways of viewing this change: it could suggest Braddon's decline in popularity and author prestige because the popular London periodicals would no longer publish her fiction in such quantities; or that Braddon's fiction was dispersed across the entire country, gaining her a wider readership – socially, as well as geographically – increasing her literary impact. The fact that they are popular newspapers in the major industrial cities of the North supports this argument. Having examined Tillotson's financial records to discover the cost of Braddon's novels, Carnell and Law demonstrate that they were bought for between £250 and £1250 each, and that 'Braddon also sold newspaper publication rights to at least five short stories directly to Tillotson

during the last decade of the century' (Carnell and Law, 2000: 145). Though they neglect to record which tales and how much they were bought for, the price of these tales reveals the 'value' placed on short fiction in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Notably, novels such as *Like and Unlike* (1887) and *One Life, One Love* (1890) were bought for over £1000, while *Weavers & Weft* (1876) and *All Along the River* (1893) – which are two of Braddon's novellas, republished in short fiction collections – were bought for £300 and £500 respectively, and have been included by Carnell and Law in their examination of her novels, once again demonstrating the fluidity of generic boundaries. My own research into Braddon's short fiction, specifically, reveals Tillotson paid £50 each for three 5000 word short stories: 'The Fly from the George' (published as 'Wild Justice' [1896]), 'Poor Old Jacob' (published as 'Poor Uncle Jacob' [1896]) and 'The Doll's Tragedy' (1898). Obviously, a short story is bought for less than a three-decker or one-volume novel, but in his Payment Ledger, Tillotson meticulously calculates the price per thousand words an author is paid: for the two novels Braddon was paid £3.70 and £5.21 respectively, for her two novellas she received £1.17.6 (£1.88) and £4.10.11 (£4.55) respectively, while she was paid £10 for her significantly shorter fiction (Tillotson, n.d. *Tillotson Fiction Bureau*: Notebook A, Box 6). Tillotson's Payment Ledger also notes Braddon earned '£60 (for W. C. Leng & Co) for ser[ial] & cont[inental] rights of "The Winning Sequence", [which was] 3700 words [equalling] £16.4.4 [£16.22] per 1000 [words]' (*TFB*: Notebook A, Box 6) – the most he ever paid Braddon. This research is significant because it reveals a conflict in how short fiction was perceived. To clarify, Tillotson's records reveal that short fiction provided Braddon with a better financial return for her efforts because publishers placed a high economic value on the genre, indicating that for Victorian authors, publishers and readers, short fiction was a popular and profitable

genre. This contrasts to the previous discussion of how the Victorian literary critics and the circulating libraries did not hold short fiction in high regard; they still perceived it as inferior to the novel. The fact that modern criticism has followed this latter perception is signified by my own research because the original publication of ‘The Winning Sequence’ has only just been discovered, indicating that modern scholarship does not value short fiction from a literary standpoint.

Tillotson’s Fiction Bureau also itemises the literary contracts of his other authors: he paid Wilkie Collins only £35 each for the newspaper publication rights for “Who Killed Zebedee?” (1881) and “The Devil’s Spectacles” (1879), which were both 12,000 words long, equating to £2.92 per thousand words (*TFB*: Volume 1, Box 5); Joseph Hatton, who published alongside Braddon in *Belgravia* earlier in the century and interviewed her later in life, was paid £15 for the continental rights to his 5000 word story “Life’s Great Play” (1889) and £45 for “The Robber’s Garden” (1894), also 5000 words, making his price per thousand words £3 and £9 respectively (*TFB*: Notebook A, Box 5), while Rhoda Broughton earned £50 each for the full copyrights of “Betty’s Visions” (1883) and “Mrs. Smith of Longmains” (1885), which were both 10,000 words, equalling £5 per thousand words; on average half as much as Braddon’s economic value (*TFB*: Notebook A, Box 6). From this comparison it is notable that Braddon was paid much more per thousand words than her contemporaries, demonstrating that the Braddon brand also placed a high value on her short fiction, as well as her novels.

This overview of Braddon’s original publication history demonstrates that she published in a wide variety of outlets over a fifty year period, revealing her diverse and dedicated approach to short fiction. As several critics have noted:

even those periodicals that aim to appeal to a fairly broad audience, and include matter of general interest [for instance *The Welcome Guest*, *Belgravia* and *The Strand Magazine*], nevertheless carefully address themselves to particular groups within that wider intended readership. They typically carve up their pages into sections directed at specific sub-categories of readers. (Fraser, Green and Johnston, 2003: 59)

This ‘wider intended readership’ is what Braddon strove for when she published her short fiction in the weekly penny-dreadfuls, the monthly periodicals and a national newspaper market, because it not only meant a larger financial profit, but also that her literary standing and influence would reach far beyond the metropolis. The ‘subcategories of readers’ that Braddon wanted to attract had another effect on short fiction as a genre, which ‘involved the development of a range of genre fictions and generic types’ (Bennett, 2011: 39): it ‘helped the development and popularity of subgenres such as ghost stories, sensation fiction, and detective fiction’ (Onslow, 2007: 262). Notably, Barbara Onslow relates the expansion of short fiction’s multiple subgenres – of which Braddon wrote examples of all the main categories – specifically to the periodical nature of the Victorian mass magazine and newspaper culture. Thus, Braddon’s positioning as an author, and later as an editor and as her own literary agent, situates her as a key player, manipulator and director of short fiction’s perceived status in the nineteenth century. Braddon’s influence on short fiction’s perceived value as a literary art form, continued after these original publications because she subsequently republished her work in edited collections.

Braddon’s Short Fiction: Republishing History

As Orel notes: ‘books that collected short stories of a single author were chancy undertakings throughout the entire century’ and the previous quotations from ‘The Art of

Story-Telling' outlining readers' indignation at collections corroborate this point (Orel, 1986: 2). Braddon therefore presents an unusual case study because she published six collections over four decades: *Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales* (1862, 1867), *Milly Darrell & Other Tales* (1873), *Weavers & Weft & Other Tales* (1877), *Flower & Weed & Other Tales* (1884), *Under the Red Flag & Other Tales* (1886) and *All Along the River & Other Tales* (1893). This implies that Braddon did not consider republishing her short fiction as a risk, both for volume sale and for Mudie's readers. The genre must have been popular with her readership *and* it must have been financially viable; Braddon's publishing of one or two collections per decade supports this. Her periodical readers remained loyal, buying the stories as collections, while the volumes also introduced new readers to her fiction in smaller doses. Braddon's short fiction's popularity is strengthened by *Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales* being reprinted after several years; it is the only one republished, demonstrating that demand for her short fiction, as well as her novels, was strong at the start of her writing career. This demand continued because she produced two collections of short fiction in the 1870s and 1880s, implying these decades marked the peak of her short fiction's popularity with the public, coinciding with the rise of short fiction as an accepted literary art form.² This rise in acceptance is confirmed by an increase in collections by other authors: Wilkie Collins published five collections from the mid-1850s to the 1880s (though he notably did not produce any in the 1860s), and Thomas Hardy published four collections from the late 1880s to the mid-1910s. The fact that Braddon produced numerous collections and did so more regularly implies that short fiction remained a vital outlet for her creative

² Unfortunately, no business records or circulating statistics were kept by Mudie's circulating library or W. H. Smith's, so the number of people subscribing to the library or borrowing individual volumes is unknown. This means a comparison between how often Braddon's short fiction collections and her novels were issued cannot be undertaken. Even if these statistics were available, they would not accurately reflect how many people read the text (because several family members could read the same volume before returning it), or if they preferred one genre to the other.

imagination, otherwise she could have kept writing novels only, given her success in that medium.

Contemporary reviews of Braddon's collections also offer an insight into how her short fictions were perceived as a group. Taking *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times's* comments on *Milly Darrell & Other Tales* as an example, it favourably notes that:

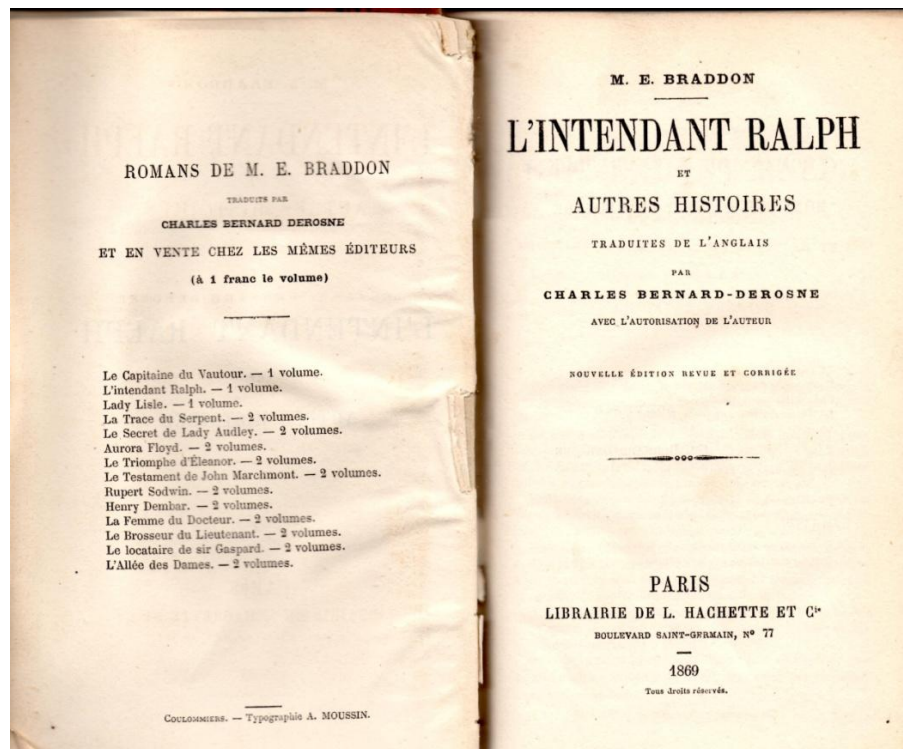
These tales, we are led to believe, have found Miss Braddon in pleasing pastime during the intervals of her more laborious work; and as such they come bubbling forth from the well of a versatile imagination such as can be surpassed by no writer of the current age. They are like the simple and exquisite sketches which an author might dash off in the moments of his leisure, as a kind of relief to the more studied object to which he has devoted his life. (‘Milly Darrell’, 1873: 3)

This review regards short fiction as an ‘exquisite’, ‘pleasing pastime’ that contrasts with the ‘laborious’ work of novel writing, confirming the genre provides more enjoyment for the author, as well as the reader, than novels, because Braddon applies her ‘versatile imagination’ in more creative ways. Furthermore, short fiction’s ‘bubbling forth’ implies it has more vibrancy specifically because authors write it at their ‘leisure’, though short fiction remains secondary to the more ‘studied object’ of the novel to which authors should ‘devote’ their lives. This contemporary view of Braddon’s collections is rearticulated in recent scholarship by Lucy Sussex, who describes them as ‘minor innovations’ (Sussex, 2010: 99): ‘minor’ suggesting small or inferior, however ‘innovations’ reflects the vigour noted by the *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times* – modern criticism is slowly branching out to recognise short fiction’s popularity. Republications of Braddon’s short fiction in collections are not the only way to judge the value of the genre; translations of her work also support this argument.

When considering translations of Braddon's fiction it is notable that she translated some of her work herself because she 'had always had a mastery of French, but she taught herself German, then Italian, and after that Spanish. She brushed up her Latin too' (TG: 282). Translations of Braddon's novels, particularly in French, were extremely popular (see Figure 10 page one for a specific list), but significantly, one collection of short fiction was also translated into this language: *L'Intendant Ralph et Autres Histoires* in 1869. This occurred two years after its second republication as a collection in Britain in 1867 (see Figure 10 page two), demonstrating the popularity of her short fiction for authors and publishers, and that it reached a wider international readership who also valued the genre. Nevertheless, no other collections were translated; sales of the volume were not as profitable as her novels, which continued to be republished across the world in German, Spanish and Polish. The influence of Braddon's short fiction in France is evidenced by her writing a serial

story originally in this language for the Paris *Figaro* ('Local History Notes', 2010: online), confirming her short fiction's growing popularity overseas and her linguistic skill.

Figure 10: 'Ralph the Bailiff' in French, 1869



Braddon's collections and translations of her short fiction have demonstrated how popular the genre was in contemporary society for herself as an author, and for her publishers and readers. This regard for the genre is slowly infiltrating literary scholarship because modern reproductions have been increasing in volume and scope over the last decade. The first collection to republish two of Braddon's tales was *The Supernatural Omnibus* in 1931, with 'The Cold Embrace' (1860) and 'Eveline's Visitant: A Ghost Story' (1867). Significantly, this is a general collection of supernatural tales, rather than a single-author collection, implying at this early point that Braddon's short fiction was just being rediscovered. Horror anthologies have been the most popular way of republishing Braddon's short fiction. This raises questions as to whether they are effectively chilling tales; if they represent the best quality of her short fiction (like the previously noted example of 'The Good Lady Ducayne' which is Braddon's most republished short story in her entire oeuvre); whether they have been specially singled out because modern readers have an innate love for horror; or because they were originally published in well-established periodicals they have been easiest to identify, collate and reprint since their copyright expired. Other collections, such as *The Dracula Book of Great Vampire Stories* (1987), *The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories* (1988) and *The Oxford Book of Ghost Stories* (1992), have also republished individual tales, although notably, the same few referenced supernatural tales have been reprinted, rather than other examples from the rest of Braddon's oeuvre.

Nevertheless, since 2000, whole collections have been reprinted more frequently, engaging with a wider selection of one particular subgenre or her multiple subgenres. Once again, it is Braddon's supernatural fiction that has sparked reprints of subgenre-specific collections, for instance, *The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories* (2000), *At Chrighton*

Abbey & Other Horror Stories (2002) and *The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (2010). This supports the theory that it is contemporary fashion that favours this subgenre, and so these tales have been specifically selected from Braddon's oeuvre to satisfy reader demand. Nevertheless, as Walter Scott argues, '[a] whole collection of ghost stories inclines us as little to fear as a jest book moves us to laugh. Many narratives, turning upon some interest, are apt to exhaust it' (Scott, 1827 [1968]: 320), suggesting complete collections of Braddon's supernatural tales are popular because of Braddon's ingenuity, rather than a society's desire to be scared. Markedly, *The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* includes three Braddon novels, three novellas and twenty-three short stories, blurring the distinctions between what is the most valued genre; theme is preferred over genre.

Alongside these genre-specific collections, *The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories* (2000) and *One Fatal Moment & Other Stories* (2001) contain examples of Braddon's domestic, crime and supernatural short fiction, proving Braddon's growing popularity within modern scholarship in a variety of different literary subgenres. These collections include critical Introductions by Chris Willis and Jennifer Carnell, respectively, indicating a rising demand for scholarly reprints of Braddon's short fiction. Overall, this overview of Braddon's publishing and republishing history of her short fiction proves she is regaining her literary reputation amongst general readers and scholars, and this is becoming more apparent because her short fiction is finally being integrated not only into reprints of her work, but also into modern academic discourse.

Literature Review: Braddon Studies

The first and only substantial biography of Braddon is Wolff's, which indicates Braddon's versatility and chameleon-like characteristics as a woman and a professional. Although his account was factually flawed,³ Wolff pieced together a significant amount by accessing Maxwell's personal archive. While this book remains the authoritative Braddon biography, Carnell directly developed Wolff's research by clarifying the mistakes and gaps in his record, particularly in relation to her acting career, to create an all-round picture of Braddon and her many pursuits, which has been invaluable to scholars. Before Wolff, Michael Sadleir's *Things Past* (1944) historicised how Braddon became an author, giving a brief overview of where and when she published her main novels. Sadleir focuses on how Braddon was restrained by her initial sensation success and her decline in popularity after her death, an issue this thesis addresses through the study of her short fiction. Her son, W. B. Maxwell, published his autobiography *Time Gathered* in 1937 in which he dedicates a chapter to Braddon – entitled 'My Mother' (*TG*: 268-285) – providing an insight into her personal life, rather than her professional careers: he implies that she wished to remain hidden from public view so her family would not be tainted by her sensational reputation. More recently, Katherine Mullin in 2004 wrote the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*'s entry on Braddon, which was then digitized and published online in 2009, while I myself, in 2011, published a timeline of Braddon's life and writings for the *Literary Encyclopedia*. Braddon's diaries for the years 1890 – 1914 have been made available by Adam Matthew Publishers, from the collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre at the University of Texas, Austin, on microfilm in 2003. This recent scholarship in

³ Examples being that her acting career began in 1857 (*SV*: 46), that it lasted for three years (*SV*: 45) and that Maxwell's first wife, also called Mary, was living in a Dublin mental asylum (*SV*: 105).

the everyday details of Braddon's life as a professional, a wife and a mother, demonstrates her rising popularity. Each of these texts adds to our current understanding by highlighting the many roles she enacted throughout her life and by building on the knowledge of the last.

These previous examples have been more 'fact' based, summarising her life in general, while more recent critics, specifically Jennifer Phegley and Beth Palmer, have critically and theoretically examined Braddon's life in relation to her 'multiple selves'. For instance, Phegley's *Educating the Proper Woman Reader: Victorian Family Literary Magazines and the Cultural Health of the Nation* (2004) focuses on Braddon's role as editor for *Belgravia*. She argues that Braddon utilised her magazine to enter into the debate surrounding women's reading practices. *Belgravia* 'legitimized women as autonomous readers who could read what they wanted, by themselves, in any way they chose' (Phegley, 2004: 128). Phegley argues one way Braddon did this was by including images of women reading 'to attest to women's abilities to read thoughtfully and to make moral judgements about what they've read' (p.131), while simultaneously disrupting definitions of high and low literary forms (p.27). This important scholarship on Braddon's editorial self demonstrates how Braddon used *Belgravia* to reposition her sensational authorial persona within the context of publishing in 'family literary magazines' (p.2). As previously mentioned, Palmer also discusses Braddon's author-editor position through the lens of Butler's performativity theory in *Women's Authorship and Editorship in Victorian Culture: Sensational Strategies* (2011). Palmer outlines how Braddon's author-editor persona was a self-conscious performance that mediated the contradictory demands of women's accepted domesticated roles and her sensation fiction's notoriety (Palmer, 2011: 8-10). My work differs from Palmer's because I consider all of Braddon's multiple subgenres as self-

conscious performances. Braddon examined and manipulated the market in order to adapt herself to these subgenres; she mimicked their conventions for economic and literary profit. Thus, Braddon used her multiple selves and her multiple generic fiction to survive; she gained recognition through her work, while simultaneously hiding behind it to safeguard her respectability.

These more recent studies of Braddon's life and her recognition as a prominent Victorian woman writer, owe a great debt to Kathleen Tillotson, who undertook vital research in recognising sensation fiction as a 'novel-with-a-secret' and who brought the subgenre to critical attention (Tillotson, 1969: xv). Her work was followed by Winifred Hughes's *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s* (1980) which was the first full-length modern study of the sensation novel. Hughes's focus was the sociopsychological implications of the subgenre: how sensation novels expressed the subconscious anxieties of the age and how these anxieties arose from 'an appeal not to the terror of the unknown, of the vaguely suggested and barely imagined, but to the even more terrifying terror of the familiar' (Hughes, 1980: 8). The next significant study was Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1982). Showalter developed Tillotson and Hughes's foundational arguments by noting that the cultural-historical contexts of the period were an influential factor on sensation fiction. Showalter asserts that Braddon's heroines were symptomatic of women's dissatisfaction with 'their roles as daughters, wives and mothers' and so she 'tapp[ed] and satisf[ied] fantasies of protest and escape' (Showalter, 1980: 158-9). These early 1960-80s studies all focused on sensation fiction in general in order to establish the subgenre in critical discourse. This partially explains why critical attention has largely remained with Braddon's contribution to this subgenre to the detriment of her wider oeuvre.

This focus on sensation fiction as a subgenre was compounded by scholarly texts published from the 1990s onwards. Lyn Pykett's *The 'Improper' Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and The New Woman Writing* (1992) compared these two subgenres through their use of 'production, consumption and critical mediation' (Pykett, 1992: 2). Her focus on writing *and* difference, and writing *as* difference articulated the socio-historical concepts of femininity that structured and mediated biological femaleness, arguing that women self-consciously interacted with contemporary debates on the Woman Question (pp.4-5). In the same year, Ann Cvetkovich's *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (1992) postulated a historicist/Marxist theory of the 'politics of affect' (Cvetkovich, 1992: 1), 'affect' relating to particularly female emotions (pleasure/pain) that both granted and denied women agency. She argues that these feelings were potentially transgressive and so ultimately needed to be 'regulated and controlled' (p.7), meaning sensation novels reinforced the 'strategies of containment' established by 'bourgeois life' (p.10); for each 'sensational' woman there was a disciplining male detective figure. Pamela Gilbert's *Disease, Desire, and the Body in Victorian Women's Popular Novels* (1997) develops these arguments by noting how images of food, consumption, ingestion, and addiction governed Victorian views of popular fiction and its effects on women readers (Gilbert, 1997: 19). She notes that consuming these diseased books became a form of substance abuse that corrupted the (female) body and in turn endangered the national and imperial character (p.72). She further historicises sensation fiction, noting its origins before the 1860s, situating it in the discourse of generic contention; genre is a social construction which is less a matter of intrinsic textual conventions and more related to categories of reading (p.81). Andrew Mangham's *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture* (2007)

deconstructs the links between sexual disturbance (adolescence, menstruation and menopause) and insanely violent women in both literature and history. He engages with a number of prominent sensation novels and court cases, but more particularly discusses Braddon's short story 'Lost and Found' (1863) in relation to mid-Victorian fears of wet-nursing (Mangham, 2007: 113-6), indicating his overarching socio-historical and close-reading approach. Once again, each of these important critical studies addresses multiple authors and texts, cross-comparing Braddon to Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens and Ellen Wood, rather than focusing solely on Braddon's fiction, which has continued to contribute to the narrow focus of Braddon's oeuvre.

To develop on from these initial studies on the sensation novel, entire critical texts were dedicated to Braddon's fiction – such as *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context* (2000), *Becoming Frauds: Unconventional Heroines in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Sensation Fiction* (2002), *From Sensation to Society: Representations of Marriage in the Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, 1862-1866* (2006) *Reading Sensation Critically: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Belgravia Fiction* (2008) and *New Perspectives on Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (2012) – as well as Braddon's inclusion in collections that explore prominent nineteenth-century writers and their achievements, such as Pickering and Chatto's 2007 *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures: Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins and William Thackeray by their Contemporaries*. These texts vary in their approach to her works. Marlene Tromp, Pamela Gilbert and Aeron Haynie's *Beyond Sensation* provided the first serious examination of Braddon's impact on the Victorian marketplace, situating Braddon as a key nineteenth-century woman writer who challenged the male dominated literary field and so takes a socio-historical perspective. Jan Schipper's *Becoming Frauds*, adopting an overarching feminist perspective, focuses on women's roles in Braddon's

novels by dividing her female protagonists into heroines or villainesses according to how they act, or are acted upon, by men and society. *From Sensation to Society* by Natalie and Ronald Schroeder examines the marital, social and cultural restraints that nineteenth-century society placed on men and women, and so takes a socio-historical gendered approach. Samantha Grave's *Reading Sensation Critically* explores how Braddon positioned her fiction in the magazines she edited, providing a wider socio-historical-cultural perspective, while Jessica Cox's *New Perspectives* increases awareness of Braddon's other literary genres and wider writing beyond *Lady Audley's Secret*, foregrounding her interest in blurring generic boundaries. Significantly, all of these texts, bar the most recent, have 'sensation' in their titles, demonstrating a fundamental limitation to their works: they focus specifically on Braddon's early sensation fiction, particularly those published in *Belgravia*, neglecting her later novels and her work in other literary fields, thus narrowing the scope of Braddon's influence on contemporary and modern society. Admittedly, my own thesis title also includes 'sensations' as an allusion to Braddon's infamous writing, but also as a challenge to develop beyond the limited reach of sensation novels. Just as 'sensation fiction' has not been fully defined (the term has been used indiscriminately for novels viewed as transgressive by women writers), each of her short fiction's subgenres invokes a different 'sensation' in the reader and so they should not be homogenously treated.

Contrasting with these critical studies of Braddon's sensation fiction, *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures* collates the essays, reviews and articles Braddon published in the nineteenth century's newspapers and periodicals, highlighting her wider engagement with the social, political and religious issues of nineteenth-century society. The collection's engagement with Braddon's non-fiction writing is an essential step forward in positioning

Braddon's influence beyond fiction, although the critical introduction once again gives an overview of Braddon's sensation writing career as context to her oeuvre. The only critical text to free itself from Braddon's sensation writing shackles is Tomaiuolo's *In Lady Audley's Shadow: Mary Elizabeth Braddon and Victorian Literary Genres* (2010), because it adopts a wider thematic approach to Braddon's oeuvre. Furthermore, though he remains focused on her novels, Tomaiuolo also inserts one article on Braddon's short story 'The Good Lady Ducayne'; Braddon scholarship is tentatively branching out into including her short fiction because it provides a wider understanding of her impact on literature and nineteenth-century culture. Finally, Anne-Marie Beller's *Mary Elizabeth Braddon: A Companion to the Mystery Fiction* (2012) offers a more comprehensive overview of Braddon's entire oeuvre. Despite the misleading title that suggests it focuses on her mystery fiction only, her companion has entries on all of Braddon's almost ninety novels, other generic writings, significant tropes and characters that link her works together, and important people in her life. This all-encompassing approach satisfies our modern interest in all aspects of Braddon's life and oeuvre, while further developing critical knowledge of her neglected texts.

Articles dedicated solely to Braddon's short fiction have also been slowly increasing in frequency since the turn of the twenty-first century, reflecting the pattern of her short fiction's republishing history and confirming the genre's growing recognition as a literary art form. Markedly, there are only six articles that devote their main focus to an example from Braddon's short fiction, and I utilise them in the appropriate thematic chapter: Chapter Two – Braddon's Supernatural Short Fiction. Scholarship, like republications of Braddon's short fiction, has focused on this one specific theme by analysing the same few stories that have been reprinted in modern collections. For instance,

'The Shadow in the Corner' (1879) is examined in two of the articles on Braddon's short fiction: Lowell Frye's 'The Ghost Story and the Subjection of Women: the Example of Amelia Edwards, M. E. Braddon, and E. Nesbit' (1998) and Eve Lynch's 'Spectral Politics: The Victorian Ghost Story and the Domestic Servant' (2004); while 'At Chrighton Abbey' is examined in 'Home Invasions: Masculinity and Domestic Power in the Supernatural Fiction of Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and Rhoda Broughton' (2007) by Alysia Kolentzis. Each of these articles contextualises Braddon's representation of men or women within a domestic space and so takes a gender-historicist approach. The other tale to be analysed, 'The Good Lady Ducayne' (1896), has been examined in half of the scholarship on Braddon's short fiction: Lauren Goodlad's "'Go and marry your doctor": Fetishism and 'Redundance' at the *fin de siècle* and the Vampires of *Good Lady Ducayne*" (2000); Heather Braun's 'Idle Vampires and Decadent Maidens: Sensation, the Supernatural, and Mary E. Braddon's Disappointing Femmes Fatales' (2009); and 'Reading between the (Blood)lines of Victorian Vampires: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's "Good Lady Ducayne"' (2009), which is the previously mentioned article by Tomaiuolo; he adapted the conclusion in his book to reflect his developed argument. Each of these articles focuses on the impact of Braddon's sensation fiction on her engagement with gothic literature and how she blurred the boundaries between these two subgenres. Thus, solid critical analysis of Braddon's short fiction has, so far, been limited to a handful of articles based on only one of the five thematic subgenres of her whole oeuvre, while also being restricted to only three of over one hundred stories. Overall, literary, gender, biographical and historical scholarship on Braddon is still discovering the multi-faceted aspects of her personality and her writing, which is what this thesis explores. Consequently, modern scholarship can be

extended by a complete study of Braddon's short fiction, offering an alternative perspective on this ever versatile author.

Overview of Thesis Chapters

The sequence of my thesis chapters – Braddon's theatrical, supernatural, detective, domestic and children's short fiction – deliberately begins with aspects of Braddon's oeuvre that are most familiar to modern critics. This is in order to move beyond these sensational tropes, introducing Braddon's diversity and other subgenres as my thesis progresses. I chose a thematic approach, rather than a chronological or journal-based structure, because it clearly distinguishes Braddon's multiple subgenres and how they reflect her own multiple selves. In consideration of her short fiction specifically, I begin with her theatrical tales because they expand directly on Braddon's performance of her multiple selves as discussed above, underpinning my interpretation of Braddon's short fiction. Theatrical fiction also links supernatural and crime fiction together because it contains cross-over tales (supernatural-theatrical and theatrical-crime tales), while domestic and children's literature follow, concluding with Braddon's most critically neglected subgenres.

Chapter One engages in depth with Braddon's acting career. Significantly, Braddon set numerous short stories (as well as novels) in the theatre or circus, depicting select protagonists as actors, actresses or circus performers. Theatrical stories are not a subgenre of fiction in their own right, like the other subgenres, so a comparison with other nineteenth-century writers requires consideration of depictions of public performance in general, such as in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Furthermore, in the nineteenth

century there was a hierarchy of professions for women and so acting will be contextualised in reference to its acceptability as a profession. Braddon's portrayal of acting and circus performance reveals her all-encompassing knowledge of the theatre and develops her use of performing identities from her own multiple selves to her fictional characters. Each of these professions illustrates Braddon's eliding of boundaries, be it class, gender or genre. Specifically, Braddon's deconstruction of theatrical stereotypes through her use of love triangles, setting and façade emphasises the doubly vulnerable position of actresses in society.

My second chapter assesses Braddon's supernatural short fiction, which was a subgenre already firmly established by writers such as Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell. An opening discussion of the progression of the subgenre from the gothic, through other supernatural writers' contributions, to the debate surrounding male versus female supernatural fiction, contextualises the complexity of nineteenth-century paranormal writing. Braddon's contribution is examined through her use of foreign and domestic settings through which she critiques societal, cultural and political conventions. Following the development of the psychological ghost story of the late nineteenth century, Braddon's writing engages with psychological, medical and post-colonial themes, demonstrating her ability to adapt with the times, while a detailed analysis of her best-known tale, 'The Good Lady Duayne', completes this chapter. Each of these themes also dominates in Braddon's other work and so her intertwining of sensation, gothic and supernatural fiction reveals Braddon's overarching breakdown of generic barriers, with all its implications for the cultural conflict between faith and science.

Crime fiction was another well established subgenre with writers such as Wilkie Collins and Arthur Conan Doyle its leading proponents. Chapter Three gives an overview

of crime fiction's historical developments to contextualise Braddon's unique contribution to this complex and evolving subgenre, much like Chapter Two. Traditionally, crime stories aim to produce clarity at the finale, contrasting with supernatural fiction which mystifies and confuses the reader; however, two of Braddon's paranormal tales contain detective figures, so her intertwining of these subgenres (alongside her sensation fiction which also utilises the detective figure), will once again illuminate her deconstructing boundaries, demonstrating the breakdown of the class structure and the hypocrisy of middle-class morality. Furthermore, the relationship between the detective figure and masculinity is addressed in an exploration of how masculine and feminine identities are separately constructed, linking to Braddon's supernatural fiction. Braddon's specific contribution to this subgenre is examined in response to her questioning what constitutes a detective: her crime short fiction contains professional detectives, amateur detectives and the reader as detective.

As discussed in Chapter Four, domestic fiction constitutes the largest section of Braddon's oeuvre, placing her in direct competition with writers such as Margaret Oliphant and Charlotte Yonge. Braddon's domestic fiction explores how outside influences affected an engaged or married couple and so her stories are considered in three separate sections: issues that arise from family and friends, rejected or new lovers, and economic hardships. Notably, Braddon's domestic tales comprise short stories and her longer novellas, suggesting her readership was interested most in scenes of domestic life, whilst also continuing the debate about the acceptable 'length' of short fiction as an art form outlined in this Introduction. Braddon's domestic fiction reveals she was alert to the negative impacts of marriage on both men and women, and so, through her depiction of extramarital affairs and misunderstandings of the heart, this chapter examines Braddon's overall

perceptions of marriage, exploring whether or not she advocated conformity to the marriage laws, or promoted reform, and was thus a feminist or anti-feminist writer.

Moving on from exploring parental, sibling and marriage situations, Chapter Five assesses Braddon's children's short fiction from multiple angles: her writing as a child, her fiction about children for adults, her texts for children and her autobiographical account of her own childhood. This comprehensive writing by, for and about children portrays a unique side to Braddon not previously explored in any literary criticism. Children's fiction again has its own unique history as a literary subgenre, so an engagement with writers such as Mary Molesworth will be utilised, alongside discussions of how children were perceived in the nineteenth century through legislation and Braddon's own charity work. Braddon's representations of and attitude towards children reveal their impact on individual adults and society in general, showing how she believed children play an essential role in challenging society's cultural mores. Her texts for children also centre on moral and virtuous actions, indicating that she continued the tradition of using fiction as an educational tool, as well as a form of entertainment.

Overall, the conclusion of this thesis summarises how Braddon's multiple selves affect her own fractured writing style, allowing her to perform multiple subgenres in her short fiction. Tomaiuolo argues that 'Braddon in the course of her literary career explored and experimented with many literary forms in order to exorcise Lady Audley's pervasive presence, and to be considered a respectable novelist' (Tomaiuolo, 2010: 12). This conclusion amends 'novelist' to 'author' because Braddon achieved this respected position through every genre and subgenre of fiction; she did not restrict her literary output. Consequently, despite the novel's domination of the literary marketplace in the nineteenth century, Braddon utilised short fiction and other genres to establish her reputation and

radically question generic boundaries by refusing to accept any constraints other than those based on her own rhythms of composition. She continually transgresses binaries within her short fiction – public/private, domestic/economic and mass fiction/literary art – complicating our understanding, not only of her oeuvre, but her place as a woman of letters in the wider nineteenth-century society.

CHAPTER ONE

BRADDON'S THEATRICAL SHORT FICTION

The fluid and enigmatic figure of the actress is paradoxically the one element that remains consistently visible throughout Braddon's writing career. (Mattacks, 2001a: 70)

As Kate Mattacks illustrates in this opening quotation, the figure of the actress is key throughout Braddon's fiction, ranging from the different social roles Lady Audley adopts and Aurora Floyd's inheritance of the stigma surrounding her mother's acting career in her sensation fiction, to the many professional actresses she depicts in her later novels: Myra Brandreth in *Hostages To Fortune* (1875), Justina Elgood in *A Strange World* (1875), Mary Freeland in *Rough Justice* (1898), Flora Sandford in *A Lost Eden* (1904) and Kate Lurgan in *Our Adversary* (1909).¹ Braddon's theatrical representation, however, does not just centre on actresses, she depicts many actors as well – for instance George Godwin in *The Green Curtain* (1911) – marking her theatrical knowledge as gender inclusive, but role specific; there is still a hierarchy in gendered terms. In light of Braddon's career as an actress – as contextualised at the start of this chapter – it is note-worthy that Braddon set so many of her tales in this location; she effectively created her own subgenre of fiction: the theatrical tale. Thus, it is important to consider these short stories all together, especially in relation to the many issues that surround the theatre – such as the questionability of an

¹ Ruth Lindemann notes, in reference to one of Braddon's first penny dreadfuls, *The Black Band* (1860), that she 'features theatrical figures in three key heroic roles. Such licence was presumably allowable in working-class fiction, since these readers would likely regard the stage as a potentially advantageous form of employment' (Lindemann 1997: 280-1). Mrs Varney in Braddon's *Lady Lisle* (1862) is another professional actress, but she is a bigamist and so is aligned with the Victorian 'fallen' woman. She is doubly disenfranchised from society because the public was not ready to accept actresses as respectable at this time.

actor's/actress's respectability, or the fluid construction of the self – as depicted in contemporary literature and critical responses.

Regarding Braddon's novels, Kate Falvey asserts that '[m]any of the tales make use of Braddon's theatrical background and offer portraits of colourful types as well as intriguing glimpses into her own early experience' (Falvey, 2007: 48). Alongside Braddon's depiction of professional actors/actresses, Valerie Pedlar distinguishes two other ways in which Braddon's theatrical experience enters her fiction: 'she weaves in reference to plays and well-known characters, especially Shakespearean [... and she] draws on theatrical effects ... since the intensity of the visual experience makes for easy assimilation' (Pedlar, 2004: 190-1). This chapter will develop Mattacks, Falvey and Pedlar's arguments by illustrating the symbiotic relationship between Braddon's short fiction and her acting career. Falvey's use of the term 'colourful types' to denote actors and actresses is significant considering their reputation and depiction in most nineteenth-century literature; actresses were generally considered to be middle-class women who had fallen from society's privileged position, or lower-class women who prostituted themselves on the stage in order to survive, while actors had violent and aggressive reputations and were considered a threat to innocent young women (Auerbach, 1990: 68). As Robert Lee Wolff notes:

MEB's published novels only occasionally touch upon the pleasant camaraderie between the congenial men and women of a theatrical company. Rivalries, jealousies, ambitions, successes, and disappointments: these she naturally set down in profusion. But she was writing for an audience which would have regarded easy, natural friendships among actors and actresses as a sign of loose morals. (SV: 74)

Braddon's writing for a middle-class readership understandably plays on their expectations, rather than presenting an accurate depiction of theatrical life, but financial imperative may impel such writing, as well as a reluctance to offend her readership. Nevertheless, in her theatrical short fiction, which was not critically evaluated like her novels, Braddon's experienced theatrical voice could either continue to conform to these stereotypes, or subvert her readers' expectations. The freedom of the short story may vitally alter her depiction of the theatre and that possibility is this chapter's main concern.

Not only does Braddon represent both actors and actresses in her tales, but she also depicts two distinct theatrical settings: the middle-class theatre (generally performing Shakespearean and other full-length plays) and the lower-class circus/low theatre (usually consisting of pantomimes, music halls, burlesques and *tableaux vivants*). This instantly indicates Braddon was freer in her short fiction to signify the everyday practicalities of the stage from all class, gender and social angles. Braddon's tales will be considered in response to this division and whether these two distinct settings have an impact on her critique of nineteenth-century society. By engaging in the debate surrounding the respectability of nineteenth-century actors/actresses, and how Braddon reminds the reader of the theatricality of everyday life through the role-playing of her actors/actresses both on and off stage, this chapter will explore whether Braddon is constrained by middle-class gender and identity ideologies, or if she exposes the façade of the Victorian stage.

Victorian Women's Professional Roles

The nineteenth century's rigid patriarchal social hierarchy that defined a person's class, and which was reflected in the construction of the Victorian family, was also applied to the

nineteenth-century middle and working class woman when she was considering her professional choices. If a woman had to work, being a teacher or governess was respectable because it demonstrated her level of education. Although she had to leave the family home, she usually ventured into another household (or school) and so remained in the private sphere. Any vocation that could be done from home was also acceptable, for instance being a writer and possibly an artist. Professions which were middle/lower class, for example roles in the theatre, were less reputable because the woman had to enter the public sphere. The occupations of a factory hand, seamstress or domestic servant were decent for a working-class woman, but not for a middle-class lady, although these positions were somewhat ambiguous. The parallels between Mary and her aunt Esther in *Mary Barton* (1848) demonstrate that a seamstress was seen as being at risk of slipping downwards into prostitution, because she was subject to the male gaze, making her more vulnerable to male advances; she was that much closer to becoming a 'fallen woman', who was viewed as scandalous and, therefore, displaced in nineteenth-century society.

In consideration of a woman's theatrical career specifically, there was also a hierarchy within this profession that was 'a faithful reflection of social class' (Booth, 1991: 2). Singing was the most acceptable accomplishment, possibly because a middle-class woman was usually taught this within her own home; it was a skill to be admired in the private sphere, and so it was easier to see singing on stage as an extension of a woman's domestic accomplishments. In *Daniel Deronda* (1876) Mirah Lapidoth becomes a singer, rather than an actress, because it has a higher moral status. Mirah had been trained in singing and acting since birth and so her family inheritance enables her to maintain her respectability. She also notes that she "had a master besides, who made [her] learn by heart and recite" (Eliot, 1876 [2009]: 181); she is expertly taught, emphasising the degree of

professionalisation that the stage requires as a career. Mirah also teaches singing to “‘Great ladies[’ ...] daughters’” (p.315), showing that she shares her talents for the benefit of others and is an authority in this area. Patricia Zakreski notes that ‘[t]he singer is represented as something *more* than the conventional woman, and as such remains untouched by the earthly issues that plagued the actress’ (Zakreski, 2006: 172). The audience judged a singer on her voice, rather than her body, as illustrated by Eliot when ‘Deronda began by looking at [Mirah], but felt himself presently covering his eyes with his hands, wanting to seclude the melody in darkness’ (p.315). The singer’s modesty is protected and the listener focuses on the purifying sound of her voice so she avoids the vulgar association of exhibiting and selling her body for the audience’s consumption.

In comparison to singing, acting was viewed as an ambiguous profession because it was associated with self-display, immodesty, exposure to the male gaze and an ability to impersonate women with loose morals, thus complicating the actress’s own identity. This was especially concerning when a middle-class woman acted the whore on stage, because patriarchy feared that such a role might blunt the actress’s finer sensibilities and compromise her reputation. Within acting there was a further hierarchy: ‘a leading role was more respectable than a part in the chorus, and Shakespearean tragedy was more desirable than a Dion Boucicault melodrama’ (Zakreski, 2006: 143). The role of a leading lady allowed the actress to be recognised by the audience and her fellow thespians as having a true talent, while Shakespearian productions educated their audience and required a high quality of acting which raised its social standing, especially when compared to the music hall which was connected with the ‘male working and lower middle-class’ (Booth, 1991: 11). Furthermore, it was relatively commonplace for middle-class families to hold private plays in their homes and so acting was an accomplishment, like singing, that was developed

in the nineteenth-century household. In a contemporary article on 28th February 1863, the author notes that these private performances ‘raise the intellectual tone, and improve the amusements, of English society [... and that] drama has always been the highest mental recreation of which the most civilized men have been capable’ (‘Private Theatricals’, 1863: 264); drama and acting were essential to society because they developed relations between the sexes by stimulating intellectual conversation. Charles Dickens ‘wrote, directed, and acted in many productions at home with his children and friends, often donating the money raised from ticket sales to those in need’ (Merriman, 2006: online). His performances endeavoured to improve the lives not just of his personal acquaintances, but also the poor and destitute, providing a philanthropic element to his theatrical productions. One review of his plays in *The Times* noted that Dickens’s audience consisted of ‘the highest celebrities in law, literature, art, and fashion’ (‘Tavistock-House Theatre’, 1857: 7). By inviting only prestigious friends to his performances, Dickens maintained the respectability of his ‘stage’ because it was kept within the private sphere.

Private theatricals, however, presented a dilemma: they allowed middle-class women to believe they could become professional actresses after having acted only in the private sphere. *Daniel Deronda*’s depiction of Gwendolen Harleth illustrates this problem. The narrator notes Gwendolen ‘had never acted – only made a figure in *tableaux vivants* at school; but she felt assured that she could act well ... having been once or twice to the Théâtre Français’ (pp.43-4). She does not understand the hardship of a theatrical life, or how she can break into the profession. Her consultation with Herr Klesmer – a ‘first-rate musician’ (p.36) – reveals these difficulties: women had to audition (as Mirah does for Herr Klesmer); have a connection who could recommend them to a theatre (“‘I shall introduce you to Astorga”” [p.415]); or have a private tutor who could train them, because ‘the stage

had no standardized system of examinations or qualifications' that potential thespians could undertake to prove their worth (Davis, 1991: 7). Klesmer also acknowledges that acting in private theatricals or taking an engagement at a theatre to earn money while studying "[c]an't be done" (p.219), because this training is not rigorous enough. Even with her schooling, Mirah "knew that [her] acting was not good except when it was not really acting, but the part was one that [she] could be [herself] in" (p.184). Unlike Gwendolen, Mirah cannot be associated with the immoral nature of the actress because she feels uncomfortable pretending to be someone else; she will not jeopardise her respectability, demonstrating her moral refinement. Despite these differences between singing and acting, middle-class audiences did not necessarily distinguish between the diverse kinds of performer. For example, in one of Mirah's private concerts, Lady Pentreath comments on Mirah's demure countenance, which Deronda dislikes because Mirah was 'remarked on in a free and easy way, as if she were an imported commodity disdainfully paid for by the fashionable public' (p.477); both singers and actresses are considered public property, even within the supposed security of a family drawing-room.

At the bottom of the theatrical hierarchy, circus performers and ballet/chorus dancers were lower-class professionals; they were 'glamorous, beautiful, erotic, fearless, and transgressive' (Assael, 2005: 10). No respectable woman could become a circus performer or ballet dancer without losing her propriety or social position, because these women were socially displaced by having to travel across country, their act depended on the visual display of the female body, and their performances were hazardous. Because of the complete separation of the circus from the theatre, the circus will be examined in a separate section of this chapter.

Establishing the overall structure and reputation of women's professions, particularly in relation to the theatre, has revealed the fluid barriers between the social boundaries. The risk of slipping downwards was a serious concern for women and the position of actresses was particularly problematical because of the risks of progressive desensitization to immoral behaviour. This is the argument the critics used to attack Braddon's sensation fiction; they claimed that her history as an actress exposed her to morally questionable people and corrupted her own sense of propriety. Resuming the discussion of her acting career will allow the main themes and issues that Braddon encountered to be discovered. These can then be drawn upon to judge whether or not Braddon's experiences did affect her writing. Does she denounce the theatre as a setting of sexual impropriety, or does she defend actors and actresses, insisting that they are not deceptive and immoral as the hegemonic middle-class society believed?

Braddon's Acting Career

As a result of her mother leaving her father, Braddon had to earn a living to financially support her family, and she chose acting as her means to achieve this. Braddon's theatrical career can therefore be seen either as an act of desperation borne of her father's neglect, or alternatively, chaperoned by her mother, as an honourable gesture of self-help, because she aligns acting with the properly domesticated feminine role of providing financially for a parent. Braddon adopted the ironic stage name Mary Seyton – the name punning on virtue and vice – to remain respectable. Braddon's acting career created a division in her family between those who supported her (her mother, who also took her stage surname) and those who dissociated themselves from her (her brother, Edward). Overall, Braddon was

‘unashamed of her acting career’ which began in the Royal Theatre at Bath in 1852 (*LL*: 74, 28). How she entered this profession is still unclear. Respectable stage schools were not established until the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth century – for instance the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts was opened in 1904 (RADA, 2010: online) – so before this period women did not have a specific institution where they could receive professional training. As in *Daniel Deronda*, their only way to practise was in the home before family and friends and they relied on any connections made during these performances to gain an opportunity to perform on the public stage. Fanny Kemble, for example, came from a reputable theatrical dynasty and made her first public appearance playing Juliet to her father’s Mercutio (Kemble, 1878 [2007]: 193), while the author Anna Eliza Bray entered the profession through her father’s connection to Mr. Dowton (‘one of the most eminent men on the English stage’ [Bray, 1884: 120]) when she discovered she had a ‘clear and articulate [voice, even if it] was far from strong’ whilst reading aloud at home (p.123). Bray had the support of both her brother and her fiancé and so also remained respectable, but her life was ‘repeatedly interrupted by illness’ and so every time she was offered an engagement she could not perform (p.202).

After her first engagement, Braddon began touring the provinces, starting in Southampton and travelling to Winchester and Reading, as well as going to Scotland for a short period in 1855 (*LL*: 28-36). As her career developed she went from playing extras in crowd scenes, to having small speaking parts, eventually rising to major supporting roles and finally becoming a leading lady. Braddon worked hard, had a talent for acting, enjoyed her career and so was able to support her family through this profession. The majority of plays Braddon acted in were comedies and farces, but she also performed in burlesques, pantomimes and Shakespearean productions, including comedies, histories and tragedies.

On a typical night there would be three plays performed and Braddon would star in at least two of them (*LL*: 15). She had a demanding schedule that gave her a comprehensive understanding of how the theatre worked, the differences between subgenres, and the importance of pleasing the audience, each aspect of which is an important influence on her theatrical fiction.

However, as an actress's fame grew she became a more publicly recognised figure, which could cause problems, such as attracting more male attention. Nevertheless, in a contemporary article on 1st July 1861 entitled 'English Actresses', 'A Governor of the Dramatic College' declared that:

it is a calumny upon a highly talented body of ladies, endowed with a few exceptions with every female virtue, that the occasional visit of a 'gentleman' is sufficient to induce them to abdicate that public and social position they adorn. (English Actresses', 1861: 2)

The Governor asserts that actresses would not allow 'gentlemen' to blemish their respectable position in society because they have 'every female virtue' and they would be alert to, and thus on guard against, the advances of such men. The Royal Dramatic College was established in 1858 and 'among those present were Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray' (Ahmad, 2010: online). This college was officially 'opened at Maybury in 1862 as a home for retired actors. The College closed in 1877' due to lack of funding ('Woking History Society', 2010: online). The Governor, therefore, was aware of the customs of the theatre and was attempting to dispel any myths surrounding the stage; however, he was simultaneously presenting a positive impression of actors/actresses as a way of increasing their esteem and respectability.

In 1856, once she had achieved leading lady status in the provinces, Braddon moved to the Surrey Theatre to launch her career in London (*LL*: 38-9). This move was intended to consolidate her position as a credible actress and allow her to take on more demanding, prestigious, and thus more profitable, roles. As Braddon's status rose she performed alongside other prominent actresses of the time, such as Adelaide (née Biddles) Calvert and Mary Anne Keeley (*LL*: 39-40). These women were well established in theatrical circles, were popular with their audiences, and maintained their respectability by having the support of their husbands, but even well-respected actresses had their reputations questioned by the public. Respectability was a key value of the nineteenth century and, in contrast with the 'English Actresses' article, people were more suspicious of the bad moral example of actresses than of actors and other men in the audience. Carnell confirms this fear by noting that the '[o]ne worry of her family must have been what sort of women Braddon would come across if she became an actress, and the fear that their loose morals would rub off on her' (*LL*: 26). Braddon was not exposed to this problem as she was chaperoned by her mother who at all times kept a deliberate watch for unwanted attention and corrupting influences.

The issue of an actress's respectability is further explored in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853). In this text Vashti's acting skills are described as 'a marvellous sight: a mighty revelation. It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral' (Brontë, 1853 [1999]: 240). Brontë symbolises Vashti's powerful and dangerous performance by having the theatre catch fire during the climax of her act. Vashti's performance metaphorically burns down the theatre because her passion is inflammatory and it threatens to infect the audience. Brontë based this portrayal on the French actress Rachel, whom she went to see in London in 1851. Describing her impressions of this performance in a letter to James Taylor that

year, Brontë indicates that her concern is not over Rachel's intense performance, but the fact that she did not use her accomplishment for 'moral' purposes or for 'good account', she merely 'forms an exhibition' using her body (Brontë, 1851 [2007]: 197). Rachel does not conform to the nineteenth-century feminine ideal and so in *Villette* Brontë fictionalises Rachel's performance, reconstructing her own experience of the theatre as a fiction, which serves to illustrate the disturbing power of the actress, who at once produces 'wonder' and 'horror' in the audience (p.197). For Braddon, performing with such prestigious actresses did not help to establish her career in London and she received varied reviews from critics (see Carnell's *Literary Lives*). The contradictions surrounding Braddon make it difficult to judge her acting ability because of the subjective nature of the theatre. However, at the time they served to slight Braddon's début, so that her first season in London was regarded a failure and she returned to the provincial circuit.

On her return from London she joined the company of Messrs. Wolfenden and Melbourne in Hull's Queen's Theatre, who, for six nights, performed in the Beverley Assembly Rooms (LL: 40-1). Being part of a company arguably provided her with financial security because she had consistent work and it also gave her a pseudo-family as a further means of protection and respectability. Beverley had previously been the home of Mary Wollstonecraft, who



Figure 11: Playbill for *Lady Audley's Secret*, Assembly Rooms, Hull, 1869

went there in 1768 with her family (Pennell, 1884 [1890]: 16), and it is in Yorkshire that Braddon acted alongside Wybert Boothby and Ira Aldridge – a famous black actor (LL: 41). Braddon continued performing with prominent actors indicating she returned to her eminent position as a leading lady after her London failure. Hull’s Queen’s Theatre was particularly note-worthy because it had ‘an auditorium seating about 3,000 and a stage ninety feet deep, it

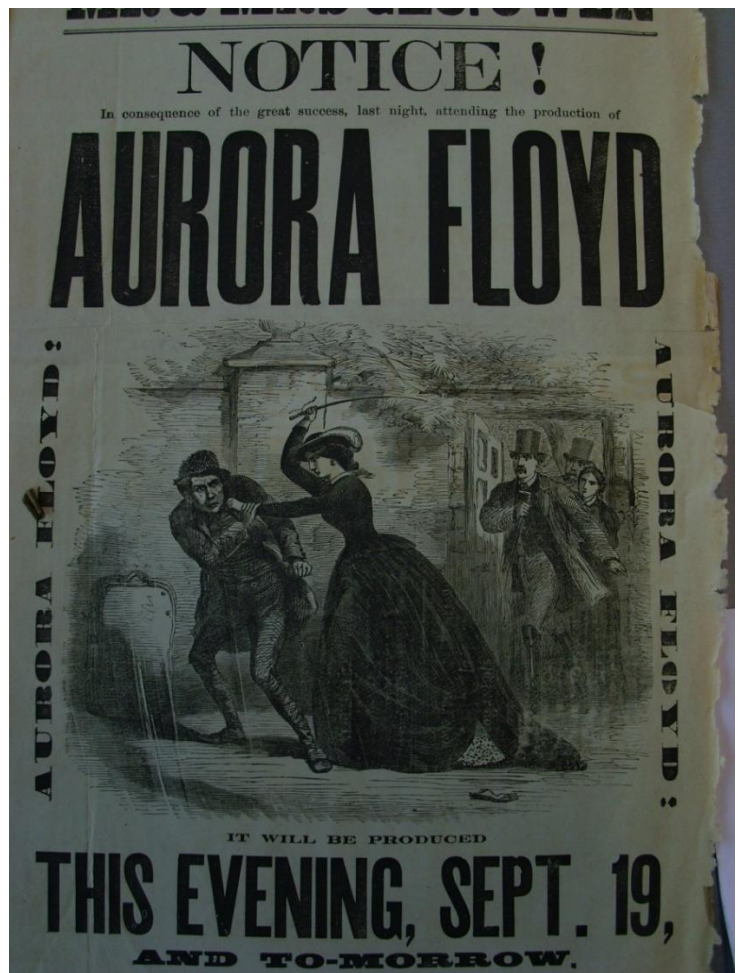


Figure 12: Playbill for Aurora Floyd, 1871, Assembly Rooms, Hull

was reputed to be the largest theatre outside London’ (Roy, 1971: 29). Braddon was engaged with a prominent provincial theatrical company. In later years Hull’s Queen’s Theatre paid homage to its former actress by producing stage adaptations of Braddon’s novels *Lady Audley’s Secret* and *Aurora Floyd* in 1869, 1870 and 1871, as Figures 11 and 12 demonstrate (photographs taken from the playbills at Hull’s History Centre). These playbills reveal that the dramas were popular – performances ran for several nights in a row – and that Braddon’s sensation influence was felt across the country, not just in London, therefore proving her widespread appeal.

In 1857 she moved to Brighton, joining Henry Nye Chart's company, and Carnell notes that this 'was a step up for Braddon [because] his was a company that was considered the next best thing to a London engagement' (LL: 43). Braddon's talent and propriety were once again acknowledged by her fellow thespians, but she seems to have begun playing parts that were mostly too old for her: she played the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, Gertrude in *Hamlet* and when she was only twenty-two she played Lady Capulet (LL: 46). This suggests her waning popularity and her inability to sustain her acting career, confirming the short 'life-span' that actresses were all too aware of. Carnell surmises that this could have been due to Braddon's 'being tall and looking a little older than she really was' (LL: 42); her suitability for playing leading ladies was over. In 'Too Bright To Last' (1870), Braddon's female narrator, Martha, who is only twenty-two herself, notes that she 'played old women because [her] personal appearance was unattractive, [her] stage wardrobe somewhat scanty, and [her] aspirations of the humblest' (Braddon, 1870 [1877]: 282); Braddon is providing reasons why younger actresses play older parts, which could explain her own acting experience, as well as demonstrating that Braddon drew on her own experience in her theatrical fiction. Contrastingly, Leman Rede in his earlier text *The Road to the Stage* (1827) observes that 'for a Lady the Old Wom[a]n may be considered the most profitable and safe line' (Rede, 1827 [1836]: 15). Old women were considered more respectable in real life and there were no sexual undertones when playing these characters that would compromise a young actress's moral standing and so it could have been Braddon's choice in order to maintain her good reputation.

After her time in Brighton, Braddon toured Coventry with the company in 1858. During this period she sometimes played male parts, such as Paris in *Romeo and Juliet* (LL: 52). This was not intended to arouse controversy or be a political statement on women's

inequalities, merely that when the company were short on actors, actresses would step in to fill the minor male roles. However, it does suggest that Braddon was aware of, and engaged in, the Victorian sexological debate concerning gender norms and boundaries. Even at this early stage in her multi-faceted professional life Braddon was defying conventions and being attacked by critics; one anonymous reviewer condemned Braddon because she ‘show[ed] rather too evident an inclination to appear in male habiliments, at least if we may judge by the frequency of her appearance in such attire’ (‘Provincial Theatricals’, 1858: 11). Despite Braddon’s willingness to wear male costumes on the stage, she retains her feminine status when off-stage in order to avoid any accusations of sexual deviancy. She also never depicts cross-gender acting on stage or characters dressing up in the opposite sex’s attire off stage in her short fiction (thus there are no overt lesbian or gay hints), illustrating that there are some barriers of respectability that she would not cross for fear of alienating her middle-class readership or her own sensibilities.

Despite Chart’s company being well respected, when they returned to Brighton it seems Braddon’s enthusiasm for acting waned. This conclusion is supported by the memoirs of her friend Adelaide Calvert, who notes that Braddon’s lack of progression in the theatre ‘was easily accounted for – her heart was not in it’ (Calvert, 1911: 56). This is confirmed by an earlier article in *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, where the author reflects on memories of Braddon’s acting while touring Scotland: ‘I have a lively recollection of the authoress of *Lady Audley’s Secret*. She was by no means a genius as an actress – but she had a most lovely head of hair – in “wavy rings”’ (‘The North’, 1865: n.p). Perhaps due to her lack of ‘genius’, her failure in London, or because she knew that she would not maintain her youth for much longer, Braddon left to pursue her writing career with help from her patron, John Gilby. This career change allowed Braddon to establish herself in the

world of literature (as the Introduction has demonstrated); however, she did not forget her professional acting experience.

After leaving the theatre, Braddon wanted to establish herself as a playwright and some of her plays were performed in theatres throughout the country, namely *The Loves of Arcadia* (1860) in The Strand Theatre, *The Model Husband* (1868) in Surrey, *Griselda* (1873) in the Princess Theatre and *The Missing Witness* (1880) in Liverpool (LL: 399-400). Gabrielle Malcolm has published a fragmented section of the play *The Revenge of the Dead*, which Braddon wrote in the 1850s while she was in Aberdeen. This segment demonstrates Braddon's budding experimentation with subgenres because it was 'fashioned from Gothic and satiric elements' (Malcolm, 2006: 62). She combines historical, domestic, supernatural, satirical and melodramatic elements to produce a play that would excite and intrigue an audience; however it was rejected by the publishers for unknown reasons. In 1894 and 1903 Braddon wrote two reflective essays on her experiences of the theatre from childhood to the present entitled 'In the Days of My Youth' and 'Fifty Years of the Lyceum Theatre' respectively, revealing her continued interest in the stage.

Analysis of Braddon's career allows several prominent themes to emerge: her participation in plays which elide the boundaries between multiple subgenres gave her insight into different conventions and techniques; the importance of choosing the correct subject for her audience and how to keep it entertained; the necessity to be wary, not only of men, but of other actresses' corrupting influences and how they could damage reputations; and how the public was concerned about the fluidity of class boundaries in the theatre because it allowed social climbing. As many critics have asserted – including Carnell, Mattacks, Falvey and Pedlar – Braddon drew on her time as an actress to colour her novels. She depicts this social advance in *Aurora Floyd*, when the low-born actress

Eliza marries into the upper classes, though the stigma of her acting career is still inherited by her daughter, Aurora. As this chapter will reveal, however, Braddon's experience was more definitive than this. Acting exposed Braddon to other people's prejudices concerning her presumed loss of social standing, but instead of allowing this to create self-doubt, it motivated her to expose the façade of the Victorian stage. Braddon achieved this by changing her method of writing and the subjects she wrote about: she used the neglected short story's form to challenge society's hypocritical perceptions that the intensified sexual politics of the stage meant that an actor/actress must be sexually promiscuous; that an actor's/actress's duplicity of character made them morally deceptive off stage; and that the façade of theatre hid these ambiguous tendencies.

Braddon's Theatrical Short Fiction

Over the course of her short story career Braddon wrote twelve theatrical tales. She began to publish these in the late 1860s ('Lost and Found' being extracted from the novel *The Outcasts* [1863-4] and published separately in 1867), but they were mainly produced in the 1870s. These dates correspond with her experimenting with other subgenres because she could build on and extend her sensation fiction fame. Braddon was able to achieve this because she interwove subtle differences to appeal to her specific demographic readership's changing desires and evolving trends in the literary marketplace. These theatrical tales allow her to adapt her style and move from inside the middle-class family home into the theatre, a place where she could not only draw on her personal experiences, but also explore and exaggerate the class and gender issues she was interested in; the theatre being a public arena where the different classes and sexes meet and occasionally clash.

By adapting her sensation writing (which has a performance element to it), her acting and her playwright careers, Braddon was able to integrate theatrical tropes, images and settings into her short stories. Considering these theatrical tales as a group will expand our understanding of Braddon's relationship with the stage, demonstrating their wider resonance. Braddon used the theatre as a microcosm for society as a whole; the gender and class issues expounded in the theatre are relevant to all levels of society. These stories concentrate on middle-class actors/actresses and lower-class circus performers, rather than upper- and middle-class singers. This means Braddon continued writing for her established middle-class readership and that, as with her sensation fiction, she persistently succeeded 'in making the literature of the Kitchen the favourite reading of the Drawing room' (Rae, 1865: 204), because she is eliding the boundaries between class distinctions through her hybrid texts. By exploring the theatre, low theatre and the circus interchangeably over the course of her writing career, Braddon indicates that they are each of importance to her when considering her time as an actress. For the purposes of this chapter, the theatre, the low theatre and circus tales will be treated separately to help interpret her response to these settings.

There is, however, an overall trend in her theatrical fiction. In her 1860s stories Braddon focuses on the jealousy and rivalry of actors/actresses, in accordance with her nineteenth-century middle-class readership's preconceptions. In her 1870s tales she explores the distinctions between reality and façade, complicating the barriers between the stage and real life; while in her 1880s stories she engages with the debate surrounding the purity of actresses, blurring the boundaries of female respectability. One story in particular serves to confirm this argument: 'Across the Footlights' has been considered by both Robert Lee Wolff and Jennifer Carnell as Braddon's most autobiographical theatrical short

story (*SV*: 58-60, *LL*: 43-5). It was published in 1884 when '[t]he [acting] profession ... evolved from an outcast group of vagabonds to an acknowledged arm of Empire' (Auerbach, 1987: 1888). By this point Braddon was confident in writing about her own experience of the stage, even if it was in a neglected genre. The story depicts many of the themes that have already been discussed in relation to Braddon's life, such as the need for a chaperone, and the financial rewards of being an actress, as well as Rosalie's need to practise in the Isle of Wight (as Braddon trained in the provinces). In contrast with Braddon's life, Rosalie gives up acting once she is married. This was customary at the time in deference to the husband's social position. Braddon reveals that Rosalie, like herself, was driven by necessity, rather than a vulgar desire to display her body in public, and by choosing to leave the stage after her marriage Rosalie favours domesticity over public performance, which cements her respectable position in society.

Braddon's preoccupation with actresses' virtues is emphasised through her fictional female performers' adoption of stage names. In 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' (1869) Mrs. Waylie takes the stage name Madame Delavanti; in 'Too Bright To Last' (1870) Lucy Derwent signs her marriage certificate as Lucy Dawson; Rosalie Morton's other name is Rosalie Melford in 'Across the Footlights' (1884), and in 'One Fatal Moment' (1889) Sibyl Botillier takes the names Ann Smith and Mademoiselle Lafontaine, but is known mostly by the character she impersonates, Joan of Arc; it is only Mrs Barbara Stowell and Sarah Pawlett of 'Her Last Appearance' (1876) and 'The Little Woman in Black' (1885), respectively, who use their birth names. In contrast with her female performers, most of Braddon's actors do not use stage names – for instance Joseph Munford and James Tayte in 'At Daggers Drawn' (1867), and Ned Langley of 'The Little Woman in Black' – suggesting that it was unnecessary for men to hide their identity. Women had to protect themselves,

whereas men could remain faithful to their identities without fear of reproach. When Braddon gives a male character a stage name it is usually to support his act, rather than to maintain his respectability, for instance the clown John Groman has the stage name Signor Grumaui in 'The Clown's Quest' (1877-8), while the lion-tamer Herr Rudolph Prusinowski is really William in 'Three Times' (1872) (there is one notable exception to be explored later). As Deborah Pye notes: '[b]y the 1880s [when Braddon was producing her late theatrical fiction] Victorian society was beginning to identify the actress from the fallen woman, in part because fictional actresses infiltrated the circulating libraries' (Pye, 2003: 73). Braddon's fiction was instrumental in helping to distinguish this difference and establish the respectability of the acting profession, while her continual engagement with theatrical issues implies that ambiguities surrounding actors'/actresses' sexuality, respectability and violence were a constant concern for her and so will be important themes of this chapter.

Of Braddon's twelve theatrical tales, eight were published in the *Belgravia Christmas Annual* and the *Mistletoe Bough*, both of which are specifically Christmas periodicals. This suggests that at this time of year the theatre became more popular, and thus more acceptable, possibly due to pantomimes and other festive productions being performed. As Michael Booth asserts: '[t]he success of the Christmas pantomime was absolutely crucial to the financial health of the unsubsidised Victorian theatre' (Booth, 1981: 76), while the narrator of 'Across the Footlights' insists, 'the queen of the fairies must be young, and fair, and gracious looking' (Braddon, 1884 [1886]: 286). Notably, the Christmas pantomime Fairy Queen was a character Braddon frequently played, indicating she was an important and valued member of the company. Braddon also interweaves this detail into her tale 'The Clown's Quest' when she depicts the life of the clown, John

Groman. John begins performing in the circus, but he advances in his career to perform in the theatre because of his skills in the Christmas pantomime: '[h]e lived in the golden age of pantomimes, when the pantomime was a legitimate and honoured feature of the drama ... when a clever clown was accounted worthy of honour' (Braddon, 1877-8 [1884]: 168). Christmas productions aimed at attracting a large audience – which included the entire family, rather than just individuals – and so the theatre, and through association these tales, became popular and acceptable to publish and read. These theatrical tales did not generate the same hostility from critics as her sensation fiction, possibly because of this Christmas connection, as well as the short story being an overlooked and underrated genre. This chapter will now examine these stories in light of the dominant themes – those of love triangles, the blurring of reality and façade, violence and respectability – while providing examples from relevant tales. These themes permeate all of Braddon's novels to some extent but are intensified in the short story because of the condensed nature of the genre.

Love Triangles

Braddon had previously depicted love triangles in her fiction to great critical outrage, namely in her sensation texts *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Aurora Floyd*, each of which has a love triangle consisting of two males and one female. This combination suggests that the woman would have the power because she could choose between the men; however, the issues surrounding the love triangle – namely female or male jealousy and desire for social advance – all serve to compromise the morality of the woman in particular, raising the question of whether she had knowingly committed bigamy or not. This places the female protagonist in a dangerous position: she is entrapped by two men, suggesting that she is a

sexually voracious ‘fallen’ woman, an ambitious social climber, or an ‘abnormal’ mother who abandons her family. Eve Sedgwick further theorises that these ‘erotic triangles’ comprised a ‘compulsory and double-edged involvement of [a] wom[a]n in all male homosocial bonds [in] the absence of direct genital contact between men’ (Sedgwick, 1985: 21, 62); for instance between a cuckolded husband and the lover, father and son-in-law, or two rivals for one woman’s affections. Braddon continued to use this framework in her later novels, as well as in her short fiction as a way of demonstrating that what was ‘sensational’ about her sensation fiction was not limited to this one form; many literary subgenres engage with this dynamic.

In the short story ‘Her Last Appearance’ (1876) Braddon presents a love triangle consisting of two men and one woman, the ‘other’ man, Sir Philip, being the instigator. Philip discovers the actor Jack Stowell is mistreating his wife Barbara, whom he falls in love with while watching her on stage, so he attempts to liberate her from her abusive husband. This illustrates the stereotypical view of actors as morally questionable, as well as the precarious position women were in while performing: men were able to gaze at an actress, unmarried or not, fantasise about her and then approach her off stage. Philip notes that he ‘found out where she lived, bought over the lodging-house keeper to his interest, and contrived to learn a great deal more than the well-informed world knew about Barbara Stowell’ (Braddon, 1876 [1877]: 328-9); actresses’ personal lives were public property, open to anyone who could afford to buy the information they desired.

The story opens *in media res* with an argument between Barbara and Philip, who are at Jack and Barbara’s home:

“He is a scoundrel,” said the gentleman.

“He is my husband,” answered the lady.

(p.325)

Opening directly into the action is a literary and theatrical technique designed to disorientate the reader and create mystery in the narrative. Braddon draws on theatrical practice in her prose fiction in order to demonstrate the similarities between the two genres: they both need to gain the audience's attention and keep them entertained. The private, personal setting of a domestic space suggests an illicit, intimate connection between Barbara and Philip and the revelation that Barbara is an actress serves to confirm nineteenth-century stereotypes of the profession. Nevertheless, the labelling of the characters as a 'gentleman' and a 'lady' signifies their elevated position in society, distorting the Victorian social hierarchy and contradicting stereotypes by suggesting that Barbara is a morally refined woman, not an immoral actress.

As the story unfolds it is revealed that Jack wooed Barbara (then a parson's daughter) because she was beautiful and he believed she would make money for him as an actress: 'With such a Juliet he could not fail as Romeo' (p.326). Jack considered Barbara's marriage potential in purely economic terms, reflecting how women could be viewed by men: as a commodity, a financial investment, or means of social/professional advance. Barbara on the other hand, thought it was 'sweet ... to have all her world of love and happiness bound up in this one volume. This fond and foolish dream lasted less than a month' (p.327). By depicting the situation faced by young women who discover their husbands are drunkards or scoundrels, Braddon is noting that women have limited options to help themselves once they are married. As a poorly paid actress Barbara would not be able to afford a divorce (or indeed obtain one without proving aggravated culpability according to the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act) and if she left Jack she would lose her respectable position in society and become a 'fallen' woman. Jack forces Barbara onto the

stage, and into public view, removing her from her 'proper' place inside the family home where 'a woman should be paramount' (p.329). Braddon implies that not all actresses choose the career for themselves; they can be forced into it. Nevertheless, acting becomes an escape from her marriage because Barbara finds the theatre a refuge from her husband's violence and takes solace in it: '[t]hese heroines of tragedy, who were all miserable, seemed to sympathise with her own misery' (p.327).

Out of love for Barbara, Philip kills Jack so that she is freed from his tyranny. She would not leave her husband prior to this because it was her duty to stay with him – “Can the path of shame ever lead to honour? No, Sir Philip, I will not do evil that good may come of it” (p.331) – signifying that a lower-class actress can be morally refined, in contrast with an upper-class noble who commits murder.² By refusing to commit bigamy, despite the violence of her husband, Barbara does not 'fall' like Braddon's previous sensation heroines; instead she maintains her respectability, demonstrating that the stereotype of actresses being morally corrupt is unfounded. In contrast with Barbara, Philip does “do evil that good may come if it”, but his motives are honourable: he wishes to marry Barbara so '[t]he town would see her no more under these garish lights of the theatre. She would shine as a star still, but only in the calm heaven of home' (p.335). Philip plans to restore Barbara to her 'rightful' place in the home, promising a happy life for her, but this also means Philip would take her profession and her independence from her; it is a double edged sword for Barbara who would remain entrapped by nineteenth-century patriarchal social conventions. Instead of marrying Philip though, Barbara dies and her ghost appears

² Barbara's speech also has biblical associations. Paul comments in his address to the Jews: 'Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" / Why not say – as some slanderously claim that we say – "Let us do evil that good may result"?' Their condemnation is just!' (Bible: Romans 3: 7-8). Thus, Barbara does not just consider her moral, but also her religious, duty, which shaped social norms at the time.

to him to say goodbye; the compromised woman must atone for her sins (the emotional hardship of her guilty conscience killed her), while Philip returns to his family and remains respectable in society. This exposes the differences between the sexes and the classes in Victorian society; men and the upper classes were in a more secure position because they could support themselves and would not be judged on the same terms as women, meaning they could risk their respectability in pursuing an unavailable woman, while the woman of the lower class became compromised (even if she did not act on her feelings), and was socially displaced due to society's double standards.

In 'The Little Woman in Black' (1885), Braddon begins by establishing her traditional structure of a one-woman-and-two-men love triangle. The low-born actress, Sarah Pawlett, is to marry Lord Bellenden, which is significant because 'it is not an every-day incident for an actress to be raised to the peerage' (Braddon, 1885 [1886]: 267). This social climbing of the actress repeats Braddon's theme from 'Her Last Appearance' (1876); Braddon knows it is a middle-class concern surrounding the profession. Despite this advantageous match to Lord Bellenden, Sarah falls in love with Ned Langley, a comedian of the theatre. Braddon is careful to contrast the differences between Ned and Lord Bellenden, drawing on established theatrical stock characters of the hero and the villain. Lord Bellenden is 'a gentleman of the purest water, a gem without a flaw, white and perfect as the Regent's diamond' (p.271), while Ned has a 'diabolical reputation' and is a scoundrel (p.268). Sarah asks Ned to marry her before she is forced to marry Lord Bellenden, but Ned refuses, suggesting they continue to be lovers after her marriage; once again it is the actor who is disreputable, not the actress. As Sarah realises Ned's intentions are dishonourable, 'her hands grew cold as death, and she wrenched them from his ... She recoiled from him' (p.273). Sarah, like Barbara Stowell, will not sacrifice her reputation for

her love and so she tries to maintain her respectability by distancing herself from him. Braddon is once again demonstrating the insecure position of women on the stage, but she does not blame the actress. Sarah's position is precarious because she has to trust that the man she loves is honourable, and if he is dishonest, then she loses her respectable and secure position in society; the blame lies with the male characters in Braddon's stories.

Braddon complicates this love triangle structure by introducing an overlapping one between Sarah, Ned and the mysterious woman in black – an unusual combination of two women and one man. Sarah thinks this woman is a ghost, but she is discovered to be Ned's wife, whom he passes off as his insane mistress. Sarah realises that this woman in black is 'even worse than a ghost – [she is] a woman, mad, or it might be, only jealous – a woman with a bitter, unscrupulous tongue bent on doing her mischief' (p.277). Braddon is noting that, unlike in her supernatural fiction, ghosts are not something to be scared of; women should be afraid of the people in their lives who can cause harm with gossip and threats because they can ruin reputations. The woman in black has compromising letters that Sarah has written to Ned, but instead of blackmailing Sarah, she gives them back to her on her marriage to Lord Bellenden. The woman in black, who is notably not named, remarks: "[w]e wives have the best of it, perhaps, with such fellows [as Ned]; for at least, we are behind the scenes, and we see them with their masks off" (p.279). Similarly to *Punch's* 1881 cartoon of Braddon (Figure 6), she uses a theatrical metaphor to comment on the barrier between the public and the private spheres of the home, while also noting how everyone maintains multiple personas to hide their misdemeanours.

By the end of the story Sarah has learned to love Lord Bellenden and 'had been educating herself severely since her engagement ... and in the course of her studies has discovered how sorely she had erred in the matter of orthography' (p.281). Lower-class

actresses had to use their wage to buy their own clothes, make-up and sometimes props (Dickinson, 2000: 135), and so Braddon is revealing that they could not afford to educate themselves as well; only the middle and upper classes could afford a good education. After her marriage Sarah burns her letters, purging herself of her past sin, and redresses the wrong done to the woman in black by befriending her, while Ned ‘vanished from the stage of the world’ (p.284). Thus, ‘The Little Woman in Black’ is a moral story that has a conventional ending for her middle-class readers in the sense that Ned is punished, and Sarah, Lord Bellenden and the woman in black are rewarded. This happy ending distracts Braddon’s middle-class readership from realising that a low born actress was able to cross social boundaries and rise into the upper class with their approval, whilst pre-figuring New Woman fiction by prioritising sisterhood over the adulterous man.

Reality and Façade

A further theme running throughout Braddon’s theatrical fiction, which has been noted in the previous story when considering Ned’s outer mask, is the contrast between reality and façade. Louisa May Alcott’s story ‘Behind a Mask’ (1866) has theatrical metaphors and includes a meta-fictional play within a play, but Braddon’s career as an actress provided her with a profound insight into the complex layers of artificiality and showmanship of the stage, which she exposed throughout her fiction. Kate Mattacks has argued that ‘[h]er literary characters manipulate their image through their use of gesture, costume and speech to hide their private desires from view’ (Mattacks, 2008: 322), and she cites as an example Lady Audley’s (re)presentation of herself as a virtuous heroine. In her theatrical short stories Braddon develops this manipulation of character image through her utilisation of the

multiple personas that she perfected throughout her many careers, thus, her theatrical short fictions are another performance in her writing oeuvre.

The story that best reflects her constructed multiple personas is ‘Prince Ramji Rowdedow’ (1874). In this tale the actor, John Miffs, instead of altering his personality to hide his ulterior motives, completely changes his original identity by pretending to be a Prince in order to entice people into the theatre for his benefit. He dresses up in an exotic costume, darkens his skin to appear of African origin, pretends to speak a foreign language and arrives in the town via a train so people will believe his deception. The use of oriental elements and spectacle within this story links with Braddon’s leading role in the musical burlesque *Lallah Rookh* written by Robert Brough (LL: 56). The play was based on Thomas Moore’s oriental poem of 1817 and this association meant the performance was more scopophilic, and the musical burlesque ‘a lower form of drama’ (Mattacks, 2001a: 74). This connection confirms that Braddon is drawing on her own experience to colour her stories, reveal the duplicity of the theatre and, by extension, the multiple identities characters create to obtain their desires.

By beginning his performance outside the theatre, John extends his act into the text’s reality, deconstructing the boundaries between acting on and off stage. As an extension of this, Braddon implies there is an element of theatricality to everyday life, or as Pedlar argues, Braddon’s theatrical fiction reminds the reader ‘of the extent to which living *is* role-playing’ (Pedlar, 2004: 200). As the overview of Braddon’s acting career has revealed, the theatre thrives on knowing what the public desires and then manipulating it into believing this façade. John remarks, ‘[n]ow I had, in the course of my professional career, beheld one marvel in theatrical statistics – or shall I say play-going human nature’ (Braddon, 1874 [1877]: 272): if an actor/actress gives the audience what it wants, then it

will not see through the deception. This idea is common knowledge within the theatre community and, as the ironic, amused and patronising tone of the narrator points out: ‘the general public, which loves to be gulled ... hates to find out that it has been gulled’ (p.278).

In order to conceal the fact that John Miffs is Prince Ramji Rowdedow, the story is written from the first person perspective which allows John to edit the narrative: ‘[w]hat passed between us I do not intend to reveal’ (p.275). This narrative editing process allows Braddon to obscure from the reader what John hides from the audience in the text. To perfect his disguise, John also deceives his fellow ‘brother actors’ (p.274), creating an all-encompassing façade. He refers to the Prince as ‘he’ (p.277), thus John talks about his original identity in the third person to disorientate the reader and his audience; he splits himself into three different characters: John Miffs, the actor (original persona), John Miffs, the narrator (second persona), and Prince Ramji, the fraud (third persona). To maintain this deception, Braddon constructs everything about this story like a performance: character names are from pantomimes – ‘Richard Wittington’ becomes ‘Dick Wittington’ (p.275, 280) – the Prince’s facial features are described in terms of a costume – ‘He wore a large beard and moustache’ (p.276) – the Prince acts ‘in vehement pantomime’ when talking to people (p.277), and his national dress is made up of props from different shows (p.276). Braddon mixes theatrical subgenres in one short story to demonstrate how they can cross-relate and influence each other in order to deceive the audience in the text, as well as revealing the ease with which deception can be used in the reader’s everyday life.

To engage the reader in deconstructing Miff’s façade Braddon uses another theatrical and literary technique: the narrative is reflexive and breaks what is known in the theatre as the ‘fourth wall’³ or in literature as meta-fiction: ‘I leave that question ... to the

³ This idea was later developed by Brecht in the early twentieth century, whose work consistently reminds the audience that they are watching a play by having a cast member sit on stage like a member of the audience, by

decision of the intelligent reader' (p.273). By asking the question, emphasising that the narrative is being told as a story, Braddon invites the reader to detect the truth within the tale by seeing through John's make-up, costume and accent – the foundation of his act – as well as inviting the reader to become part of the spectacle, extending the deception to the reader's world and so our life becomes a fiction. By implying that the reader's world is a stage, and that the fictional stage reflects the reader's life, Braddon once again creates a hybrid space that draws attention to the fact that everything is a façade: there is no one authentic identity, no reality, no universal truth; everything is a socially constructed performance. As Elizabeth Langland notes, '[t]he home ... can be decoded so that we recognize it as a theatre for the staging of a family's social position, a staging that depends on a group of prescribed domestic practices' (Langland, 1995: 8). In her theatrical short fiction, Braddon re-presents the 'prescribed domestic practices' of a character's multiple selves for the text's audience to watch in public, and for her readership to read in private, collapsing the boundaries of respectable/unrespectable private/public life, pushing nineteenth-century readers to question and deconstruct their stereotypes of the nineteenth-century theatre, actors and actresses.

Braddon develops her (de)construction of the reality/façade of the Victorian theatre in her later story 'Thou Art the Man' (1884). This story extends the idea of the reader's life as a socially constructed performance by invoking the theatre as a site in which the characters' life events are performed. Within this story, Elyard, the actor, is famed for his portrayal of a betrayed husband in the play 'A Venetian Husband'. On stage he 'stabs his false wife in a garden at sunset ... hides the corpse among the rushes that fringe the canal'

having an actor speak directly to the audience or by remarking on the construction of the setting during the play ('Brechtian Techniques', 2009: online). Brecht wished for his audience to remain alert to their surroundings and reality in order for them to be able to comment or pass judgement on the morals or social injustices highlighted in his plays (for example, *The Threepenny Opera*); a desire seen very clearly in Braddon's work.

and, after he is caught, kills himself (Braddon, 1884: 317). By depicting a play that has a ‘murder which thrill[s] the audience, and sen[ds] them home rapturous and awestricken’ (p.317), Braddon emphasises that the one type of theatre that has sustained itself over time is sensational theatre. Twenty years after her initial fame, Braddon is still defending her sensation writing career against critics who condemn her work as morally corrupting by illustrating that in theatre it is drama that panders to the sordid side of human nature that remains profitable; murder and bigamy in drama are acceptable, but not in less visually stimulating genres, such as the novel.⁴

After returning home from sea, Charles Bywater discovers that his beloved childhood friend, Helen Leeworthy, has been missing for five years. Every effort was made by a family friend, Michael Elphinstone, to find her, but to no avail. One night, Charles attends the production of ‘A Venetian Husband’ and is shocked by Elyard’s performance of the betrayed, murderous husband: “[a]cting”, replied [Charles]. “It’s not like acting. It’s like reality” (p.318). Charles’s exclamation is prompted by Elyard’s attention to detail when (re)enacting the crime, which, for Charles at least, blurs the distinction between Elyard’s acting on stage and his conduct off stage within the text: “I could not have believed that any man could do such things as this man does unless he were at heart a murderer” (p.318). To this confusion of acting and living, his friend, Phillimore Dorrell, retorts: “[y]our true artist imagines himself the being he represents. It is as easy for him to imagine himself a murderer, as to imagine himself a hero or lover” (p.318); the actor’s skilled performance is achieved only by becoming the murderous persona, thus his own original identity is compromised (such influential theatrical practitioners as Constantin

⁴ Braddon had also made this point earlier in her career when she published two short stories entitled ‘The Mudie Classics’ (1868). These tales draw upon Ancient Greek and Roman tragedies that included bigamy and murder to demonstrate that the content of her sensation fiction was not new, it grew out of a long tradition of literature from around the world.

Stanislavski have expounded views on ‘living the part’ which helped them gain great popularity in the early 1880s [Stanislavski, 1937: 3]). This ambiguity of character was an issue that affected actresses’ private lives, as has previously been discussed, but for the actor, this compromise does not affect his credibility as a man; instead it serves to promote him within society: “[Elyard] goes into the best society. He was at Oxford; and is a man of considerable refinement” (p.318).

To support his conviction that Elyard is a stage name used by Elphinstone to separate himself from his murder of Helen, Charles draws comparisons between the stage setting of ‘The Venetian Husband’ and the country scenery of his childhood where he and Helen grew up: ‘[t]he picture was as vivid to his mental vision as that other picture which he had seen last night with his bodily eyes on the stage at Drury Lane’ (p.329). To prove his point Charles adopts the surname Browning to spy on Elyard – he takes a *nom de plume* in the text’s reality in order to disguise his original identity – while Elyard created an alias, like many of Braddon’s fictional actresses, to maintain his reputation by hiding his secret from the other characters. When Charles confronts Elyard about the murder of Helen, Elyard confesses in a passionate outburst, but soon backtracks by saying: “[m]y raving just now was a bit of acting got up on the spur of the moment to deceive you” (p.342); Elyard attempts to hide his original murderous identity as a form of fiction. However, Charles has already discovered the evidence he needs to convict Elyard and prove that his acting in, and the setting of, ‘The Venetian Husband’ are in fact based on his real life actions within the tale, and it is Elyard’s actions outside of the theatre that are an act; art reflects life.

If the beginning of ‘The Venetian Husband’ imitates the real life of the story, then the ending reflects the finale of the play: once he has been caught, Elyard, like his character, commits suicide in jail before he is hanged. Therefore, as Oscar Wilde later

theorised in 'The Decay of Lying' (1889): 'life imitates art' (Wilde, 1889 [2002]: 158). According to Braddon's diary she completed this story in 1877 and published it in 1884. Within it she extends Wilde's yet to be published critical argument by creating a circular narrative: life reflects art reflecting life. Both 'The Venetian Husband' (art) and the characters' reality (life) 'hold[...] the mirror up' to each other, reaffirming the constructed and performance nature of the reader's world (p.162), because Charles reinforces the relationship between the textual and the reader's construction of the theatre and the real world. By collapsing the boundaries between acting and living within her tale, Braddon is demonstrating that the socially constructed conventions of the stage and real life can not only be blurred, as they were in 'Prince Ramji Rowdedow', but can be completely subverted; the acts of performing and living are one and the same.

In her representation of the theatre, Braddon explores issues surrounding the respectability of actors and actresses through the themes of love triangles and the reality/façade of the stage, both within the characters' and the reader's worlds. Notably when depicting the jealousy and instability of love triangles Braddon's protagonists are female, while men are the predominant characters in her tales of physical and moral deception. Braddon's use of the love triangle demonstrates that women are placed in precarious positions when it comes to love because they have no social support or legal standing if they marry a violent or dishonourable man. Men do not have the same constraints as women and so they are free to pursue whomsoever they wish. By focusing on actors in 'Prince Ramji Rowdedow' and 'Thou Art the Man' Braddon implies that men are able to deceive and distort the boundaries of their own and the reader's reality/fiction through their multiple selves because of their freer social situation; men would not be categorised as 'fallen' by society's double standards. In exploring the theatricality of

everyday life, Braddon exposes the highly constructed nature of the stage and subverts conventional associations of the theatre with artificiality and deception by revealing that it depicts more directly the socially constructed nature of the reader's world.

Low Theatre and the Circus

As previously mentioned the circus began as a lower-class form of entertainment because of its lewd and grotesque associations. As the V&A Museum notes, the circus was created by Philip Astley in the late eighteenth century ('The First Circus', 2010, online). His stage was in the round so that the audience could see all of the performers and the stalls came as close to the performance area as they could. Astley's Amphitheatre's production of *Mazeppa* in the early 1830s not only founded the circus as a space for daring manoeuvres, but also of risqué costumes. When Adah Isaac Menken starred in the title role, '[s]he caused a sensation by being tied to a real horse that galloped around the theatre ... wearing only a short tunic and tights which made her legs look naked' ('The First Circus', 2010, online). This attire helped to set the precedent for subsequent tight fitting circus costumes that drew attention to the physical display of the female form, meaning circus performers and ballet/chorus dancers were considered lower-class theatrical professionals because their performance went against nineteenth-century ideas of feminine decency. The lower class association of ballet dancers further meant that they were placed in a hazardous position, as the contemporary critic W. T. Robertson notes:

[t]heirs is not a luxurious life; it is not sensual. It is laborious, unpleasant, comfortless, wet, sloppy, and sore-footed ... The poor, pale girl is swung up to terrific heights, imprisoned in and upon iron wires, dazzled by rows of

hot flaming gas close to her eyes, and choked by the smoke of coloured fires. (Robertson in Pemberton, 1893: 141-2)

This demonstrates that not only were the front of house acts exotic and dangerous, but the behind the scenes mechanics of the circus put women at risk.

Despite this, however, during the mid-nineteenth century the circus industry grew rapidly and became popular with all classes. ‘Lord’ George Sanger produced two Royal Command Performances for Queen Victoria, and Dickens mentions Astley’s Amphitheatre specifically in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841): ‘Dear, dear, what a place it looked, that Astley’s; with all the paint, gilding, and looking-glass; the vague smell of horses suggestive of coming wonders; the curtain that hid such gorgeous mysteries’ (Dickens, 1841 [1957]: 293). The depiction of Astley’s as a place of mystery, wonder and excitement served to cement its national reputation, which consolidated the circus’s overall social position. Circuses would travel across the country, making them popular with their audiences because they would stage a parade when entering a new town to promote their show. The development of railways enabled the performers to travel to remote areas of the country, as well as across Europe, with larger quantities of equipment. ‘Such was the popularity of circuses’, continues the V&A museum, ‘that many 19th century theatres also presented circus acts and you were as likely to see jugglers and aerial acts on a trip to the music hall as at a circus’ (‘Victorian Circus’, 2010: online). The fact that Queen Victoria, and audiences of music halls and theatres equally enjoyed circus performances demonstrates that lower-class theatricals infiltrated the middle and upper classes without causing controversy.

Braddon’s publication of these tales in periodicals aimed at a middle-class readership, suggests that in her low theatre and circus stories she conformed to nineteenth-

century stereotypes in order to appease her loyal readers. The themes of jealousy, violence and deception that flow throughout these circus tales serve to confirm this conventional depiction of the theatre, especially 'One Fatal Moment' (1889) which describes the disreputable thoughts and actions of a female circus performer. However, the main theme that runs throughout Braddon's oeuvre, that of critiquing the relationship between men and woman, is exchanged in her low theatre tales 'At Daggers Drawn' (1867) and 'Three Times' (1872), for the exploration of the relationship between two men. Braddon's oeuvre begins by depicting circus performances in the theatre, the familiar setting for her readership, but she later expands her stories to depict a travelling circus company. This development implies that Braddon either became more daring in her writing due to her establishing a respectable position in society, or more confident that her loyal readership would not abandon her for depicting lower-class characters.

Braddon's earliest theatrical short story, 'At Daggers Drawn' (1867), is also the first short story she wrote under her pseudonym Babington White; Braddon thus distances herself from her theatrical past so her readership cannot relate this lower-class profession to her middle-class status as a writer. Braddon also used this *nom de plume* initially to experiment with the subgenre, to see how her audience reacted to theatrical literature, and only once she had judged their reception did she use her own signature M. E. Braddon, unlike with her supernatural fiction which she openly acknowledged straightaway. The tale is about two 'low' comedians (Braddon, 1867 [1886]: 335), Joseph Munford and James Tayte, their low status placing them socially below the 'serious' actors of the stage, but above circus performers. The two men become rivals when a London theatre's lessee arranges for Munford to join his theatrical company, where Tayte is the top performer. Braddon uses the opening section to detail the reality of actors' lives, for instance the salary

they are paid – ‘a weekly stipend of three guineas’ (p.336) – how they have to support their family on this income – ‘The salary of a provincial favourite ... does not afford a very liberal income for a family of eight’ (pp.335-6) – and how they have to buy their own costumes out of their salary and transport them if they go on tour (p.336). Munford’s arrival makes Tayte jealous and insecure and he reveals his anger through his ‘dark and repellent’ countenance (p.338). Once on stage, however, his appearance transforms and becomes that of the carefree entertainer; his on and off stage personas again illustrate an actor’s deceptive split personality and the ease with which desires can be hidden from view. This split is emphasised by Tayte’s attire as he exchanges ‘a suit of scarlet-and-green tartan and a red scratch-wig for the sombre attire of everyday life’ (p.338); his ‘sombre attire’ is a costume he wears to hide his inner hatred for Munford.

The pride, and potential violence, of Mr. Tayte – ‘[who] felt as if he might have derived a grisly satisfaction from the act of hacking asunder his rival’s jugular vein with an indifferent razor’ (p.340) – aligns the lower-class performer with popular stereotypes of criminality and aggression; the violence becomes a metaphor for the tension of the stage. The choice word ‘act’ in this quotation blurs the boundaries between Tayte’s reality and thoughts by suggesting that, even though this violence is only contemplated, the action could be performed as a ‘real’ act of violence, or as though it were an act being performed on stage. There is even a blurring in motivation; his act is described as being a ‘grisly satisfaction’, but the word ‘indifferent’ then creates an almost oxymoronic feel to the undeniably violent act. This can be seen as further intentionally blurring the reader’s allegiances and shifting the norms that the reader might expect. Thus there are three levels to this violence which all distance the reader from the actor, displacing the aggression onto the lower classes. Nevertheless, Braddon’s assertion that ‘there are monarchs who will

endure no second power in the state; and a popular low comedian is of the same arbitrary temper' collapses the boundaries between the aristocracy and the working class (p.339); man's jealous nature is universal and class status is irrelevant if a man feels his livelihood is being threatened. As well as destabilising the boundaries between classes, Braddon challenges class stereotypes by indicating that Munford is not a violent or jealous low comedian. He took the job to provide for his family and only counters Tayte's aggression, rather than provoking it. In portraying one aggressive, 'bad' character and one 'good', hard-working character, Braddon draws on a common trope used in literature and theatre to 'visualize virtue and vice, specifically in brothers or male doubles' (Vlock, 1997: 171), as she does in 'Her Last Appearance'. Braddon reduces her characters to basic dramatic types so that they are easily recognisable to her readership, making them more acceptable to read, and therefore write about.

As their hatred for each other rises Munford becomes ill and can no longer act or support his family. As a result Tayte helps Munford financially and emotionally and a friendship develops, indicating that actors are not just violent and uncouth; they are capable of compassion and close friendships. Braddon is suggesting to her middle-class readership that the lower classes are not ideologically opposed to them, humanising them for the reader. As in her sensation fiction where she depicts closed communities in country houses, in her theatrical fiction Braddon shows how 'snug [a] little family party' a company of performers is (p.339), and how, despite their differences, they band together when someone is in need of help. Wolff notes that the line "'Come back to the theatre and I'll hate you again' ... [s]aves the story from being a mere Victorian sentimental trifle' (SV: 426), and allows Tayte and Munford's 'stock' character traits to be destabilised, suggesting that

Braddon transcends the oversimplification of theatrical characters in order to challenge social prejudices.

Braddon echoes the theme of lower-class male violence in 'Three Times' (1872), which is occupied with the circus performance of lion-taming. Lion-taming was a well established act by the nineteenth century and was popular with all classes: it had 'plenty of life and movement in the pieces, and what may be called showy action in the performance' (Braddon, 1872: 302), which entertained the lower classes. Furthermore, while Braddon notes that 'it isn't every box audience as will take to wild beasts. You may get schools of pious people that object to the drama' (p.304), it is known that when 'Mr Isaac Van Amburgh ... put his head inside a lion's mouth[,] Queen Victoria was very impressed by his performance' ('Circus Acts', 2010, online). Circus shows remained popular throughout the Victorian period, although acts involving animals, such as lion-taming, decreased in popularity with the rise of animal welfare campaigns.

Braddon develops the violence and tension between men in this tale by setting the circus act in a theatre. The theatre is a safe area where the actors do not engage in risky performances, while the circus is popular and entertaining because it is a place of peril; there is a sense that something might go wrong: "One would suppose [the audience] liked to see a poor beggar hazard his life every night" ... "If it wasn't for the danger, the wild-beast business would be as flat as ditchwater" (p.203). By combining these two settings Braddon transports the danger of the circus to the theatre, whilst bringing lower-class entertainment to her middle-class readership. The tension is increased throughout each of the three chapters by their subheadings 'The First Time', 'The Second Time' and 'The Third Time', heightening the sense of danger within the tale. Furthermore, as the previous

quotation demonstrates, the violence between men in this tale is not between two performers, as it was in 'At Daggers Drawn', but between the performer and the audience.

The violence within this relationship is based on who has power: the watcher or the watched? The audience has the power before the show opens because it pays for the entertainment, and so the performer has to comply with its desires, just as Braddon must in her writing. However, once the act has begun the performer has the power, the power to command and mesmerize his audience. As Charles's friend notes in 'Thou Art the Man', the actor Elyard could "exercise a powerful fascination over me" (Braddon, 1884: 332), and it is this fascination that keeps Elyard in control for the first half of the story. In 'Three Times' however, there is one audience member who subverts this power dynamic of the stage by capturing the attention of the lion-tamer, Herr Rudolph Prusinowski. Rudolph becomes suspicious of the man with the "light reddish hair" (p.305), and describes to his fellow actors how he was almost killed five years ago by one of his lions the same night this man was in the audience. Rudolph continues by stating that the man had "a steadfast ravenous kind of look" and was sitting "in a half crouching attitude" watching his every move (p.305, 306), his eyes roaming "like a cat's following a mouse" (p.305). This description of the mysterious, nameless man invokes a superstitious and sinister aspect to the story, as well as emphasising the danger of Rudolph's show: the lion, as well as the man, would be watching him as a predator stalks prey.

The day after this story is told, the same man joins the audience and Rudolph has a lucky escape from the jaws of one of his lions. Rudolph manages to accost the man after his show and discovers that he is an 'amateur of sudden death' (p.315); he uses his wealth to see entertainers perform dangerous acts, and consequently, Rudolph becomes afraid of his presence. As Chapter Two's analysis of Braddon's supernatural fiction will illustrate, the

lower-classes in her fiction uphold superstitious beliefs. Three years later, the mysterious man arrives to see Rudolph perform his act again. This time Rudolph is determined not to stop the performance. Instead he continues, resulting in a sensationally violent climax: the lion kills him. This ending harks back to Braddon's established career as a sensation fiction writer. Here, however, she displaces the horror of the situation onto the middle-class mysterious man at the conclusion of the tale. He tells 'the story as a pleasant kind of thing after dinner' (p.319). Rudolph's act is kept eternal by the remembrance of his violent end for the amusement of the middle-class man's dinner guests. On the surface, the violence of lower-class actors conforms to Braddon's middle-class readership's expectations, however, she implies that this violence can be a front used by actors to hide their fears, and that the middle class can be just as violent; general stereotypes about the classes can be misleading.

Braddon's final theatrical tale, 'One Fatal Moment' (1889), engages with the themes that she had previously explored in both her theatre and low theatre fiction. Almost thirty years after her own stage career had ended, Braddon demonstrates that she is now in a position to explore the lowest class of performer without fear of literary and social ostracism. The story details the life of a soldier, Colonel Forrester, and his interactions with a female circus performer, referred to as Joan of Arc. The circus arrives in the town where Forrester and his regiment are stationed and they parade through the streets. As they enter the town the circus performers are described as: "poor bedraggled wretches", 'weary', 'dishevelled', 'pinched', 'worn' and 'ill-fed' and it is noted that they are a 'third-rate' circus troupe (Braddon, 1889 [1895]: 169, 170). As he considers interacting with the performers, one soldier remarks: "I never saw one of them outside the ring ... It must be capital fun to hear them talk", to which Forrester replies: "they'll talk just like everyone else" (p.175). By labelling the circus performers as "them", the first soldier considers the

entertainers as almost a separate species from himself because they are lower class and not deemed respectable, much like Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), where the circus folk are given an idiosyncratic style of speech quite unlike the standard English of the main characters. Dickens leaves the reader in no doubt that though these are vibrant likeable people they are definitely not middle class. Nevertheless, Forrester's comment instantly pulls the performers and the rest of society onto the same level. Braddon displaces her social commentary onto a character, distancing herself from any potential criticism, while pointedly blurring significant class boundaries to question if circus performers are like the rest of society or vice versa. Braddon represents the biased middle-class view, in alignment with her readership, but then mocks this perspective in order to demonstrate the absurdity of it.

The soldiers invite the female performers of the company to dine with them after their show; their theatrical performance is not depicted. Instead, the story centres on their life outside the circus, focusing on the interaction between the classes. Braddon re-engages with the destabilisation of the on stage/off stage dichotomy by having both the soldiers and the performers dress for the dinner as if it were an official banquet and not the 'joke' of a meal it really is (p.174): the men 'dressed as carefully as if they had been going to dine with the Dean's handsome daughters' (p.174), while the entertainers dress with a pretext of decency – one woman 'wore blue satin, with a black lace scarf' (p.176) – however, their modesty is undermined by their common nature: the woman's scarf does not hide her 'opulent bust and shoulders' (p.176). Braddon makes a point of detailing their 'disreputable' outfits (p.172), which are suggestive of their free, coarse and easy-going nature. As Gail Marshall argues: 'on the Victorian stage at least, it was precisely the "statuesque" actress who was a highly charged icon of sexual desirability, whose own

“erotic energy” was variously camouflaged, denied, even facilitated by her access to the theatrical rhetorical of statuary’ (Marshall, 1998: 4). Braddon’s circus performers take this “erotic energy” one step further because they do not try to ‘camouflage[...]’ their ‘sexual desirability’ off-stage or on-stage. Middle- and upper-class women would not be subjected to this impropriety, but because these women are lower-class, and especially because they are circus performers, they are considered by the soldiers to be fair game. The women’s talk is also ‘essentially horsey. They knew a good deal about racing’ (p.177). This knowledge of horseracing inter-textually links them with Braddon’s (in)famous bigamist Aurora Floyd and the criticism laid against her character, emphasising the risqué reputation of the female performers.

As the night wears on most of the women get intoxicated and start smoking, but Joan of Arc remains sober. She is described as having ‘black eyes’ and a ‘defiant pride, aggressive pride almost’ (p.171), suggesting that she is a violent and unruly character, like Madame Laure in *Middlemarch* (1871-2). When Ireland’s Fenians are verbally attacked, she gets uncontrollably angry and stabs a soldier: ‘a great gush of blood covered his shirt with crimson’ (p.180). This violent imagery is particularly detailed for Braddon’s short fiction and serves to highlight the horror of the situation; ‘[i]n one instance the farce was changed to tragedy’ (p.180). The omniscient narrator describes the scene using theatrical terms for everyday life, illustrating how the two supposedly separate spheres interconnect; violence is not contained on the stage, it infects the characters’ real world. Furthermore, the actress’s supposedly deceptive nature is undermined here; instead of repressing her intense emotions as nineteenth-century etiquette required, she expresses her feelings openly, albeit violently. Joan is Irish and so was personally affronted by his derogatory comments, creating a sense of sympathy for her within the text, which confuses the slippage between

crime and the social 'sin' of being an actress. Moreover, it suggests that actresses can be more honest than other women, and even if they do show duplicity of character, it is no more than anyone else; therefore, they should not be singled out, and their reputations slandered, by societal prejudices.

Joan of Arc manages to evade police custody and is not seen for another seven years. Her ability to hide can be attributed to her unstable identity. As a performer she has several personas: she calls herself 'Ann Smith' when she joins the circus company (p.182), her stage name is 'Mademoiselle Lafontaine' (p.182), although she was called 'Joan of Arc' after her character by the soldiers. She is also referred to as 'the Maid of Orleans' (p.173), while her original identity is discovered to be 'Sibyl Botillier' (p.191). This splitting of her character into different personas, especially in relation to their associations – Ann Smith (plain, in order to hide herself from her family), Mademoiselle Lafontaine (French, therefore exotic for her performance), Joan of Arc and the Maid of Orleans (historical references to a fierce and challenging woman) and Sibyl Botillier (mystical and alluring as her original self) – extends and liberates the possibilities of her identity, indicating that she has a fluid and enigmatic character, as Kate Mattacks's opening quotation suggests of Lady Audley, and as I have argued about Braddon in the Introduction of this study. It is this reinvention of her character that hides her original identity from the police; Sibyl has so many versions and extensions of herself that her first identity is buried, or even completely erased.

After seven years the story resumes with Forrester and his return from fighting in India. He visits the dead soldier's brother only to discover he is going to marry Sibyl. This plot development is another reflection of Braddon's sensation fiction of the 1860s, suggesting that she is still relying on her sensation fame in order to entertain her readership.

Forrester confronts Sibyl about her upcoming marriage and she pleads that it was “[o]ne moment, one single moment of wickedness: and I am to pay for it with the loss of a lifetime of bliss! Is that fair, do you think?” (p.197). This argument reflects Lady Audley’s plea, reaffirming that the respectability, morality and multiple selves of her heroines are a constant concern in Braddon’s writing. Forrester is unmoving in his moral stance that she should tell her fiancé that she killed his brother, for he believes that she is still ‘a woman of strong character and icy temperament’ (p.200); a person’s characteristics are unchangeable, no matter how often they alter their name. The day before her marriage Sibyl is taken to visit her fiancé’s brother’s grave and it is here that she reveals that she murdered him; she repents of her sins, purging herself of her multiple created identities, leaving only her isolated and rejected original persona. Sibyl moves to Brittany to become a governess and nurses Forrester in his old age to atone for her sins and reintegrate into society by conforming to their conventions. Braddon is showing that despite Sibyl’s lower-class status and violent temperament, she redeems herself. Nevertheless, she only inflicts self-punishment; she does not give herself up to the police to face public execution, suggesting Braddon felt that those who attempt redemption should be forgiven and not punished. By engaging in the 1880s with the same themes as her earliest fiction – the debate surrounding the purity of the actress – Braddon reveals that despite her now secure and respectable position in society, her history of being a performer still made her uneasy. She felt she owed it to the stage not only to challenge the stereotypical perspective that actresses were ‘fallen’ women and that actors were violent, but also to help establish the theatre as a respectable profession.

Conclusion

Explorations of Braddon's theatrical career reveal a problematic relationship with the stage. It provided her and her mother with financial security, but it also gave her an ambiguous social position and identity. These complexities infiltrate her theatrical short stories, broadly demonstrating her preoccupation with the respectability of actors/actresses. Dividing this chapter into an analysis of Braddon's theatre and then low theatre/circus tales has shown that this dominant theme is common to both. Braddon stresses that gender expectations are affirmed irrespective of class; a man and woman's reputation are independently judged against similar standards. For actors, disreputability is measured against their physical deception and violence, while actresses' propriety is based on their moral purity and refinement (or in Sibyl's case, her capacity for redemption). This is in keeping with her middle-class readership's ideals, suggesting that her theatrical tales are conservative and act as a warning against going on the stage. However, by also portraying morally upright actors/actresses, Braddon was able to depict theatrical performers of all types, without alienating her loyal readers, and defending the legitimacy of the profession.

To prove to society that actors'/actresses' reputations should not be measured against their ability to 'deceive' whilst acting, Mary Corbett argues that Fanny Kemble, along with Madge Kendal and Marie Bancroft, strove to justify the acting profession by aligning performance with an acceptable feminine identity: they 'redefin[ed the stage] as but another room in the middle-class house' (Pye, 2003: 75). Each of these actresses, including Braddon, illustrates that the narrow and stereotypical perception of the stage is unfounded and that it is in fact a strenuous and arduous life. Braddon strengthens this depiction in her short stories by putting lower-class actresses into love triangles to illustrate

their precarious situations; by deconstructing the barriers between the stage's performances and the reader's world to indicate the highly constructed nature of both; by presenting lower-class actors as violent, only to indicate that middle- and upper-class men are also aggressive; and by representing circus performers as repentant. Braddon repeatedly exposes in her theatrical short stories that nineteenth-century society's preconceived notions about the theatre need re-evaluating, because the stage, with its intensified emotions and alleged duplicity of characters, actually reflects the socially constructed world of the reader. The stage presents the emotions that society hides, whilst demonstrating that actors/actresses essentially act as metaphors for the deceptions men and women practise upon one another. Thus, actors/actresses should not be singled out by society as a group whose reputations are morally questionable; everyone has a deceptive nature and creates multiple identities.

Furthermore, Kate Mattacks argues that 'Braddon's representation of the actress functions as a site where Braddon interrogated her own self-styling as a sensation writer' (Mattacks, 2008: 322). As has been noted, contemporary critics attacked her sensation writing because they perceived it as emerging from her unstable moral standing as an actress, and because of this experience Braddon is more defensive of the theatre in her writing. To develop this argument, the ambiguity of an actress's life and reputation acts as a metaphor for the complexities of the female sensation writer's status and reputation; the meta-fictional and inter-textual techniques Braddon utilises in her theatrical fiction extend this metaphor to imply sensation fiction is considered 'lower-class'. Furthermore, Braddon did more than just examine 'her own self-styling as a sensation writer', she used her theatrical knowledge of multiple techniques and conventions to develop her own unique literary hybrid subgenre, whilst defying her critics by making the theatre respectable to her middle-class readership as a means of defending her past.

CHAPTER TWO

BRADDON'S SUPERNATURAL SHORT FICTION

What was the fair woman with the knife? The creature of a dream, or that other creature from the unknown world called among men by the name of ghost? (Collins, 1855 [2006]: 159)

The Victorians were intrigued with life after death and, in England from 1852, there arose a multitude of clairvoyants and spiritualists, beginning with the American medium Mrs. Hayden, who professed to communicate with the dead through séances and other means (Owen, 1989: 19). Arising from this fascination, '[b]etween 1850 and 1930 or so [the supernatural story] achieved enormous popularity and was patronized not merely by hack journalists but by many of the major writers of the day' (Briggs, 1977: 14); Edward Bulwer Lytton, the Brontë sisters, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, Thomas Hardy, Arthur Conan Doyle, Sheridan Le Fanu and Henry James, to name but a few, all infused this 'other' world into their fiction, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon is no exception. Braddon's contribution to the subgenre, therefore, is significant, especially considering many of these major writers had died by the mid-1870s, leaving her to continue the development of the subgenre in her own direction.

However, despite its rise in popularity 'the ghost story' remains a difficult subgenre to define because of its ever evolving nature; as the opening quotation demonstrates, the cross-over between people, psychological manifestations and 'physical' ghosts is a line that was, and still is, indistinct. What is definitive about Braddon's supernatural fiction is that there is a deliberate blurring of the classification of what constitutes the 'supernatural'. On the surface, Braddon's short stories contain ghosts, goblins, reincarnations, doppelgängers and vampires, but the reasons for this phantasmagoria vary considerably, questioning the

origins of the 'supernatural' as natural, other-worldly, or made-made occurrences.

Nevertheless, to separate ghost stories from other horror tales would be:

an unrewarding exercise. Such stories are generically related through a common intention of inducing fear by the use of the supernatural, and are in turn quite distinct from tales of fairies or white magic, and those which include the ghostly machinery of omens, portents, fulfilled dreams or similar magical prolepses. (Briggs, 1977: 12)

To be all-inclusive of the phantasmagoria that Braddon depicts, this study specifically uses the term 'supernatural fiction', although the well established and more traditional ghost story is most common. Notably, Kate Mattacks argues that '[g]hostly figures in her novels are quickly revealed to be real-life victims of false imprisonment' (Mattacks, 2008: 323), which Suzanne Ferguson confirms by noting Braddon 'rationalises and domesticates the horror by revealing that the seemingly uncanny is merely human evil after all' (Ferguson, 1989: 188). If the ghosts are only 'the seemingly uncanny' in her novels, why and to what purpose Braddon depicts 'real' ghosts in her short stories are vital questions to consider.

Like most supernatural writers, Braddon uses this subgenre 'to indulge her desire for exploring the undercurrents of social problems' (Lynch, 2004: 73), suggesting that the paranormal tale 'somehow managed to incorporate feelings of relevance, even importance to the age, feelings which could not find expression so directly or satisfactorily to either writer or reader in other modes' (Briggs, 1977: 15). Supernatural fiction allowed authors and readers to examine their deepest desires and the hidden secrets behind the respectable façade of nineteenth-century society from the relative safety of the family home; they were designed for family and friends to gather together for a night of entertainment, not to disturb the reader. For Braddon, these undisclosed pleasures and secrets include an

examination of a woman's place in the home and society, the Victorian fear of suicide and the potentially negative impact of medical advances. Along with an examination of these themes, Braddon's main contribution to nineteenth-century supernatural fiction will be evaluated: how she inter-connects supernatural, gothic and sensation fiction conventions to unveil the complexities of the relations between the sexes and the impact of societal perceptions on the individual. As a result of the subgenre's indefinable nature, the first part of this chapter discusses the subgenre's progression from the Gothic, its engagement with pseudo-sciences and the development of the psychological tale, while also drawing on other prominent authors' work and debating male versus female supernatural fiction. The second part examines Braddon's early supernatural fiction from 1860-79 with reference to the social commentary that underlies her fiction and her blurring of generic conventions. The third section engages with her late supernatural fiction, from 1889-96, and her distortion of the psychological supernatural tale through her deconstruction of boundaries. Firstly, this chapter begins its analysis of a well-established subgenre of fiction by contextualising Braddon's supernatural fiction and illustrating her unique contribution to this subgenre.

Victorian Supernatural Fiction

The use of ghosts and otherworldly creatures is common in literature from an early period, but it was not until the nineteenth century that supernatural elements became a common literary trope. Many critics have focused on this subgenre due to its popularity, exploring how authors used this subgenre to express their views and criticisms of their own culture. Such critics – for example E. J. Clery in her text *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* (1995) and Julia Briggs in *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost*

Story (1977) – have analysed in detail the progress of the supernatural tale from its origins, through its climax in the Victorian period, to its modern form. Nonetheless, as Nina Auerbach has argued, ‘serious scholarship on ghosts in fiction and film is, however, surprisingly sparse’ (Auerbach, 2004: 278), and Srdjan Smajić has recently re-emphasised this by stating there still is a ‘dearth of scholarship on the ghost story’ (Smajić, 2010: 12). To help fill this void, this chapter will now give a brief discussion of the supernatural tale to illustrate the main developments, so Braddon’s fiction can be contextualised and to illustrate which generic conventions Braddon enacts, re-works and performs to establish her supernatural authorial persona.

The nineteenth-century supernatural tale arose from the eighteenth-century Gothic tradition of crumbling castles, ‘haunted’ labyrinths and hysterical females in novels like Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Ann Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796). The supernatural tale evolves from its Gothic heritage in the early nineteenth century through five basic paradigms: firstly, by moving from the novel into the short story genre (although paranormal novels were still produced such as Braddon’s *Gerard, or The World, The Flesh and The Devil* [1891], which is a reworking of the Faust tradition). This means supernatural fiction transformed from a mainstream genre to one which was critically neglected partly because – as considered in the Introduction – the short story as a literary genre has been marginalised. This development leads to the second change: ghosts went from being providers of information and episodic parts of subplots, designed to create a break in the longer narrative thread, to being significant aspects of the plot, deliberately designed to frighten the reader for the whole of the narrative. As Dinah Birch notes: ‘[b]efore the 19th century, the ghosts are less important than the information they reveal; and though they excite fear and wonder, their

introduction is not designed to unsettle' (Birch, 2009: 423). The designed 'safety' of the Gothic tale is also reinforced by the distancing techniques used by the authors, such as being set in distant lands or times – for example Italy in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* – separating the reader from the danger. This effect produces the third change, where the ghost story moves to present day England, bringing the horror closer to nineteenth-century middle-class readers who 'enjoyed romance and pictures of high life, [while] also lik[ing] to read of familiar settings transformed by a sudden eruption of crime, violence or the supernatural' (Briggs, 1977: 14). The fourth difference is that Gothic texts focused on the physicality of evil, such as the suppression of women by dominant men, or the discovery of a hidden room or passage in which the 'ghost' – usually a real human – has managed to appear and disappear, while supernatural fiction contains ghosts, vampires, goblins or other paranormal creatures, relating to the Victorian interest in life after death. An engagement with contemporary concerns is the final development from the Gothic. Gothic texts explore authors' fears of nationhood, invasion and 'consumerism' which were topical at the time (Clery, 1995: 5), while nineteenth-century supernatural writers focus on industrialisation, class structure and the destabilisation of the safety of the home due to such pressures as the expansion of the suburbs (Whelan, 2002: 'Between Worlds') and Darwin's revolutionary *On The Origin of Species*. Darwin's seminal text was published in 1859 – near the beginning of the supernatural period considered in this chapter – and its influence on literature of the period is well documented (see Gowan Dawson's *Darwin, Literature and Victorian Respectability* [2007]).

Along with evolving from the Gothic, '[t]he pre-1850 corpus of literature about apparitions, and the spiritual and non-spiritual uses of mesmerism are important contexts for the early Victorian ghost story' (Henson, 2004 [2005]: 61). Supernatural fiction

intertwines with the nineteenth century's fascination with occult sciences and rapidly developing technology. In her autobiographical account, Braddon notes she was introduced to mesmerism in the 1840s when she was 'experimented upon' at her aunt's house ('BKE': 61). She draws upon her personal experience when she critiques mesmerism in her short story 'Dr. Carrick' (1878), although as mesmerism is treated as a science it is in essence a realist text, and so is generically different from supernatural fiction, and better discussed in Chapter Three. The nineteenth century preoccupation with another pseudo-science, spiritualism – which was founded in America in 1848 and relates to the living attempting to commune with the dead through séances, mediums and clairvoyance (Owen, 1989: 18) – is well documented. The ghost story in particular was a literary space which helped to fulfil the Victorians' need to commune with the dead owing to their high premature death rate. For instance, Margaret Oliphant explored this subgenre after several of her children had died; she was interested in understanding the dead and how they could commune with the living. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The History of Spiritualism* (1926) tracks its chronological development, and its effects on literature have been noted in Richard Noakes's 'Spiritualism, Science and the Supernatural in Mid-Victorian Britain' (2004). In Braddon studies particularly, Marlene Tromp examines 'At Chrighton Abbey' (1871) in relation to how ghost stories are 'marked by the shifts modelled in Spiritualist thinking', namely the freedom it affords women and how this tale 'embod[ies] many of Spiritualism's wife-friendly principles and values' (Tromp, 2006: 50, 72). Nevertheless, Braddon's fiction does not directly engage with this phenomenon – none of her living characters deliberately contact the dead – so spiritualism will not be considered further.

As an extension of scientific advances, supernatural fiction engages with technological innovations, such as photography; '[p]hotography was seen as a scientific and

objective means of recording supernatural phenomena and providing evidence of their existence' (VictorianWeb, 2012: Online). It was discovered though, that if a person moved during the long exposure time then their image became distorted and 'ghostly'. This gave rise to fraudulent spirit photography, epitomised by William Mumler and Frederick Hudson (VictorianWeb, 2012: Online), meaning the boundaries between 'real' and 'un-real' were blurred, a liminal space that Braddon utilised regularly. Each of these prominent paradigms reflects changes in nineteenth-century society and culture that are best exemplified through the works of important supernatural writers of the period.

Ghosts haunt 'any ground on which distinctions are based between what can be felt and what can be known' (Wolfreys, 2002: 21). For the prominent nineteenth-century supernatural fiction writers – Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Elizabeth Gaskell – this extends to include the borders of public and private life, the safety or danger of the home, rationality against irrationality, faith contrasted with doubt, the possible against the impossible and sight versus instinct/reason. Each of these liminal spaces destabilises nineteenth-century preferences for structure and security and simultaneously frightens and comforts the reader through a subgenre that was critically neglected. The ensuing discussion of select works of these representative writers will provide an outline of the nineteenth-century supernatural tale in order to demonstrate its evolving critical status, the complex literary techniques available to the supernatural tale, and how the subgenre interrogates key Victorian anxieties, so Braddon's contribution can be contextualised within this particular period.

Charles Dickens's contribution to the supernatural has been described as one of 'far greater importance' than other authors' because of his prolific contribution to the nineteenth-century ghost story corpus (Birch, 2009: 413). He depicts ghosts specifically

and was particularly interested in the ‘well-authenticated ghost story’; he published tales in *Household Words* and *All The Year Round* only if the author had ‘considered [the] difficult matters of evidence, authority and belief’ (Henson, 2004 [2005]: 53, 59). The majority of his tales use first person narrators to achieve this authentication because events purport to be transcribed from personal experience; the narrator sees the ghost directly or the event is documented based on what has been discovered (a notable exception is *A Christmas Carol*’s [1843] omniscient narrator). The Christmas setting also meant Dickens could ‘combin[e] sentiment (the memory theme) and story (Christmas revels)’ (Slater, 2003: xvi), as well as emphasising his moral messages, such as giving alms to the poor and campaigning for the rights of the lower classes. These features are also demonstrated in *A Christmas Carol*, which focuses on the social reintegration of a wayward character, Scrooge, for the good of society, as well as society’s inadequacies, through the characters of Want and Ignorance, ultimately to suggest that society is at fault, not Scrooge. Furthermore, despite the fact that his tales are presented as suitable reading for all of the family, like Braddon’s supernatural fiction, in most of his tales the ghosts are not personally connected to the ghost-seer; spirits can ominously appear to anyone at any given moment. Nonetheless, Dickens’s closed narrative endings comfort readers because the ghosts disappear once their unfinished business is complete. From exploring his ghost stories it is apparent that Dickens uses them to bring entertainment and reassurance to the family at Christmas, while delivering didactic moral guidance that teaches his middle-class readership not to take for granted their privileged position.

As a direct rival of Braddon’s in sensation writing and supernatural fiction, Wilkie Collins’s short stories reveal an interest in the uncertainty of identity and detection, just like his novels *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868). Collins’s

comprehensive approach to supernatural fiction – he explores ghosts (‘Mrs Zant and the Ghost’ [1885]), premonitions (‘Nine o’clock’ [1852]), demonic objects (‘The Devil’s Spectacles’ [1879]), and dream narratives (‘The Dream Woman’ [1855]) – depicts an exploration of the unknown in its fullest form. Like Dickens’s supernatural fiction, Collins’s tales are mainly first person narratives that place readers in direct contact with the spectres, legitimising these apparitions through supposed credibility. ‘In the spaces it creates around the narrator and characters, in its economy and speed’ John Bowen notes, ‘the short story can resist explanation and lead to shocking, inexplicable and uncanny effects’ (Bowen, 2006: 38), but ‘[i]nstead of turning pale at a ghost we knit our brow and construct hypotheses to account for it’ (Eliot, 1856: 460). Such hypotheses though do not always explain the unnatural phenomena and by playing on Victorian fears of the ‘other’ world, and blurring the boundaries between reality and dreams, rationality and insanity, Collins destabilises the nineteenth-century ideals of structure and order. Collins re-emphasises this ambiguity through certain open-ended conclusions – such as in ‘The Dream Woman’ and ‘The Devil’s Spectacles’ – leaving the narrative unresolved and readers disturbed. Nevertheless, the phantasmagoria usually have a personal connection with the ghost-seer, placing readers in a comforting position compared to Dickens’s, because it reassures them that the revenants appear only if they have a specific reason to. Overall, Collins’s supernatural fiction explores all paranormal activity, but refuses to order or explain the events, leaving the reader with a sense of wonder and fear, much like Sheridan Le Fanu’s supernatural fiction, though Collins’s opus is not grotesque or disturbing, and so more closely aligns with Braddon’s supernatural writing.

By focusing on Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins this chapter has so far concentrated on the male contribution to the supernatural story. Criticism of the subgenre

has followed this trend too because when supernatural stories have been anthologised they have been ‘saturated [by] Victorian men’ (Auerbach, 2004: 280); the female supernatural tale has been marginalised. Nonetheless, despite the apparent male domination, female writers did explore the paranormal tale because it ‘was not a literature scrutinized and judged with the same strictness and wariness as were realistic works’ (Dickerson, 1996: 12); it was a safe and acceptable place to examine women’s views on society. Female authorship is so significant in fact that Briggs’s research has proved that ‘[f]rom 1860 to the 1880s ... women practitioners predominated [over the ghost story], and perhaps a taste for romance and sensitivity to mood and atmosphere made them well-suited to this particular form’ (Briggs, 1977: 44). As a neglected subgenre written by a suppressed sex, the female short story is doubly marginalised and therefore women may be particularly suited to writing a form that specially explores underlying Victorian fears. Thus, writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell should not be excluded from this discussion; women supernatural writers span the decades of the tale’s climax and are influential in the development of the subgenre.

Elizabeth Gaskell’s contributions to supernatural fiction explore ‘[g]othic themes and motifs such as the double identity, the discovered manuscript, and the conflict with history and forms of authority’ (Kranzler, 2000 [2004]: xi). Gaskell wrote only one specific ghost story, but ‘the elements intrinsic to the genre – creation of atmosphere, building of suspense, the ability to shock – were put to good use in all her stories’ (Foster, 2007: 109). Furthermore, like Collins, Gaskell’s writing also contains the use of curses, predictive dreams and witchcraft, alongside themes such as murder, sexual jealousy and revenge. Unlike that of her male counterpart, Gaskell’s supernatural fiction explores women’s problems and how society constructs female issues around purity, an example being ‘The Old Nurse’s Story’ (1852). Gaskell’s first person narrator (who talks directly to the reader)

and lack of frame unsettle the gaps between the reader, the listener in the story and the narrator. This perspective engages with the oral tradition of supernatural stories, revealing how tales were passed down through generations of women, reflecting their marginalisation because their heritage was not formalised on paper. By depicting the phantoms in a nineteenth-century middle-class home, Gaskell reinforces the sense that ghosts dominate over a female space, emphasising her critique of society. Furthermore, because susceptibility to seeing phantoms was a cognitive instability relating to marginalised figures, ghost-seers in female supernatural writing are usually women, children or servants, and the apparitions they see are also usually female and represent this marginalised status or sexual taboos (Castle, 1993: *Apparitional Lesbian*). Women were held especially responsible for society's moral standing, so the reinforcement of moral values by spectres served almost as an extension of a woman's duty; spirits are symptomatic of the culture and act as an outlet for female anxiety. Accordingly, in the female supernatural story masculinity is downplayed, while femininity is prioritised, meaning society's patriarchal structures are destabilised, giving women power, which links back to women's influence in the spiritualist movement. This subversion reinforces Gaskell's respect for the nineteenth-century home, while suggesting that 'this domestic arena which [Victorian society] is so keen to preserve and prioritize is also precisely the place where women are at their most vulnerable and in most danger' (Kranzler, 2000: xiv). Gaskell's supernatural stories destabilise and disorient readers, making them question their own beliefs and knowledge, while raising debates over the position of women that Braddon continued later in the nineteenth century.

Despite the recent upsurge in critical analysis of women's supernatural fiction, this chapter will not take a strictly gendered approach to the supernatural tale. From examining

male and female supernatural fiction, it can be disputed that supernatural fiction is ‘almost always reserved for men’ (Auerbach, 2004: 281); some male supernatural tales focus on the female perspective – such as Collins’s ‘Mrs Zant and the Ghost’ – just as ‘sensation novels written by men focus on the feminine point of view’ (Hughes, 1980: 30). Furthermore, ‘female writers frequently appropriate the incredulous male point of view in their stories’ (Kolentzis, 2007: 62), because a woman writing with a man’s voice harnesses his authority and power. Because of this fluidity of narrative voice, a strictly gendered approach would be reductive and limit the exploration of the supernatural tale. This argument is reflected in Braddon’s decision to write under the name ‘M. E. Braddon’. By deliberately choosing an ambiguously gendered pseudonym she does not align herself exclusively with female supernatural fiction conventions.

Over the history of the supernatural tale there is one prominent development that changed the form’s conventions; the psychological ghost story became its own subgenre in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Before the psychological tale emerged people did not question the presence of ghosts as physical manifestations, instead they were treated as a matter of fact, as the previous examination of supernatural writers’ fiction has demonstrated. The main feature of the psychological story is that spectres move from being linked to external locations or reasons (ghosts as a physical manifestation of the unknown) to the inner setting of the protagonist’s mind; it becomes centred on the spirit-seer as part of the phantom itself because the mind became ‘a kind of supernatural space, filled with intrusive spectral presences’ (Castle, 1995: 164). As Freud was to explain at the turn of the twentieth century in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) and *The Uncanny* (1919) – both published after the stories considered here – the human mind was split into the conscious and the unconscious, so this subgenre (unknowingly at the time) explores the characters’

repressed desires, be they sexual or any other. Henson further notes that '[t]he apparitions in these stories are bound up with the identity of the protagonists, with memory playing a crucial role, supplying the "ideas or relocated images of the mind" from which the spectres take their form' (Henson, 2004: 47). Ghosts are a part of the self, but memory displaces setting and situation, meaning the validity of one's thoughts is questionable; ghosts could be a figment of the imagination, 'casting doubt on the narrator's sanity [creating] an incomprehensible urge [that] presses the narrator towards self-destruction or self-realisation' (Briggs, 1977: 145). Consequently, the psychological story concludes either with the destruction of the ghost-seer or their release from the desire that is haunting them.

The psychological ghost story is epitomised in Henry James's novella *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), where the governess's sightings of Peter Quint and Miss Jessel are ambiguously her adept perceptions of evil beings who are intent on corrupting Miles and Flora, signifiers of her mental instability from the pressures of her life, or a manifestation of her sexual jealousy of these previous employees. This deliberate uncertainty demarcates the psychological tale from the early nineteenth century ghost story which is more formulaic and fixed because it has meaning and an explanation forced onto the ambiguous situation. Nevertheless, ghosts are not the only phantoms to be explored under the heading of the psychological supernatural tale: the use of the uncanny double is also a prominent aspect of the subgenre. The doppelgänger has its roots in Gothic texts such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), is explored by Gaskell in 'The Poor Clare' (1856) and is later (in)famously depicted in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). The Gothic remains a key aspect to the development of late supernatural fiction alongside an examination of the obsessive mind of the narrator/character, providing another liminal space in which boundaries are blurred. As presented, the nineteenth-century

supernatural short story was a well-developed and complex subgenre to which Braddon would make her own distinctive contribution.

Braddon's Supernatural Short Fiction

Over her short story career Braddon wrote seventeen supernatural tales, each contributing something significant to this well-established, yet evolving subgenre. From the beginning of her supernatural fiction in 1860 to her final paranormal tale in 1896 Braddon draws on the traditions of presenting moral messages (like Dickens), the destabilization of identity (like Collins) and exploring women's position in society (like Gaskell), but she makes some significant conventional, critical and gendered changes along the way. Her paranormal oeuvre is split into two distinct sections – 1860-79 and 1889-96 – which provides the structure for the remainder of this chapter and demonstrates the distinction between her contribution to early supernatural fiction and her engagement with the psychological tale.

From 1860 to 1879, Braddon specifically explores ghosts, suggesting she concentrates on this well-established subgenre to ground her reputation in supernatural literature before developing her subject matter. Wolff notes with reference to the novels Braddon acknowledges, 'in the early 1860s she also turned out anonymously or pseudonymously a good deal of still more lurid fiction, published in penny or halfpenny journals, written in [a] monosyllabic and repetitious style designed for a newly literate audience, and steeped in violence' (SV: 3). Wolff's word 'fiction' can include her short stories, and the prominence of the genre is emphasised because the first tale Braddon publishes under her own name, rather than a pseudonym, as well as being her first contribution as editor to *Belgravia*, is 'Eveline's Visitant: A Ghost Story' (1867); the

subtitle suggesting Braddon wants to highlight her contribution to this firmly established subgenre. Braddon continues to publish numerous supernatural stories in this magazine, implying that because it is a popular subgenre she uses it to fill the pages of her journal; alternatively the quantity also indicates she is intent on developing the subgenre stylistically and she finds it conducive to exploring aspects of society that she wishes to investigate. Braddon's early stories explore 'a concern for the domestic experiences of women' (Kolentzis, 2007: 72), along with male social issues and the conflict between medical and supernatural explanations for revenants, illustrating her critique of a wide range of issues that the Victorians were curious about and yet feared. Braddon's later tales explore other paranormal occurrences, and engage with the psychological ghost story, showing she remains attuned to the developments of the period. Throughout all of her supernatural fiction Braddon uses paranormal occurrences to explore social issues such as marital guilt, domesticity, patriarchy and medical advance to reveal how societal attitudes affect individuals. Other important aspects are visibility (who sees the spirits) and the reasons for the spectres' appearance; they reveal a wide range of meanings behind the apparitions which either subvert or confirm aspects of nineteenth-century ideology.

Braddon's Early Supernatural Fiction: 1860-79

As has previously been argued, the Gothic tale, with its preoccupation with foreign settings and rationalised, physical evil, was one influence on supernatural fiction. However, as many critics have explained – for example, Ann Cvetkovich's 'Review of *Beyond Sensation*' (2003) and Heather L. Braun's 'Idle Vampires and Decadent Maidens' (2009) – the supernatural story also arose from sensation literature's examination of the human mind

and behaviour, contemporary social criticism and the setting of the nineteenth-century middle-class home. As Braddon was a key figure in sensation literature – writing *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862), *Aurora Floyd* (1863), *Henry Dunbar* (1864) and *Birds of Prey* (1867) in between her first two ghost stories 'The Cold Embrace' in 1860 and 1867's 'Eveline's Visitant: A Ghost Story' – she was in a unique position to develop the supernatural subgenre. Her early supernatural stories reveal an intertwining of Gothic and sensation literature to produce supernatural fiction that interconnects a nineteenth-century middle-class setting and ideology with paranormal phenomena.

One way Braddon achieved the bond between sensation literature and Gothic fiction to produce her own contribution to supernatural fiction was through setting. In each of her short stories the settings are described in detail; Braddon creates verisimilitude, the credible events provoking fear for the reader because the supernatural is invading the readers' 'real' world. This blurring of realism and the Gothic occurs in sensation writing because 'sensation made use of realist conventions in order to achieve its peculiar effects. Unlike genres that clearly departed from realism ... sensation was a threat not because it was wholly other but because it was a mixture' (Schmitt, 1997: 113-4). Braddon had experimented with the crossing of subgenre boundaries previously in her sensation fiction and expands the liminal spaces between subgenres in her supernatural literature. Her first few published supernatural stories have Gothic elements, including foreign settings: 'The Cold Embrace' (1860) is set in Germany, 'Eveline's Visitant' (1867) in France and 'My Wife's Promise' (1868) mainly in the Arctic. Others take place in the past, such as 'Sir Philip's Wooing' (1869), displacing Braddon's critique from the nineteenth-century, and distancing the reader from the horror. Nevertheless, these foreign stories are set in a contemporary time frame, so the apparitions are brought ever closer to the reader. Another

distancing technique that Braddon uses is setting two of her stories in a theatre: ‘The Scene-Painter’s Wife’ (1869) and ‘Her Last Appearance’ (1876). Alysia Kolentsis has argued that ‘the Victorian ghost story hinged on the domestic and the mundane in an attempt to anchor itself squarely in the realm of the real’ (Kolentsis, 2007: 61), but by setting ghost stories in the theatre Braddon rejects the domestic sphere while displacing the horror onto the lower classes and their supposedly questionable moral standing, leaving the middle-class reader once again removed from the horror.

Nonetheless, from 1870 Braddon places her supernatural stories in the sensation setting of the domestic interior – ‘John Granger: A Ghost Story’ (1870), ‘At Chrighton Abbey’ (1871) and ‘The Shadow in the Corner’ (1879) – which is why they are subversive: they give the supernatural aspects a sense of immediacy, while locating the horror in the vicinity of the middle-class Victorian reader. Like sensation novels, supernatural tales rely on the concept of the home as a safe, reliable and enclosed space where identity and sense of being are confirmed, but which is susceptible to intrusion from the outside or other world. Notably though, ‘[f]ear of the supernatural is essentially circular, for what we fear most is the sensation of being afraid, which endows the most familiar objects with frightful possibilities’ (Briggs, 1977: 128). For her middle-class readership, the home setting provides a double layer of horror: readers are scared while reading the story, and of their personal surroundings once the tale has concluded. Nevertheless, the homes in these stories are described like Gothic buildings: Chrighton Abbey has ‘a curious old wing and a cloistered quadrangle’ (Braddon, 1871 [2002]: 9), while Wildheath Grange in ‘The Shadow in the Corner’ is ‘a lonely house on a lonely road’ (Braddon, 1879 [2002]: 56). Braddon merges the associations of sensation writing’s domestic sphere and Gothic writing’s dark

and sinister buildings, blurring the distinctions between the two subgenres, and distinguishing her supernatural tales from those of other authors.

Moreover, to combine Gothic and sensation literature, Braddon was able to use the ghost story as a means of presenting her social criticism in a way that enhanced the sensational plot: for instance, 'The Shadow in the Corner' explores the political issue of women's education, while 'At Chrighton Abbey' interrogates the plight of the governess. Eve M. Lynch examines both of these stories in 'Spectral Politics: the Victorian Ghost Story and the Domestic Servant' (2004), where she has a section specifically on Braddon: 'Mary Elizabeth Braddon and the Spirit(s) of Social Reform'. Lynch outlines the social developments that occurred during the explosion of the ghost story, from the second Reform Bill of 1867 to 'parliamentary acts on education, married women's property, custody of infants, matrimonial causes, university admission for women, medical education and franchise rights for women at local government levels' (Lynch, 2004: 74). Each of these reforms aimed to improve a woman's position in the nineteenth century, but as Lynch explains and Braddon's stories demonstrate, this was not always the outcome.

While the ghost story has inextricable ties to Gothic and sensation literature, there are important distinctions between these forms that are worth noting. In the case of sensation against supernatural fiction, Braddon's sensation literature was initially written for the enjoyment of the lower classes but which came to entertain the middle class, hence Rae's previously quoted scathing review. Contrastingly, her supernatural fiction, which covered similar themes of impropriety and sin, was written specifically for the middle class and published in their popular periodicals. This distinction in readership produces the second notable difference which was 'critical reception; ghost stories by women were generally greeted with ambivalence, and thus they could often slip under the radar of

critical scrutiny' (Kolentzis, 2007: 63). Supernatural stories aroused no censure or controversy from critics or the public at the time, unlike sensation literature. This may be because the sensation form was more openly defiant than the supernatural tale; that supernatural fiction already had an acceptable pedigree from contributors such as Dickens, Gaskell and Collins; that they were designed for family entertainment round the fire on winter's nights; or because most of Braddon's supernatural tales were published in Christmas numbers of *Belgravia* and *The Mistletoe Bough*, integrating them into an already established tradition, making them more acceptable than sensation fiction.

Women in Society

In the following analysis of a selection of Braddon's early supernatural tales – 'The Cold Embrace' (1860), 'My Wife's Promise' (1868), 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' (1869) and 'Sir Philip's Wooing' (1869) – her exploration of human behaviour, the mind, and Victorian society's forbidden topics will be considered. These tales depict her critique of society's moral and political codes, just like sensation literature, revealing the cross-over between the subgenres. They have been selected for discussion specifically because they provide a comparison between sensation writing and Gothic fiction in terms of setting, structure and themes. These tales are also a mixture of well known Braddon short stories ('The Cold Embrace' has two collections of short stories named after it, but unusually has received no critical attention) and other relatively unknown short stories to provide a representative analysis of her early supernatural short fiction.

Braddon's first published supernatural tale is 'The Cold Embrace' and it depicts a woman who is jilted by her lover and is being forced to marry a man she does not love. Her

lover – who is strategically unnamed so he can represent any ‘artist’, ‘orphan’, ‘student’ or ‘nephew’ (Braddon, 1860 [2002]: 45, 46) – is described as ‘young, handsome, studious, enthusiastic, metaphysical, reckless, unbelieving, heartless’ (p.45), a description that highlights his fickleness and morally ambiguous nature. After their secret engagement, he gives Gertrude an ominous ‘gold serpent’ ring that has the double association of ‘eternity’ and evil and travels around Europe painting (p.45), deliberately returning after his fiancée’s marriage to another man. On his homecoming, he stops to draw a body that has been pulled out of the river, only to discover it is Gertrude who has committed suicide.

Braddon’s depiction of a love affair turned sour explores the contrasting positions of men and women in relationships and in the broader context of society. When considering their relationship the lover acted on what was ‘better far for himself’ and chose to remain ‘free’ (p.48, 50). Only materialistic options are taken into account: ‘he was no worse off than he was yesterday. His genius was not gone; the money he had earned at Florence still lined his pocket-book’ (p.50); financial factors are valued above female security and happiness, despite the fact that he can earn his own living, while she cannot. For Gertrude, and for other women in society, options are limited if their lovers desert them. Braddon presents two possible outcomes for Gertrude here: marry a man she does not love or commit suicide. These extreme options depict the fragility of a woman’s situation and how dependent women were on men. If she marries she potentially faces a life of servitude to a man she does not love, while if she commits suicide she forfeits her place in Heaven and becomes an ‘unholy spirit’ (p.46); Braddon’s triple repetition of ‘It is not a funeral’ as they remove Gertrude’s body from the water emphasises this (p.48). Either way, Braddon uses the ghost story to criticise a society that condemns a woman to a compromised situation

instead of helping her, implying that men should be held accountable for their actions towards women.

Nevertheless, the lover is punished: whenever he is left alone, his deceased lover's 'deadly caress' encircles him (p.53), eventually driving him 'mad' (p.52). On entering the Parisian Opera House he believes he has regained his 'boisterous gaiety' (p.54); however, spectators remark on 'the outrageous conduct of some drunken student, and it is to him they point when they say this' (p.54). His deteriorating health means he can no longer fully comprehend his reality or distinguish between his actions and other people's; the spirit's presence has destabilised his mental and physical health. Braddon reinforces this when the man believes that 'the brightness of [a dancer's] eyes dies out [and her face turns] white' (p.54), when it is really he who is fading and dying of 'exhaustion, and the breaking of a blood-vessel' (p.55). Like Gertrude, he loses control of his senses and reasoning; he is reduced to the emotionally and physically fragile state that he subjected Gertrude to. Rather than restricting herself to depicting female hysteria in her sensation writing, Braddon expands her analysis of human behaviour by examining male madness. Alongside the possibility of Gertrude being a 'physical' ghost, she can also be regarded as a manifestation of the lover's guilt for his actions, or the return of the repressed of all women who have been slighted by men. Braddon also demonstrates she can develop generic fiction from her first contribution to a subgenre by pushing the boundaries of supernatural fiction further than Dickens; her characters are forced to react to ghosts in public, rather than in private.

What is unique about 'The Cold Embrace', and so indicates another contribution by Braddon to supernatural fiction, is that the ghost is invisible but is able physically to touch the living. Julian Wolfreys notes that one 'disturbing aspect[...] of ... the image of ghosts in intimate contact with us, touching us, breathing on us, speaking to us, *seeing us* [is that]

[t]he other gazes unseen' (Wolfreys, 2002: 89). Having the ghost invisible to the eye questions the authenticity of the experience, but the ghost's touch solidifies its presence in the text. A touch is harder to misinterpret, reaffirming the reliability of the male's narrative because the questionable nature of vision so central to the ambiguity of the ghost story is avoided. If the ghost does represent the return of the repressed, then by physically touching the man Gertrude gains more power in death than she had in life. Braddon is revealing the lack of agency women had in a society that subordinates them, while demonstrating that in death those women who have been slighted will be avenged.

Another tale in which Braddon explores the conflicting behaviour of men and women is 'My Wife's Promise'. In this story an arctic adventurer, Richard Dunrayne, retires to marry, promising his wife Isabel he will remain home. When another expedition is arranged though, Isabel feels obliged to release him from his promise. By breaking his oath Richard further demonstrates a woman's marginalised position in Victorian society because even when married to the man she loves, in contrast with 'The Cold Embrace', the woman still has no real power. She cannot tell her husband how to act; she must obey his will. Furthermore, despite the home traditionally being the feminine domain, Isabel has no power here either. Reinforcing this idea, John Tosh notes that: '[f]or most of the nineteenth century home was widely held to be a man's place, not only in the sense of being his possession or fiefdom, but also as the place where his deepest needs were met' (Tosh, 1999: 1). The domestic sphere is not enough to entice Richard to remain home, which was an issue that many women faced in the nineteenth century because, like Richard's Royal Society, men had many gentlemen's clubs and professional associations that were more appealing. Richard has power in the public sphere, because he is a leader in his field, as well as the private sphere and so he has complete control over Isabel's life. Richard's

selfish nature is also evidenced by his ‘lingering in town, though [he] knew that Isabel would have preferred to return to Devonshire’ (Braddon, 1868 [1886]: 324); Richard prioritises the society of his male companions over his wife’s needs, suggesting he considers male desire more important. Richard notes, in reference to his wife’s happiness, that ‘I little knew that [her] gaiety was but an heroic assumption sustained to save me pain’ (p.325). Braddon’s use of the male first person narrative exhibits how Richard misunderstood Isabel’s actions and did not recognise her sacrifice. However, by sacrificing her happiness for his, Isabel follows nineteenth-century domestic ideology instead of challenging it; she is trapped and forced into doing her duty, unlike Richard, who can abandon his responsibilities.

Previous to this excursion, Richard has rejected an expedition because his father’s health was declining and he was ‘determined not to leave him. *This* duty at least [he] would not abnegate’ (p.319). He has a sense of responsibility towards his father after his mother dies while he is away, but Richard ultimately has no such sentiment for his wife or home. Richard’s actions do not go unpunished, though, because his expedition fails, bringing him ‘nothing save disappointment’ (p.327); the moral implication being that those who disregard their duty are punished and so Braddon’s supernatural fiction aligns with Dickens’s through didactic moralising to the general public. Collins and Dickens had previously depicted an Arctic exploration in the play *The Frozen Deep* (1866) where another adventurer named Richard sacrifices himself to save his love rival, indicating this was a popular setting at the time. Isabel dies while Richard is away and her ghost appears to him in the Arctic, indicating that ‘[s]he had kept her promise as truly as [Richard] had broken [his]’ (p.330). While Isabel’s death contradicts this moral message – she is punished for her husband’s actions – Richard is also reproved because he loses his ‘precious one’ as

a result of his desire for scientific advance (p.321). This is similar to *Frankenstein* (1818), where Dr. Frankenstein pursues his career over family duty and so he is punished by a succession of family deaths. The meaning behind Isabel's ghost is ambiguous: her spirit could signify Richard's guilt – as in 'The Cold Embrace' – but she did release Richard from his promise; the return of the repressed, in the form of the abandoned housewife who is left in favour of scientific advance; an avenging spirit who is haunting her lover for his sins; or, as argued here, a figure providing closure. Isabel's apparition fulfils her promise that 'at the death-hour [her] spirit will fly to [him] for the last fond parting look upon earth' (p.326), along with helping him discover the resting place of his lost comrades for whom he is searching. Isabel does not want revenge, but to be a source of comfort. Thus, in 'The Cold Embrace' and 'My Wife's Promise' Braddon implies through ghostly apparitions the effect on individuals of society's oppressive practices towards women, rather than on society as a whole. It is the men who abandon their domestic duty, but the women who are ultimately punished by dying, once they are forced into a situation that they have no control over. Braddon is noting that men are not always accountable for their actions and the women in their lives may have to bear the consequences. Her critique of society's unequal position of the sexes in marriage highlights the unfair disadvantages that women accepted upon matrimony.

Forbidden Themes

As Joan Kessler notes, 'the fantastic would provide an invaluable vehicle for probing the dark side of the human mind, for delving into unexplored spiritual territory and articulating forbidden themes' (Kessler, 1995: xi). In her supernatural fiction Braddon examines the

'forbidden themes' of jealousy, revenge and guilt, as depicted in 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' and 'Sir Philip's Wooing'. In 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' Joseph Waylie marries Caroline the lion-tamer. While he is transferred to another theatre Caroline is courted by another man and when Joseph returns, discovering his wife's conduct, he kills himself. A year after his death his ghost appears to Caroline in the audience, causing her to lose focus and the lion maims her. From a feminist perspective, because the tale is told through the frame of a male first person narrative, Caroline becomes a ghost in her own story; she does not tell her own tale and so has no agency. The title of the story confirms this by categorising her, not through her profession or her own identity, but those of her husband and marital position; she has no power over her own life, and her actions and feelings could be misrepresented or misinterpreted to the reader. An example of this is Caroline's seeming lack of a guilty conscience for her actions, which depict her as heartless – "I like his admiration, and I like his presents ... I shall have my bit of fun" (Braddon, 1869 [2000]: 35) – but she remarks that she "will tell Joe all about it" because she loves him (p.35). Caroline acts in a typically masculine care free way, but because of her lower class status and profession, her actions are distanced from middle-class readers, making them less likely to feel compassion for her situation; the authoritative male narrative removes all emotions from the tale.

This distancing technique is emphasised through Caroline's actions because they are blurred between her role-playing in the text's reality and her acting on stage: 'Captain Jocelyn threw his bouquet, which was received with a coquettish smile and a bright upward glance that seemed to express profound delight. I knew that this was merely stage-play' (p.36). In distorting Caroline's reasons for her behaviour, Braddon once again plays on nineteenth-century boundaries of public and private life and what is living and acting,

suggesting that the nineteenth-century dichotomies on which Victorians based their lives are not static; they are fluid and can be adapted for a person's own advantage. After discovering the death of her husband Caroline blames her 'vanity and foolishness' and has a 'nervous way in going through her work in the ring, as if there was a fever upon her' (p.38, 39). The use of 'fever' reminds the reader of female hysteria and madness present in sensation literature, but here this malady is used as a medical explanation for her seeing the ghost of her husband. The rational male narrator suggests that the ghost was a 'delusion' Caroline 'conjured up ... out of her own brain' (p.40). This scientific explanation gives credibility to the male narrator's voice but is opposed by the idea that Joseph's ghost is a manifestation of Caroline's guilt because she had been 'brooding upon his death for a long time' (p.40). This return of the repressed uses Victorian fears of the other world to once again portray a moral message: women should be faithful to their husbands and do their domestic duty, which ultimately restores society's conventions and structure, while demonstrating how oppressive to the individual they are.

A common theme to link human behaviour and the mind in 'The Cold Embrace' and 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' is that the slighted lovers commit suicide and return as spectres. Suicide plays on nineteenth-century anxieties about the other world because killing oneself was illegal in the nineteenth century – although those who were arrested for attempted suicide were given 'a court order and not a custodial sentence' (Anderson, 1987: 303) – meaning the deceased could not be buried in consecrated ground or go to Heaven. Folklore required they had to be 'buried apart or pinned down' otherwise their spirits could cross between the other world and reality (p.192). In her study *Suicide in Victorian and Edwardian England* (1987), Olive Anderson notes that '[i]n the nineteenth century it was usual to deal in suicide rates which related to persons, without distinction of sex' (p.41);

suicide was not treated differently based on gender, despite 'suicide [being] three or four times more frequent among men than among women' (p.41). Significantly, in Braddon's tales both Gertrude and Joe kill themselves for romantic reasons (the betrayal of a lover), not financial or any other, indicating that emotional factors are more important for Braddon than situational circumstances when considering human behaviour and the mind.

These emotional aspects, as well as the moral message present in 'The Scene-Painter's Wife', resurface in 'Sir Philip's Wooing' because Constance, the wife of Humphrey Mardyke, falls in love with his cousin, Philip Stanmore. On the death of her husband she marries Philip, only to discover that Philip murdered Humphrey so he could marry her and claim the family estate. Philip's guilt is discovered and he commits suicide before being sentenced, representing another suicide for romantic not financial reasons. Constance's unfaithfulness is punished by the death of her protector, reaffirming that women should maintain their moral standing. Contrasting with 'The Scene-Painter's Wife', this tale is told from the third person perspective, is set in the past and is about the aristocracy; nineteenth-century ideologies transcend all class boundaries. In this story the aristocracy is presented as corrupt and evil – 'few men were more deeply dyed in sin than Philip Stanmore' (Braddon, 1869 [1886]: 207) – which contrasts with her depiction of upper-class Sir Michael Audley in *Lady Audley's Secret* who marries a woman of lower birth, not because he is corrupt, but because he is naive and foolish. This depiction of Sir Philip implies that in her short fiction Braddon was able to displace criminal activity onto the aristocracy without fear of criticism. Constance is described as being in a 'victim's entanglement' (p.212), implying that the upper classes, as well as the lower classes, are sometimes perceived as morally corrupt and take what they want without regard for others: Constance was 'a penniless girl when [Humphrey] chose [her] for his wife' (p.212).

In this tale both Constance and Philip see the ghost of Humphrey, suggesting once again that the ghost is a physical manifestation of their guilt: Constance for no longer doing her duty and loving her husband and Philip for murdering him. This ghostly apparition is similar to the ghost of King Hamlet in Shakespeare's play and associates this tale with the themes of sin, moral corruption and revenge. Humphrey's ghost appears 'within the doorway' (p.215), signifying the apparition's occupation of liminal spaces: inside and outside the family sphere. Braddon's blurring of borders is emphasised by the use of scientific explanations and supernatural ones: 'Sir Philip tried to convince himself ... that the figure was but the emanation of a disordered brain [but he cannot because m]en were prone to superstition in those days' (p.219). Braddon's use of the past setting allows her to blur the reasons for the spectre, creating doubt in the reader's mind as to the origin of the spirit. In 'The Cold Embrace', 'My Wife's Promise' and 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' Braddon portrays the ghosts as a manifestation of marital guilt, while in 'Sir Philip's Wooing' the spectre is also a manifestation of criminal guilt. As Lara Whelan argues:

[ghost] narratives further work to reassert moral boundaries by revealing those seemingly respectable middle-class characters who have 'let the side down' by committing some outrageous crime. Without the ghost, every single murderer or wrongdoer in these stories stands a fair chance of getting away with it, and, therefore, of letting the 'disease' of moral depravity hide out. (Whelan, 2002: 146)

What is unique about 'Sir Philip's Wooing' is that despite the ghost appearing to the main characters it has no direct influence on the discovery of his murderer. The resolution is brought about by the detective force that discovers Philip's guilt through the physical trail of evidence he left behind him; Braddon once again challenges the conventions of supernatural fiction and adapts them to suit her own purpose. This story suggests that

ghosts are only threatening if the characters or the reader impose meaning upon them; they cannot do any harm in themselves because they have no physical form. The apparitions in 'The Scene-Painter's Wife' and 'Sir Philip's Wooing' reveal how society's repressive attitudes towards the sanctity of marriage can be detrimental to men's health as well because marriage can be dissolved by women, and that men are equally punished for the actions of women.

In this first phase of supernatural stories, all of Braddon's ghosts are born from an unresolved emotional need that originates from personal reasons relating to the friend or relative they appear to: the ghosts can be out for revenge (for instance in 'Eveline's Visitant' where the ghost appears to the wife of a cousin who killed him a duel); fulfilling a promise ('The Cold Embrace'); trying to communicate with the survivor for some reason, such as providing vital information to solve a crime (in 'John Granger' the ghost appears as a warning to a female friend that he has been murdered, giving her agency and power to solve his murder); saying goodbye ('My Wife's Promise' and 'Her Last Appearance'); acting as a reminder of past sin ('The Scene-Painter's Wife', 'Sir Philip's Wooing', 'The Shadow in the Corner') or as a warning for future events ('At Chrighton Abbey'). That ghosts have a personal connection to the people they haunt, like the spirits of Wilkie Collins's stories, reassures the reader because they appear only if they have a specific purpose and once their business is completed they leave ('The Cold Embrace' being the notable exception). In most of these stories, despite the ambiguity of the origins of the ghost (scientific or supernatural), the ghost's presence is not questioned because it upholds the moral standards of society.

The fact that each of Braddon's tales has a closed-narrative restorative ending leaves the reader with a firm sense of closure – the evil and supernatural happenings are no

longer – instead of providing a sense of mystery, intrigue and uncertainty, like the endings of Le Fanu’s ‘Green Tea’ (1872) or Wilkie Collins’s ‘The Dream Woman’. As Julian Wolfreys notes, the ‘promise of the gothic was – and still is – a promise of a certain return, a cyclical revenance’ (Wolfreys, 2002: 10), therefore Braddon’s closed-narrative endings disrupt the gothic elements by producing a sensation fiction finale; Braddon’s re-engagement with the subgenre demonstrates a cyclical return within her oeuvre. By concluding her tales in this way, Jennifer Uglow argues that Braddon allows her women the triumph that sensation novels could not give them (Uglow, 1988: xiv): a non-marriage ending. Alysia Kolentzis has protested this point, however, by noting that ‘[w]omen’s marginalised status may be temporarily repositioned in these stories, but the endings invariably restore the status quo’ (Kolentzis, 2007: 64), which is the case in most of Braddon’s supernatural tales. Braddon’s tales restore order to demonstrate to the reader how society’s attitudes are detrimental to individual men and women and so form part of her broader critique. For instance, in ‘The Cold Embrace’, ‘My Wife’s Promise’, ‘The Scene-Painter’s Wife’ and ‘Sir Philip’s Wooing’, Braddon reveals how the oppressive nature of patriarchy and women’s entrapment within domestic spaces force women into unrealistic roles that they cannot maintain, eventually leading to the death of the wife or husband.

Braddon’s Development of the Supernatural Story: 1889-96

After a ten-year break from the ghost story following the publication of ‘The Shadow in the Corner’ in 1879, Braddon returns to the subgenre in 1889 with ‘My Dream’. This long break could signify a change in direction in Braddon’s writing that raises questions

regarding her return to the subgenre and whether there is a marked difference between her earlier supernatural fiction and her later contributions. However, in publishing these stories in a Christmas magazine Braddon was writing for a similar audience – *The Mistletoe Bough* was also aimed at a middle-class readership (SV: 80) – and so her supernatural tales begin by re-engaging with her previous style of omens, premonitions and personal connections between the ghost and the ghost-seer, suggesting Braddon re-familiarises herself with the traditional ghost story before she adapts and expands the subgenre in her late 1890s fiction. This change in focus was vital in keeping Braddon abreast of developments, because ‘[w]omen who wrote 1860s-style ghost stories in the 1890s were out of tune with the times’ (Tuchman and Fortin, 1989: 188). Braddon’s modernisation of the subgenre is denoted by her change in setting from the British contemporary home to further afield – such as France, Italy and the Red Sea – which could be seen as a return to Gothic conventions because the horror is displaced from the reader. Alternatively, it means that Braddon will not attract censure from the critics by directly basing her societal criticism at home. In these later stories Braddon also changes the nature of the revenants she examines – ghosts are accompanied by reincarnation, doppelgängers and vampires – while medical and psychological issues become more apparent, signifying Braddon’s engagement with the developments of the era, while still representing the impact of wider social issues on the individual.

The supernatural tales Braddon wrote for *The Mistletoe Bough* – ‘My Dream’ (1889), ‘His Oldest Friends’ (1890), ‘The Ghost’s Name’ (1891) and ‘The Island of Old Faces’ (1892) – are all ghost stories that relate to Braddon’s previous style of paranormal tale. Each of these four stories has a contemporary time frame and is either set in England or in Europe; they have ominous sightings of ghosts that are usually personally connected

to the ghost seer, and they have closed narrative endings, suggesting the reality of ghosts and the visibility of the 'other' world. 'My Dream' (1889) relates a woman's premonition of her fiancé's death that she fails to stop, 'His Oldest Friends' (1890) narrates an old family tale of a carriage containing deceased friends who act as an omen of the seer's death, and 'The Island of Old Faces' (1892) recounts a man visiting an island where he sees the friends of his youth who warn him that now he has revelled in his memories the future holds no excitement. Overall these tales continue to analyse the personal relationships between the deceased and the living, indicating to the nineteenth-century reader that there is life beyond death. Notably, Braddon submitted 'His Oldest Friends' to *The Grand Magazine* for the series 'My Best Story and Why I Think So' in 1905. Braddon's introductory passage relates the reasons for her choice:

Walking in the New Forest with a member of my family at that grey hour between dog and wolf, when there is always something ghostly in the woodland ... we watched a coach and four passing on the road ... A man stood up ... and looked at us, and we exclaimed almost simultaneously 'How like Monsieur R!' – naming an old and valued friend not long dead ... the phantasmal aspect of the thing in the evening grey, and the chance likeness to a much-regretted friend, haunted me. (Braddon, 1905: 881)

Braddon's account indicates that what she likes best about the tale is the blurring of reality and supernatural, and how 'association' and 'vivid memory' can personally affect an individual (p.881).

'The Ghost's Name', however, offers a different perspective from the tangibility of the 'other' world. In this story a haunted room of a family estate causes guests to see an apparition, while the young children who live in that room die from their dreams. The ghost is described as:

now man now woman; now old now young; but mostly horrible, and sometimes deriving its chiefest horror from a hideous indistinctness, a gigantic overpowering presence which weighed on the chilled spectator like a mountain of iron; a shapeless oppression to which he awakened shrieking, with icy water-drops upon his forehead. (Braddon, 1891 [1895]: 213-4)

The 'indistinctness' of the form demonstrates the ability of the ghost to adapt to what each individual person considers most horrifying, suggesting ghosts can take on different forms; they are not distinct people who are connected to the ghost-seer. The ghost also changes from being an apparition to appearing in dreams, highlighting the destabilisation of the barriers between waking and sleeping, and life and death. At the end of the story a medical man inherits the house and discovers that the ghost is 'Typhoid Fever' (p.263); the spectre is actually made up of hallucinations caused by the illness. As Briggs notes, '[i]t is th[e] gap between what actually happens and its scientific cause which distinguishes the ghost story' because the supernatural and the inexplicable maintain a fair hold (Briggs, 1977: 54), suggesting that this story is ineffective as a ghost tale because it has a clear scientific explanation. In opposition to this argument Thomas Fick notes that 'in a substantial body of women's writing ... the supernatural is frequently the natural in masquerade' (Fick, 1999: 82), drawing on the long tradition of Gothic literature's physical and rational explanations for ghosts. Fick is referring to characters who deliberately impersonate ghosts, but Braddon's medical explanation offers a psychological disordering of mind, instead of manifestations of guilt as in her previous stories, demonstrating another version of the supernatural masquerading as the natural: ghosts as disease. In the nineteenth century the increase in medical experiments and scientific knowledge frightened people because it questioned the sanctity of the Church, which in turn undermined society's structure. Nonetheless, Braddon's use of definitive medical reasoning implies that the horror of the

supernatural derives from the ignorance of superstition because it can hide the underlying cause, while science can save people's lives. Thus, through 'supernatural' occurrences the impact of scientific and technological advance on the individual is depicted as a positive modernisation of both society and the supernatural subgenre.

Beyond the Realm of the Ghost

In her next few stories – 'The Higher Life' (1907),¹ 'Herself' (1894) and 'The Good Lady Ducayne' (1896) – Braddon expands her exploration of the psychological paranormal tale by depicting supernatural elements other than ghosts. These other aspects do not demolish the superstitious fears people had in the nineteenth century; instead their concerns take different forms which Braddon uses to critique society. In 'The Higher Life' Stephen Stilyard is a man who sins in his youth, divorces his wife and casts out his children, choosing later in life an academic outlook, 'turning believer – not in the Christian's creed, but in the Platonic dream of a future life' (Braddon, 1894 [2005]: 361). This path leads him to develop his '[d]reams, not deeds' (p.361), denoting his selfish behaviour and lack of concern for the welfare of others. Braddon demonstrates that despite universities admitting women and primary schools being made widely available to children of all classes by the 1870 Education Act (whose relevance was explored previously by Lynch in reference to 'The Shadow in the Corner'), almost forty years on, academia was still dominated by rich upper class men who buried themselves in their work and did not use their wealth or knowledge to help others.

¹ 'The Higher Life' is one of the few stories of which the original publication is still untraced. The tale is confirmed as Braddon's as a copy appears in Wolff's collection with a handwritten note from 1894 by Braddon stating: 'Advanced sheets of story revised. The property of Mrs. Maxwell, Lichfield House, Richmond, Surrey' (*SF*: Reel 5), and has recently been reprinted for a modern readership alongside the supernatural novel *The White Phantom* (1862).

Stephen does not go unpunished, though: when he dies his soul is released from his body to soar across the sky, but ‘out of the darkness rush the demon pack, the spectral hounds that hunt the souls of sinful men ... [which force his soul into] the faint consciousness of the new-born child’ born in the East End of London to a murderer and a thief (pp.363-4). This reincarnation of the soul ends Braddon’s more experimental supernatural tale with the destruction of the protagonist brought about by his own desire for personal gain. This moral message emphasises the continuing didactic nature of the supernatural tale as epitomised by Dickens, while contradicting the message of the previous story, ‘The Ghost’s Name’, because Braddon implies that a belief in God, not science, is the key to preserving life and happiness. The tale also stresses that individuals should make a contribution to their society, rather than relying on the government, which Braddon practiced in her own life by regularly giving to charity.

The story ‘Herself’ is another psychological tale that reveals the degeneration of the protagonist through supernatural occurrences. Lota spends a winter in her family holiday home in Taggia where her health deteriorates rapidly. During the day Lota stares at a mirror in which she sees herself aging and dying until she suffers the same fate. The use of the doppelgänger has been explored previously: usually it embodies or acts out the character’s repressed desires which have been submerged because they threaten the established order of things. In ‘Herself’, the uncanny double does not represent repressed desire, it embodies Lota’s fear of aging, a condition which in the nineteenth-century was fatal to a woman’s marital prospects in life. As with other doppelgängers, Lota’s repressed personal fears develop an energy that demands release, forcing their way into the realm of the visible where they have to be acknowledged. It is Lota’s own intense self-consciousness which constitutes her madness and ultimate demise through self-destruction.

The use of the mirror reflects the materialistic and self-involved nature of nineteenth-century society and how that society values beauty over intelligence for women. Braddon here demonstrates that society's materialism is victimising young women because they cannot maintain their looks or position in society for a sustained period of time, a topic Braddon returns to in her next story 'The Good Lady Ducayne' (1896). A woman was forced to choose a husband quickly because otherwise her advantageous position would be lost and then she faced a life of spinsterhood and dependence on family and friends. Augusta Webster's dramatic monologue 'Faded' (1893) also considers this theme. As an unmarried lady reflects on a portrait of herself as a young woman full of promise, she realises that her elderly self is divorced from her former self, as the dead are from the living. Braddon's story title's change from 'Venetian Glass' to 'Herself' is significant when considered in this context; the focus changes from the materialistic object of the mirror to the effect it has on the individual: the insignificant position of women and their growing realisation of their own helplessness. The mirror and society effectively deprive young women of their energy, youth and life, forcing them into a state of dependence on men, conforming to nineteenth-century society's moral and social values.

This pseudo-vampiric imagery of the life being drained from a young woman resurfaces in 'The Good Lady Ducayne', Braddon's most well known and discussed short story. Because of its popularity and significance to the subgenre of vampire fiction an extended analysis will demonstrate Braddon's challenging of generic conventions and society's class and gender expectations. In this tale Bella Rolleston becomes a companion to Lady Ducayne, so she can earn money to support herself and her mother, just as Braddon took to the stage to support her mother. Bella notes that her lack of education means she is not fit to be a governess because they were too poor to 'afford a piano since [she] was

twelve years old' (Braddon, 1896: 185). The employment agency Bella applies to consequently describes her as 'unformed' (p.186); no woman is complete without the middle-class education that prepares her only for married life. Bella is another representative of the 'redundant' woman W. R. Greg discusses in his *National Review* essay 'Why Are Women Redundant?' (1862) that Braddon previously depicts in the form of the governess or abandoned woman. Once again Braddon attributes this lowly position not to the lack of determination or hard work by Bella and her mother, who support themselves by needle-work, but to the desertion of Bella's father who was a 'scoundrel' (p.187), exposing again a woman's dependence on men in the nineteenth century.

Bella's reliance on the employment agency introduces into the text the first example of vampirism because the 'Superior Person' effectively bleeds Bella of her money (p.185): she takes five shillings as payment for searching for a situation, and once she has found Bella a place she takes a further ten pounds in payment. Instead of overtly condemning these actions, Braddon adopts a comic, upbeat, 'detached and ironic' tone which stresses the horror of the situation because it 'form[s] a striking contrast with the sensational subject of the story' (Stephenson, 1993 [1997]: 17). Bella has no money and so is required to look for a job, but if she enters the world of work then she is victimized by those from whom she seeks help. Lauren Goodlad's Marxist reading, which draws on Luce Irigaray's *The Sex Which Is Not One* (1985), postulates that Bella's 'disturbing vacuity, the semi-consciousness with which she transits from one dependent function to another, mark her as the archetypal woman-commodity' (Goodlad, 2000: 227). Describing Bella as having 'vacuity' and a 'semi-consciousness' does her a disservice, though; she is a naive but industrious person who does not understand the world of work and so is easily moved, like a commodity, between different capitalist agents. Significantly, the first two agents are both

women: the Superior Person and Lady Ducayne. To escape the oppression of women as ‘exchangeable values’, these two female agents replicate the patriarchal exchange to avoid becoming objects themselves.

As a result of her father’s desertion, Bella becomes the companion of Lady Ducayne, who is described as having ‘a withered, old face’, ‘sharply pointed chin’, ‘claw-like fingers’ and ‘shining black eyes’ (p.187-8), and her arrival in a stage-coach harks back to ‘Carmilla’ (1872). This dehumanising description does not on first reading associate Lady Ducayne with a vampire, but in the original text published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1896 the opening title’s illustration clearly depicts Lady Ducayne as a vampire for the reader (Figure 13). This vampiric imagery highlights the danger of Lady Ducayne to young, innocent and helpless women, emphasising a central theme of the Gothic: ‘the threat of violence against women’ (Schmitt, 1997: 11). Although, the threat against women in this story is not from the Gothic’s overpowering patriarch; instead the terror originates from Lady Ducayne who is like ‘a fairy god-mother’ or a mother-figure (p.187). By demonising the mother-figure Braddon suggests that the horror is not controlling patriarchy, but society’s attempt to control and dominate women through domesticity. This subversion of

the family structure reveals Braddon as destabilising societal norms as she did in her sensation writing, when the



By MISS BRADDON.

Figure 13: Title of 'The Good Lady Ducayne' by Miss Braddon, 1896, *The Strand Magazine*

questionable past of the supposedly innocent heroine is revealed. Eugenia DeLamotte argues that '[v]ampirism represents the threat of physical violation – a transgression against the body, the last barrier protecting the self from the other' (DeLamotte, 1990: 21); what is most horrific about vampires, especially female vampires like Le Fanu's Carmilla, is their desire to control people physically as well as their ability to make the self become 'other'. As Edward Said's preface to *Orientalism* (1978) notes: the 'mind actively makes a place [...] for a foreign Other' (Said, 1978 [2003]: xix), and the triple layering of Lady Ducayne's figure – that of a woman who is a mother-figure, foreign and evil – is an intertwining of the supernatural and the domestic, increasing the horror for the reader. This is because '[t]he cruel lady may represent a fascinating if forbidden ideal' (Briggs, 1977: 121); the post-colonial 'other' takes possession of the nineteenth-century reader's 'self', power and control. Furthermore, Lady Ducayne's exoticism could also represent 'the cultural, sexual and even racial "other" who tries to penetrate, corrupt and infect the healthy Englishness embodied by Bella and defended by Herbert' (Tomaiuolo, 2009: 108). Tomaiuolo argues Lady Ducayne symbolises French degenerating influence, along with Braddon's concern over the Jewish question; Lady Ducayne is the 'alien invasion' (p.110).

In the company of Lady Ducayne, Bella travels to Italy where she meets Lotta and Herbert Stafford. In the removal from England to Italy Braddon engages with the Gothic tropes of '[e]xotic props and settings ... because, while they might be associated with mysterious, unknown powers, these were commonly treated sceptically by Western visitors, and a drama of conflicting viewpoints would arise' (Briggs, 1977: 99). In Italy Bella's health begins to deteriorate: she suffers from 'a sudden sense of suffocation, and then [hears] those whirring wheels, so loud, so terrible' (p.195). Lady Ducayne's doctor, Parravicini, examines her, attributing the marks on her arm to 'mosquitoes' (p.192), but he

epitomises old Italian medicine and is labelled as a ‘wicked old quack’ (p.191). As Lady Ducayne notes, Parravicini ““does all he can to keep me alive ... but he is getting old ... his brain-power is going – he is bigoted – prejudiced – can’t receive new ideas – can’t grapple with new systems”” (p.197), so she desires someone new to keep her alive. For this reason she turns to Herbert Stafford. Having been trained in Edinburgh and Paris, two of the world’s renowned medical institutions, Herbert represents a new kind of English gentleman’s medicine with its ‘new-fangled theories [and] modern discoveries’ (p.197). This juxtaposition of old and new elucidates a main theme of Braddon’s oeuvre; like Herbert’s medical expertise, Braddon’s short fiction remains at the forefront of modernity, while producing yet another vampire story post ‘Carmilla’ and pre *Dracula*.

This modern approach is developed when Stafford denounces Parravicini by revealing that he has been using chloroform and bleeding Bella to transfuse her blood to Lady Ducayne in order to sustain her life. A woman’s unquenchable desire to drain other females of their life-force is also depicted by Arabella Kenealy’s Lady Deverich, in ‘Some Experiences of Lord Syfret: A Beautiful Vampire’, which was published in the same year as Braddon’s tale. In Kenealy’s story, like Lady Ducayne, Lady Deverish sucks the ‘vitality’ out of women and children and states she ““would drink blood out of living bodies”” if she could (Kenealy, 1986: 43, 44), revealing another female vampire created by her desire for eternal youth. Leah Larson, however, has argued that ‘The Good Lady Ducayne’ is ‘important because it is the first to combine traditional vampire superstitions with the Victorian interest in technology, especially in transfusion’ (Larson, 2007: 170). Bella becomes the site of male scientific experimentation, thus she loses control of her own body, but it is the superstitious nature of the tale that hides this medical process. ‘To live in a world of accelerated technological change’ Valdine Clemens notes, ‘can be both a

blessing and an affliction; on the one hand there is greater immediate safety and comfort, but on the other hand there is an increasing sense of temporal fragmentation and consequent anxiety about the future' (Clemens, 1999: 5). In contrasting the use of science as an explanation for the supernatural in 'The Ghost's Name' – where it comfortingly dispels the ghosts – to the transfusions in 'The Good Lady Ducayne' – where medical advance demonstrates affliction and anxiety – Braddon reveals the horror of technology and how science destabilises the moral balance of nineteenth-century society.

Braddon is not the only author to use blood transfusions in her writing though: George Eliot in *The Lifted Veil* (1859) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) also engage with this ambiguous representation of science. In *The Lifted Veil* doctor Meunier transfuses the blood of Mrs. Archer so she can return to life to denounce the villainess Bertha, suggesting that scientific developments are positive because they expose criminals. However, '[w]hat Meunier does is move the blood transfusion experiment from the realm of the scientific to that of the occult sciences' (Willis, 2006: 160); blood transfusions become a source of fear, an unnatural technology. In *Dracula*, Stoker depicts the doctor Van Helsing using blood transfusions to maintain the life of Lucy Westenra, demonstrating that science, when used correctly by a physician, is safe and acceptable. However, Van Helsing fails in his attempt to save Lucy from vampirism; science and technology are not always effective against the supernatural.

Unlike *Dracula* who is a traditional self-sustaining vampire because he feeds directly from humans, Lady Ducayne requires external help, ultimately revealing her lack of power and agency. Notably, Lady Ducayne uses a male doctor to drain blood from the girls, she does not bite them herself, suggesting that she is not a vampire; she is merely an old woman seeking to live longer. This is how Braddon challenges the well-established

vampire tale; she demonstrates that vampires do not have to be creatures from another realm, they are living breathing human beings who prey on the weak and suck the life out of the young and innocent. Once again, Braddon uses the division between natural and supernatural origins of evil to great effect: Lady Ducayne is a ‘non-supernatural vampire’ (Pitt, 2001: 381), making the horror even more real because the implausible and unbelievable are transformed into the possible and practical through science; reality is more terrifying than fiction. Herbert emphasises this point when he states: ““Oh Lady Ducayne, need I put your wickedness and your physician’s still greater wickedness in plain words?”” (p.198). Herbert considers Parravicini’s deception as worse than Lady Ducayne’s because as a man and a doctor he should represent the epitome of nineteenth-century masculinity and uphold Victorian moral ideologies, like Van Helsing, while instead he is a threat to Victorian scientific discourse because he destabilises the respectability of advancing technology and reveals that ‘doctors were ... far from infallible’ (Briggs, 1977: 22).

This argument for Lady Ducayne’s non-vampiric identity, and thus for Braddon’s original contribution to the vampire tale, is reinforced by the previous illustration because the bat is a separate entity drawn behind Lady Ducayne, rather than being part of the Lady herself. This division of human and animal separates Lady Ducayne from other literary vampires, such as Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* and Stoker’s *Dracula*, because they both transform into other animals while Lady Ducayne does not. The male intermediary also removes the lesbian undertones commonly found in vampire literature, as exemplified between Laura and *Carmilla*, demonstrating that Braddon does not engage with nineteenth-century fears of female sexual deviancy.² Another author to subvert traditional vampire imagery is Arthur Conan Doyle in his later short story ‘The Adventures of a Sussex Vampire’ in *The Case*

² Heather L. Braun argues the relationship between Bella and her mother is romantic, thus implying lesbianism, but the desertion of Bella’s father would create a negative association with men for Bella and foster a close personal bond between the two women.

Book of Sherlock Holmes (1924), where he depicts a mother draining the blood of her baby, not to sustain her life, but to prolong the life of her child who has been poisoned; the vampire woman eventually becomes a saviour figure, rather than a draining, monstrous character.

In contradiction to Diana Wallace's argument that the supernatural story allows women to 'evade the marriage ending' (Wallace, 2004: 58), Braddon concludes her most renowned paranormal tale with just that finale: Herbert removes Bella from the danger of Lady Ducayne's companionship, acquiring for her one thousand pounds, which Bella gives to her mother, while she marries Herbert. By marrying Herbert instead of using the money to support herself, Bella remains a commodity within patriarchy's capitalist culture, indicating Braddon takes a decidedly 'antifeminist stance on marriage, showing it to be the most expedient and accessible way to social[ly] rise among working-class and lower-middle-class women' (Braun, 2009: 240). By choosing marriage over labour Bella adopts the easiest way to achieve self advance, stability and financial independence, while ultimately restoring the status quo. Because of the vampirism of the mother-figure (her own mother who drains her economically, as well as Lady Ducayne), Bella requires a strong male figure for protection and so marriage is her most direct way of avoiding a return to dependency on a draining figure, while simultaneously becoming a drainer herself because she now requires Herbert to support her financially. Cannon Schmitt supports this argument by noting that a 'threat of invasion from without produces Englishness within' (Schmitt, 1997: 3); the supernatural agency in this story has brought about the restorative ending – "It is all good Lady Ducayne's doing" (p.199) – in which the narrative conforms to a traditional Victorian structure. Nevertheless, this conventional ending is undermined by the lack of closure with Lady Ducayne: at the end of the tale Lady Ducayne 'one can only

assume dies, despite vowing to find another, less homicidal method of extending her age' (Wooden, 2007: online). There is no destruction of the vampire in a traditional staking scene, as in 'Carmilla' or *Dracula* (implying again that she is not a vampire), and Lady Ducayne, after having spent years and probably a vast amount of money developing a method to sustain her life, is not likely to submit to Herbert's ruling. This open-ended strand of the narrative subverts the marriage conclusion and does not give the reader confidence in the continually advancing scientific field of medical research because it can always be used for evil by individual doctors against their patients.

Overall, in her later paranormal tales – specifically 'The Ghost's Name' and 'The Good Lady Ducayne' – Braddon highlights the contrast between science and faith that is central to this subgenre by revealing the ambiguous impact of society's medical and scientific advances on individuals: an impact that can be either positive or negative depending on the implementation of individual doctors. In contrast with R. A. Gilbert's argument that it 'is truly the dead who return, and there is no place for rational explanation or artifice' (Gilbert, 1998: 69), Braddon demonstrates that in certain cases a rational explanation can be more chilling than the return of the dead because, for the Victorians, although a return of the repressed signifies a breakdown in their societal structure that affects people on an individual level, it is the living who are capable of more harm. By drawing on modern developments, such as science and technology, Braddon defies the idea that the supernatural tale was a reaction to encroaching modernity because she specifically updates the subgenre to reflect modern developments, creating fear in the reader, a fear of the future, destabilising society's progressive outlook. Furthermore, in 'Herself' and 'The Good Lady Ducayne' Braddon develops her analysis of nineteenth-century society's attitudes towards women by exploring the physical effects they have on a woman's body:

Lota physically fades away due to her fear of becoming 'redundant', and Lady Ducayne drains young women in order to maintain her life and vitality.

The Visibility of Braddon's Spectres

As Srdjan Smajić argues: 'the fictional ghost-seer is typically caught in a disconcerting double bind between instinctive faith in the evidence of one's sight and the troubling knowledge that vision is often deceptive and unreliable' (Smajić, 2003: 109). Braddon engages with this 'disconcerting double bind', because unlike other supernatural writers, in her oeuvre it is not just women or fragile men who see revenants, they appear to all manner of people across different class levels, geographical locations, time frames, sexes and ages, suggesting that the contrast between faith and vision is universal. The setting of time and place has already been discussed but Braddon's use of class distinctions and the sexes is a notable aspect of her contribution to this subgenre. As in traditional female gothic, Braddon depicts women seeing male revenants in 'Eveline's Visitant: A Ghost Story', 'The Scene-Painter's Wife', 'John Granger: A Ghost Story', 'At Chrighton Abbey' and 'My Dream'. These conform to the argument that women, because they are marginalised in society, are better situated to see other outcast figures. All of these stories have the women see a male ghost(s), suggesting that these apparitions represent patriarchy because they are reasserting their power over women and they ultimately restore order.

Braddon's supernatural tales are not limited to this idea of the female gothic, because she writes of men seeing revenants in 'The Cold Embrace', 'Her Last Appearance', 'His Oldest Friends', 'The Island of Old Faces' and 'The Higher Life'. Kolentzis argues that this 'tactic relegates men to the traditionally female circumstance of helplessness'

(Kolentsis, 2007: 62); they have lost control of their surroundings and arguably their reasoning and sanity, which were central to nineteenth-century masculinity. These men also create a paradox in the spirit-seer debate because some men are able to see more than one ghost, for instance Maxime De St. Vallier in 'His Oldest Friends' and Hal in 'The Island of Old Faces' both see a group of spectres. This could suggest that Maxime and Hal are mentally adept because they are able to distinguish the 'other' world from the 'real' world. Alternatively, Maxime, because he is 'no longer a young man' (Braddon, 1890 [2010]: 339), and Hal, because he is 'shaken' (Braddon, 1892 [2000]: 249), can be perceived as of unsound mind, relegating them to the position of 'shattered' men (Auerbach, 2004: 281), situating them alongside the female spirit-seers. On the other hand, Philip Hazlemere in 'Her Last Appearance' is in good physical health and does not realise he sees a ghost, indicating that he is in control of himself and his surroundings; the supernatural only has power and control if the person believes it does.

Braddon expands beyond both of these traditional aspects of visibility when she depicts a group of people seeing the revenants in 'My Wife's Promise', 'Sir Philip's Wooing', 'The Shadow in the Corner' and 'The Ghost's Name'. By having men, women and children see the spectre Braddon reveals the power of revenants to destabilise everyone in nineteenth-century society, as with Oliphant's 'A Beleaguered City' (1879). In this group of supernatural tales, class distinctions are also blurred because the spirits appear to lower-class servants and middle-class masters – in 'The Shadow in the Corner' – meaning a man of science descends to the level of a female domestic servant and is forced to acknowledge that his 'world is governed by uncontrollable, relentless, probably hostile, powers' (Uglow, 1988: xvii). The upper class are also invaded by spectres in 'Sir Philip's Wooing', revealing spirits transcend class boundaries and therefore the repressed issues they represent are

universal; all individuals are affected by society's moral attitudes. By designating the upper-class Lady Ducayne as the demonic creature in 'The Good Lady Ducayne' Braddon shows that not only are class boundaries dissolvable to spectres (and therefore possibly to people), but that the upper class itself is a source of evil because it victimizes the lower classes to maintain its superiority.

Conclusion

Braddon's supernatural oeuvre features many different revenants which all allow the nineteenth-century middle-class reader to explore their deepest and darkest desires in a form that was relatively safe from the censure of the critics. If Braddon's stories were simply paranormal tales then who sees the spectres and the reasons for them would rationalise the spirits or otherwise be explained as the internal rhetorical devices of the supernatural subgenre. Braddon, however, is much more subtle and creative than that. Her revenants represent her critique of the society she lives in: a woman's marginalised and commoditised position in society indicates her lack of agency; marital guilt reveals that both sexes are equally affected by external pressures; and the contrast between science and faith reflects the conflicting pressures of moving forward or harking back to a past age. This last dichotomy demonstrates the development from her early to late supernatural fiction: her early tales recall faith in superstitions and the occult, while her later stories reveal a movement towards modern science. Braddon also relates how society's attitudes and pressures affect men and women on an individual level; people strive and resort to extreme lengths to merely maintain their social level, a theme that remains dominant throughout her entire oeuvre. Braddon's intertwining of her sensation literature techniques

with the historic Gothic tale produces fiction that crosses the boundaries of nineteenth-century sensibilities and ideologies. The closed-narrative endings reaffirm the status-quo, contrasting with unsettling open-ended supernatural tales, which ultimately aligns with her sensation fiction. ‘As in her less uncanny sensation fiction’ Falvey asserts, ‘plots hinge on suicide and suffering, crime, guilt, and revenge. Commonplace cruelties and everyday ambiguities are thematic mainstays’ (Falvey, 2007: 48). Her engagement with sensation fiction in her early tales to create a hybrid form is the main contribution Braddon made to the nineteenth-century supernatural story.

From exploring the development of the supernatural story in her later fiction it is also clear that this subgenre ‘featured as both a popular form of entertainment and as a subject of philosophical debate and scientific investigation in [order] to provide both instruction and entertainment by blending sensation with improving reading matter’ (Henson, 2004: 59), something which Braddon was in a prime position to do. Overall, Braddon’s supernatural tales portray how society’s attitudes harm the very people they are meant to protect and this challenging of society’s conventions continues in her other subgenres. Ultimately, Mark Bennett argues that because supernatural and sensation fiction ‘are regarded with evident distaste by reviewers, critics and other arbiters of literary merit, they acquire thereby a fittingly Gothic identity within Victorian literary culture’ (Bennett, 2011: 39); the perpetuation of the Gothic within a process is more unsettling than the Gothic itself (p.51). Thus, it is the repression of the Gothic’s important cultural status that directly contributes to the return and expansion of the subgenre, which Braddon helped to revitalise, enabling other writers to take it further.

CHAPTER THREE

BRADDON'S CRIME SHORT FICTION

“Every man is at heart a Sherlock Holmes, while every woman thinks herself a criminal investigator by instinct.” (Braddon, 1910: 185)

The detective story is a distinct product of the nineteenth century and the opening quotation emphasises some of the main themes that thread throughout Braddon's crime fiction and the subgenre as a whole. Crime fiction is usually considered to have originated with Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Murders of the Rue Morgue' (1841), while the detective figure entered English fiction through the subplot of Inspector Bucket in Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852). Wilkie Collins developed this figure to create the British detective novel, *The Moonstone* (1868), while Arthur Conan Doyle epitomised the subgenre with his creation, Sherlock Holmes. Braddon's mention of the eponymous detective in the opening quotation references the popularity of the professional detective or private investigator of the 1880-90s, while the term 'criminal investigator', in comparison, has a more amateur status. This contrast is one of the main developments of crime fiction and so will be utilised in relation to Braddon's oeuvre. Notably, the opposing types of detective also reference the gender division: it is the woman who has the generic, amateur 'criminal investigator' status, while the man is a named professional, suggesting his superiority in the crime-solving process. This is evidenced by the woman being mentioned second in the list, making her already inferior to the man. This gender division is an important issue in Braddon's detective fiction and so will also inform the analysis of this chapter. Furthermore, the man 'is' a detective 'at heart', implying he has a physical, and simultaneously emotional, right to be a detective, while the woman only 'thinks' she is a detective, but she does so by 'instinct'.

'[I]nstinct' references a woman's innate, almost animalistic intuition, suggesting some confusion over the female detective figure – is she natural or not? Despite seemingly upholding nineteenth-century attitudes to gender roles, Braddon subtly undermines them in this quotation, and this idea will be developed throughout this chapter. As with supernatural short fiction, crime fiction has a long-standing history and so this chapter begins by outlining the progression of the subgenre. Braddon's contribution can then be contextualised to demonstrate how she performs the subgenre, which, as Anne-Marie Beller opines, 'lies not only in her pioneering of crime and mystery as justifiable subjects for the respectable novel but also in her plot and narrative innovations' (Beller, 2012: 8); these 'narrative innovations' are particularly notable in her short fiction as I will demonstrate.

Victorian Crime Fiction

The emergence of crime fiction, rather than the more specific subgenre of detective fiction, is notoriously difficult to define because of its all encompassing catchment, which problematises the subgenre. Recent studies of the development of crime fiction – such as Stephen Knight's *Crime Fiction 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity* (2004) and Heather Worthington's *The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (2005) – have traced this evolving subgenre in detail and have noted that its origins are the same as for sensation fiction: it is a natural progression of the Newgate novel, the Gothic, and real life crime as reported in newspapers. Therefore, crime fiction is a composite subgenre which incorporates similar characteristics to each of these preceding subgenres, including Braddon's own supernatural fiction. The term 'crime fiction', rather than 'detective fiction', is being used in this study because Braddon's oeuvre contains

elements pertaining to the wider associations of crime fiction: she includes professional and amateur detectives, as well as involving the reader as a detective figure. Therefore, her short fiction is not purely centred on the detective, but on the process of detecting crime. Braddon also depicts many different kinds of crime, thus her all encompassing criminal outlook, much like her supernatural fiction's wider inclusivity, is the distinguishing feature of her original contribution to this subgenre.

Crime fiction traces its roots back to the Newgate novel of the 1830-40s, which was based on the *Newgate Calendar* (1728), and popularised by authors such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Braddon's mentor. Newgate fiction brought to justice eighteenth-century robbers and highwaymen, was set in castles or 'flash kens', and confirmed society's ideologies because the criminals confessed and repented at the conclusion from a sense of 'Christian guilt' (Knight, 2004: 5-7). They drew inspiration from contemporary broadsides and were vilified because they 'imported the literature of the streets ... to the drawing room' (Pykett, 2003: 32), much like sensation fiction. However, '[o]ne of the most important differences between sensation fiction and the Newgate novel is the shift of focus from crime to detection' (p.34); sensation and crime fiction parallel because both subgenres focus on the process of detection, positioning the detective figure, rather than the criminal, as the hero. Nevertheless, early crime fiction was still associated with the lower classes; it was not until the mid-nineteenth century that the subgenre became popular reading for the middle classes through periodicals.

As explored in Chapter Two, the development of the Gothic into supernatural fiction occurred through several different means, and '[t]he identifying features of Gothic and crime fiction [also] overlap in substantial ways, but the traditions are not coterminous' (Rzepka, 2010: 1). Such similar elements are intimate closed settings, a mystery to uncover

and a move to a contemporary time frame, though detective fiction relies on ‘signs of implicit faith in the epistemological value of sight and the universal legibility of visual signifiers’ (Smajić, 2003: 109), while supernatural fiction relies on the character’s belief that they have perceived a revenant. Jack Sullivan illustrates the distinction between the two subgenres by noting that:

detective stories progress towards clarity, transparency, and explicit illumination of a puzzle or concept. They depend on the power of reason and logic; they invariably explain themselves. Ghost stories, however, sabotage the relationship between cause and effect. The parts are self-consistent, but they relate to an inexplicable, irrational whole. Instead of lighting up, the stories darken into shadowy ambiguity; instead of depending on logic, they depend on suggestion and connotation. (Sullivan, 1978: 134)

This distinction is further extended by supernatural fiction having at its heart a terror aroused by the ‘unknown’, while crime fiction’s fear derives from the known: the mystery is an actual crime that has been committed by a person(s), not revenants.¹

The rise of true crime reporting in the broadsides fashionable with the lower classes in the 1820-50s also helped to popularise crime fiction. These broadsides – for instance, *Cleave’s Weekly Police Gazette* – detailed the crimes brought before the courts and they commented upon the punishment of the criminals. Their purpose was to entertain the lower classes, and illustrations ‘added impact’ to these accounts (Worthington, 2005: 10), although they also scared the public into conforming to the law. Alongside these broadsides, public hangings attracted a large audience, confirming the voyeuristic appeal of

¹ Braddon blurs the boundaries between detective and supernatural fiction in ‘The True Story of Don Juan’ (1868). The brother of a woman Don Juan seduces is a monk and detects Don Juan’s guilt, tricking him into coming to his monastery. Once there, the monks exact justice by burying Don Juan alive. Nevertheless, the country folk spread the rumour that Don Juan was killed by the statue of the murdered father of the seduced girl. Thus, Don Juan is transformed into a ‘never-to-be-forgotten legend of human guilt and supernatural retribution’ (Braddon, 1868 [2000]: 17), and detective fiction is transformed into supernatural fiction to hide the facts.

criminal punishments with the lower classes. For the middle and upper classes, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* published Thomas De Quincey's 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' in 1827, capitalising on its success in their 'Tales of Terror' series, which incorporated crime into their narratives, although no specific detective figure was introduced. *Blackwood's* also published 'Warren's fictional "Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician"' [which] inaugurate[d] the case structure of the observing and analytical physician, [to] explore a discursive space that will later be occupied by the disciplinary detective in the private sphere' (pp.46-7). Thus, the detective was pre figured by the doctor and the lawyer/judge (for example, Erik Sørensen in the Danish crime novella *The Rector of Veilbye* [1829] by Steen Steensen Blicher), which established a pattern of analytical investigative methods and logical thinking.

The final development to pave the way for the detective figure was the establishment of a unified police force. After he became Chief Magistrate, Henry Fielding set up the Bow Street Runners in 1749, who were 'mobile police attached to the Bow Street court in central London' (Knight, 2004: 10). Ensuring the Bow Street Runners were not perceived as an oppressive force, they operated as carriers between the courts and accosted criminals if they did not appear when summoned; they operated more as a detective force and were active until 1839. Robert Peel's New Metropolitan Police Office took over their role as a deterrent in 1829 (Pykett, 2003: 23) and were generally perceived as an institutional form of control (Worthington, 2005: 122). To counter this perspective, Dickens incorporated the police into his 'Street Sketches' and 'Sketches of London' (1834-5), which were published in *The Evening Chronicle*. These sketches depict the police as part of the scenery, for example in 'The Streets – Morning' '[a]n occasional policeman may alone be seen at the street corners, listlessly gazing on the deserted prospect before him'

(Dickens, 1834-5 [1906]: 38). Dickens suggests that the police blend into society without causing controversy, although the adjective ‘listlessly’ implies the policeman’s lack of effectiveness, or lack of challenging work. Continuing to write articles about the police between 1850-3 in *Household Words* (for example ‘Spy Police’ [1850]), Dickens celebrated the police’s fairness and effectiveness, especially compared with the rest of Europe (Dickens, 1850b: 611). Thus, they were ultimately seen as a beneficial force towards governing the unruly lower classes and so became acceptable to the middle and upper classes, who quickly assimilated them into Victorian culture. The detective, however, was viewed differently from the police, because the middle and upper classes saw him as a threat to their social standing.

Nineteenth-century society’s need for the detective, rather than the police, emerged from the increasing number of people living in urban areas, which created a perceived rise in violence and crime. The closure of the Bow Street Runners meant that there was no active detective force operating until the Detective Police division was established thirteen years later, in 1842. The detective’s job was to protect the innocent, as well as to ensure the prosecution of the guilty. To achieve this, the detective’s main characteristics were his discernment, adaptability, imagination, firmness, reason, determination, visual/mental memory and discipline, separating him from police officers, as well as the general public, because he was an all-seeing detached observer of humankind; his unseen eye implicitly watched all. It is this omniscient eye and his lower class status – British ‘detectives were commonly working class’ (Schroeder and Schroeder, 2006: 139) – that the middle and upper classes objected to. Detectives ‘had the privilege of a direct access to the world of the upper classes that was traditionally denied them’ (Tomaiuolo, 2010: 84), which meant they could potentially disrupt the strict social hierarchies of the nineteenth-century era: they

might discover that the criminal was a member of an upper-class family, or they could uncover household secrets, such as illegitimacy. Despite working for the good of society, the detective was an unruly element that resided outside social 'norms'. To rectify his position, he entered a house only when required: when a crime was committed the middle and upper classes would request a detective to investigate, meaning he was considered a hired helper. The detective police were, therefore, reactive, rather than preventative, and were ultimately considered bringers of justice; they reveal the facts and catch criminals and so, eventually, they had the community's trust and support. Furthermore, 'throughout the latter part of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century', the detective was 'increasingly of middle-class status and of superior police rank' (Worthington, 2005: 168-9); he manages to rise socially, no longer being a threat to the middle class because he assimilates with them. Only when the detective had gained respect in society did he enter fiction, notably through an American writer's construction of the character: Edgar Allen Poe's Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin.

Edgar Allen Poe's three Dupin stories inaugurated crime fiction and each is significant to the development of the subgenre: 'The Murders of the Rue Morgue' (1841) is the first 'locked room' mystery, 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' (1843) is based on a real life crime and Poe used newspaper clippings to 'solve' the mystery, while 'The Purloined Letter' (1845) opened up the subgenre to psychoanalytic readings following Jacques Lacan's analysis of the tale (Pittard, 2003: online). Poe's detective was logical, evaluated evidence rationally and was an intellectual, and he coined the phrase 'ratiocination' to combine these detective traits, including Dupin's ability to place himself in the minds of criminals to understand their thought processes. Poe also contrasts Dupin with the police; he solves the crimes that the police do not, thus Poe vilifies the professional constabulary,

depicting them as incompetent. As Dupin states in ‘The Murders of the Rue Morgue’: “that [the Parisian police] failed in the solution of this mystery is by no means the matter of wonder” (Poe, 1841 [2002]: 139). Poe’s use of the short story is also significant, as David Punter notes: ‘there are only a few tales which seem to muster [Poe’s] entire concentration [and t]hey are often the shortest’ (Punter, 1988: 1). The short story requires more consideration because there is no room for unnecessary detail; every action, object and symbol has significance for the case that the detective must determine. Furthermore, despite the fact that Poe is American, his early detective short fiction reflects the rising popularity of British crime-reporting broadsides of the 1820-50s; ‘[t]he destinies of both the short story and the detective story were, then, closely related to the history of magazine publication’ (Kayman, 2003: 41) and Dickens, Collins, Braddon and Doyle used these connections to full advantage.

The first example of a British literary detective is by Dickens. In *Household Words* Dickens followed detective Inspector Charles Field’s activities, using Field as the inspiration for Inspector Bucket in *Bleak House* (1852). Inspector Bucket epitomises the uncertain social status of the detective because he straddles the boundary between respectable society and the criminal (Pittard, 2003: online). Bucket’s ability to discern a criminal created a problem with his character, and that of the detective figure in general. The detective needed to know the criminal’s motives and methods in order to discover him; however, this meant the detective had comparable characteristics to the criminals he pursued, marking a similarity between them that undermines the integrity of the detective. Bucket is part of a subplot, nevertheless, he is an all-seeing detective who solves the case of Mr Tulkinghorn’s murder when the other amateur detectives fail, confirming his own, and the general detective figure’s, reputation as a bringer of fact. Despite Bucket’s depiction,

‘Dickens, who seems to have circled around crime fiction a great deal and for all of his career, never wrote a text that could fairly be allotted to the subgenre: he always sought movement, reform, not stasis restored’ (Knight, 2004: 47). Knight’s argument disqualifies *Bleak House* as a true example of crime fiction, because Dickens’s main emphasis in the novel is on exposing social crimes generally.

One of the nineteenth-century’s most prominent English detective novels is Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868). Collins had previously depicted two amateur detectives – Walter Hartright and Marian Halcombe – in the sensation novel *The Woman in White* (1860), but it is *The Moonstone* that centres on a clearly defined crime: a diamond is stolen and Inspector Seegrave and Sergeant Cuff are called upon to solve the mystery. Their ironic names blur reader expectations: Seegrave actually epitomises the limited view of the authoritarian policeman, while Cuff, instead of using violence, utilises Dupinesque ratiocination techniques when examining the crime scene. Pamela Gilbert’s analysis of crime fiction reveals that:

[t]he detective is usually an outsider, who represents an objective principle of justice and is unwavering in his quest. Perhaps because of this quality, he is usually a static character, who does not change or learn in the process of his pursuit, and to the extent that he does, such growth is subordinated to the reader’s interest in the unfolding of the mystery which is the object of his detection. (Gilbert, 1997: 96)

The Moonstone confirms this argument. While neither Seegrave nor Cuff solves the mystery, Ezra Jennings – a doctor’s assistant – discovers the facts of the case using his knowledge of science; his outsider’s ‘objective’ perspective is vital to unravel the mystery. He concludes that a guest at the party, Franklin Blake, stole the diamond while drugged and gave it to Godfrey Ablewhite, a family friend, to put back in the bank. It takes an amateur

detective who has no personal link to the victim, but has medical expertise, to solve the case. Collins's later novel, *The Law and the Lady* (1875), contains a female amateur detective, Valeria Woodville, although she assumes the detective role only in order to prove her husband's innocence and restore her own domestic stability. Collins's use of the novel further emphasises the options available to authors of crime fiction. In a novel, an author can prolong the discovery of the crime, create complex back-stories for each of the characters, misdirect the reader with red herrings and coincidences, and allow the reader to guess the conclusion by giving time to figure out the connections, while a short story cannot devote such space to prolonged investigation.

A prolonged investigation does not always work in favour of the novel, however. Within crime fiction, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories are probably the most well known. They were only approximately 12,000 words long yet Doyle was paid £100 per thousand words for them (Knight, 2004: 58, 62), demonstrating their enormous success and popularity. The Holmes stories reveal a move back to crime short fiction at the end of the century, because the specificity and intricacy of the tales would be difficult to maintain for a full-length novel; '[t]he immediacy of the sensation and monitory effect present in the shorter narratives is lessened when it is diffused into longer stories' (Worthington, 2005: 54). Doyle wrote five collections of short stories and only four novellas, such as *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1901-2), confirming that the short story is the more ideal genre for crime fiction. Holmes is well known for his eccentricity, disciplinary knowledge, bohemianism and elitism, and what he brings to detective fiction is his logical conclusions from the minutest of details about everyday life, his love of disguises and his knowledge of weapons and martial arts. Doyle created an entirely new profession for Holmes: the "consulting detective" (Doyle, 1886 [1982]: 23), separating him from the official police

force, but still maintaining his position as hired help to restore social order. Doyle undertook the Holmes stories as a means of making money, like Braddon, and even though he killed Holmes in 'The Final Problem' (1893), due to public demand and Doyle's own financial situation, Holmes returned to continue his authority over crime fiction for another twenty years. Overall, the time span covered by these writers (1840s – 1900s) reveals the subgenre's continuing popularity. The fact that the often referenced leaders of the subgenre are all male suggests that crime was seen as a masculine theme: Poe, Collins and Doyle 'resemble three generations' (Sussex, 2010: 2); their work is equally spaced out over the nineteenth century and so covers the wide ranging developments of the subgenre.

Nevertheless, as Lucy Sussex's study *Women Writers and Detectives in Nineteenth-Century Crime Fiction* (2010) has discovered, authors such as Catherine Crowe, Mary Helena Fortune and Anna Katherine Green were crucial in shaping the subgenre. Crowe's *Adventures of Susan Hopley* (1841) has the subtitle *or Circumstantial Evidence*, which is 'probably the first time this legal term was so featured in a novel' and contains three amateur female sleuths (p.46); Fortune contributed over five hundred detective stories to magazines, promoting the short story with 'The Detective Album' (1868-1908), which was the 'longest-running early detective series worldwide' (p.3); and Green has been erroneously called the mother of detective fiction after the success of *The Leavenworth Case: a Lawyer's Story* (1878), which was praised by Wilkie Collins (p.182). Sussex traces the history of female authorship to demonstrate overall that 'crime writing is inclusive of both genders, even before the formal beginnings of the genre' (p.184), and Braddon's contribution is vital to this feminine influence, because crime fiction was her 'persisting obsession, re-emerging at intervals' over the course of her career (pp.184-5). Crime fiction allowed Braddon to reject the limiting parameters of male logic, a significant aspect of her

original contribution to the subgenre, and establish a widening readership through another popular subgenre.

Sussex's text includes Braddon's novels, noting that her entry into crime fiction was with her first novel, *Three Times Dead* (1860) (p.85), which she wrote whilst in Beverley, and was republished by Maxwell as *The Trail of the Serpent* (1861). This novel contains the mute detective Joseph Peters; he is another example of a detective bordering the liminal spaces of accepted/marginalised society. Peters's 'success is not threatened by, but rather predicated on, deviation, dependency, and prosthesis' (Ferguson, 2008: 2); it is precisely because he is disabled that the criminal neglects to consider him a worthy opponent, so he is effective in his role as fact bringer. This idea is supported by Tomaiuolo who argues that marginalised detectives 'have more direct access to truth and a sharper perception of events than "centralised" investigators' (Tomaiuolo, 2010: 98), although Braddon's *Eleanor's Victory* (1863) takes an opposing view. This is one of Braddon's few novels to centre on a female amateur detective and Eleanor adopts this masculine role to obtain vengeance against her father's killer. A male friend warns that she 'will waste [her] life, blight [her] girlhood, warp [her] nature, unsex [her] mind, and transform [herself] from a candid and confiding woman' (Braddon, 1863 [2002]: 87), because a female detective defies Victorian conventions, placing Eleanor as threat to society. Eleanor, however, is 'one of fiction's first (and least efficient) female detectives' (Willis, 1998: 4), and her 'ineptitude is Braddon's concession to middle-class apprehensions about wilful, independent women' (Schroeder and Schroeder, 2006: 139). In the end, Eleanor is reunited with her estranged husband and so returns to her acceptable feminine role; Braddon conforms to traditional stereotypes to placate her middle-class readership.

Braddon's well known sensation texts *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Aurora Floyd* also feature an amateur and professional detective, respectively, who have received extensive critical attention. As a detective, Robert Audley is not a professional outsider or 'the innocent observer of events[. H]e becomes an active participant in the drama he unfolds. He seems to produce the crime in the process of investigating it' (Cvetkovich, 1992: 60). Like Franklin Blake, Robert is an integral member of the family and so has an insider's perspective, as well as a vested interest in the process of revelation. Critical discourse on Robert has taken two diverging paths: the first argues that Robert's detective skills are not deductive – after he has observed a potential clue, 'precious little actual reasoning is done' to discover its significance (Cropp, 1998: 89) – and so he lacks traditional detective characteristics. The opposing view is that although Robert 'doubts his knowledge, efficacy, and his motives' (Cvetkovich, 1992: 53):

[h]is state of confusion over the fragmented nature of reality [for instance, Lady Audley's self-representations] paradoxically makes him not a less, but a more effective detective, because he is called upon to dismiss comfortable platitudes about everything from golden-haired angels in the house to reason. (Marks, 1994: 6)

Robert ultimately proves himself as a detective figure because he exposes Lady Audley's multiple selves, restoring the domestic balance by removing her to a *Maison de Santé* in Belgium. Unlike Robert, *Aurora Floyd's* professional detective, Joseph Grimstone of Scotland Yard, is 'a figure who concludes the narrative rather than being central to it' (Sussex, 2010: 92). Grimstone enters the narrative in volume two and is a traditional 'static' detective who is a detached outsider (Gilbert, 1997: 96). He does not grow emotionally, he serves only to discover other characters' guilt/innocence and restore order.

These four detectives from Braddon's early novels demonstrate that she engaged with crime fiction from an early stage in her career and that she did so in a wide-ranging capacity. In fact, Chris Willis has suggested that Braddon has a more valid claim than Wilkie Collins of having written the first full-length detective novel in English with *The Trail of the Serpent*, indicating her contribution and significance to this well established subgenre (Willis 2003: Afterword). Understanding of Braddon's contribution to crime fiction, and the development of the detective figure specifically, is extended and complicated through analysis of her short fiction. It is precisely because Braddon crosses the bridge between the novel and short fiction, and makes a significant contribution to the development of a female crime fiction, that her interaction with this male-dominated subgenre is worth exploring.

Braddon's Crime Short Fiction

Lucy Sussex states that: 'the first decade of [Braddon's] writing career was almost entirely occupied with crime fiction' (Sussex, 2010: 99), and this is true, but for her novels only; in terms of her short fiction, most of her crime stories were published post-1870 when she began experimenting with other subgenres. Once again, her main publishing outlets were her own middle-class magazines, and when their popularity declined, she published in local newspapers. These crime tales have proved popular because they are republished in her short story collections, and in recent edited collections, demonstrating their developing interest to scholars. Braddon's ingenuity, as well as the sheer volume of fiction she wrote, can be credited to her lasting impact. She managed to keep crime fiction alive by adapting the themes, motives and types of crime that are committed in her fiction, which was

stimulated by the competition she had from the already explored established writers. In fact, as Sussex argues, ‘Braddon wrote much more of what we would now term generic crime than Collins. Despite the problems of quality control caused by the sheer quantity of her production, she matched and could even surpass him’ (p.95). Braddon did surpass Collins in terms of publications, probably because she outlived him, but the quality of her work also remained high; she was adept at keeping up-to-date with subgenre advances (as discussed in Chapter Two) and ‘[h]er constructions are full of ingenuity and resource’ (Bennett, 1901: 31). This chapter positions Braddon as one of the main crime writers of the nineteenth century because she outsold most of the male writers by challenging the conventions they constructed.

Braddon’s crime short fiction engages with the same general themes as the established authors, such as the effect of jealousy or economic strain on marriage or the family, sight versus instinct, and professional versus amateur detectives. Braddon’s forte is domestic crime in which criminal investigations are combined with realistic representations of everyday life; she explores themes that relate directly to her readership, as well as mental instability and scientific advances. Her contribution to the subgenre is her blurring of the boundaries between the amateur/professional/reader as detective, as well as challenging a woman’s designated place in the home through contrasting male and female detectives. Braddon’s focus on the permeable boundaries between the lower-middle to middle class – she writes about doctors, lawyers, clergy, nurses and governesses, the people who are meant to protect us – exposes the lengths to which people in precarious positions would go to rise socially, securing a respectable social position. As in her sensation fiction, she reveals fractures in the façade of nineteenth-century society. Short fiction’s condensed nature reduces character development and plot intricacies to the basics, but this enables the

reader's heart to race by focusing on the nub of sensation fiction: crime. Braddon uses the impact of the crime to comment on society, revealing what she believes is important: how society at large impacts on the individual, as well as how individuals' relationships affect others. Braddon does not just condense the subgenre to its violent and shocking aspects; instead, she teases and misleads the reader by heightening ambiguity and engaging with social developments.

Her first crime story, 'The Mystery of Fernwood' (1861), is noteworthy for its deviations from the rest of her crime oeuvre and so is worth analysing in detail. The tale was first published in two parts in the popular *Temple Bar*; however, reviews of the tale were not particularly favourable: *The Standard* describes this tale as 'tolerable' ('The Magazines', 1861: 3), while *The Morning Chronicle* labelled it as merely 'readable' ('Literature', 1861: 3), but both magazines did single it out over other contributions as worth reading. Contrasting with the bulk of her short stories that are omniscient and written in the present tense ('Milly Darrell' and 'At Chrighton Abbey' being notable exceptions), this first attempt at crime fiction is a first person retrospective narrative of the female amateur detective, Isabel, which provides the reader with the inherent clue that she survives the narrative. Braddon's choice to portray a female amateur detective at the start of her crime fiction career demonstrates she found this subgenre to be particularly suited to giving a voice to marginalised members of society. The retrospective narrative means the female narrator knows the outcome of the crime process before the story opens and so the emphasis is on the reader solving the mystery as she explains her situation. The lines between writer/reader/character as detective are blurred: Braddon has created the mystery and so is the master; the reader detects the implications as the plot progresses and so

constructs the crime in the mind; while Isabel recounts past events for the reader, thus becoming the author of the mystery.

Isabel, like many other sensation heroines (for instance, Aurora Floyd), is an ‘orphan’ (Braddon, 1861-2: 552), and so has not had the ‘proper’ education in how to conform to society’s standards. This supposed defect underpins her unruly nature, fuels her unusual detective characteristics and presents her as unnatural; Isabel is described as ‘inquisitive’, having ‘fancies’ and is, tellingly, a ‘daring horsewoman’ (p.560, 562, 555). Nevertheless, as an outsider to the norms of Victorian society, as Gilbert asserted earlier, she ‘represents an objective principle of justice’ (Gilbert, 1997: 96); Isabel has a clearer insight into other people’s lives because of her marginalised status. The first person narrative prioritises her thinking and intuition: ‘[h]ow little I thought of that letter!’ (p.552) and ‘I could not help wondering...’ (p.65). Isabel’s personal thoughts reveal the process of her detection, meaning the reader questions not only the developing mystery, but also Isabel’s own detective skills. For instance, when Isabel speculates about Lucy’s (her future sister-in-law) past – ‘she looked as if some hidden sorrow had quenched out the light of her life long ago ... some disappointed attachment, I thought’ (p.555) – the reader questions whether Isabel’s deductions are an instinctive insight into other people, if it is another of her ‘fancies’ (p.562), whether this sorrow is part of the overarching mystery of Fernwood, or if it is a decoy. Her presumption about Lucy links to this chapter’s opening quotation from *Beyond These Voices*. Isabel, by instinct, hones her innate detective skills, suggesting that women’s detective qualities are natural; however, she also has an ‘irresistible curiosity’ (p.71), implying that her deductions are born merely out of gossip and pursuing them would be detrimental to her social status as a lady.

The reader's questioning of Isabel's detective processes is paralleled by her own reflections on whether she is over-analysing the situation: 'I have tried to create a mystery out of the simplest possible family arrangement' (p.558). This is confirmed when Laurence (her fiancé) comments on the instability of memory – it is ““difficult to dissociate the vague recollections of the actual events of our childhood from childish dreams that are scarcely more vague”” (p.70) – subtly implying that Isabel's retrospective narrative should not be trusted for its accuracy. Furthermore, whilst she is attempting to unravel the mystery, Laurence cautions: ““my little inquisitive Isabel, do not rack your brains about this poor relation of ours”” (p.560). The poor relation Mr Thomas, around whom the mystery revolves, is being nursed upstairs in the attic; the subject of hidden identities expands Braddon's sensation fiction tropes into other subgenres. Additionally, Laurence's 'reproof' sustains conservative nineteenth-century views that women should not overexert their intellectual capacity because it does them harm (p.561), warning the investigative female to remain in her place. Nevertheless, the setting of the mystery is a large secluded house, so Isabel is remaining in her 'place'; she does not venture from the closed domestic sphere into the public domain. It is precisely because the mystery centres on a familial situation that a woman detective is appropriate, and thus not unnatural.

Intertwined with the mystery of Mr Thomas's identity, the tale also contains supposed supernatural elements; the house has its own 'ghost story' and a ghostly figure appears to Isabel (p.558). She describes the vision as her fiancé's 'shadow', 'phantom' and a 'horrible double' (p.563, 63, 63), referencing detective fiction's Gothic traditions of doppelgängers, although the vision is also 'flesh and blood' (p.63). Sight as a trusted faculty is a key feature of detective fiction, but the figure's contrasting descriptions reveal he inhabits Braddon's liminal space between reality and fantasy, so the inherent value of

sight is called into question and the boundaries between the two subgenres are blurred. This fragmentary description also confirms Braddon's emerging preoccupation with the split, or multiple, self – the person and the shadow – which infiltrates every subgenre of her work and that she expanded in her late psychological supernatural fiction. This sighting of the creature concludes part one; Braddon utilises the cliff-hanger technique dear to serialised novels, engaging the reader in guessing at the material or supernatural presence of the creature, forcing the reader into the position of detective.

Following Isabel's assault by this creature, in the second half, the doctor explains that she most likely suffered from 'hysteria, optical delusions, false impressions of outward objects, disordered and abnormal states of the organ of sight, and other semi-mental, semi-physical infirmities' (p.65). As in *Lady Audley's Secret*, the doctor's diagnosis can be a ploy to discount the woman's testimony, but Lucy supports this diagnosis. Her questionable motives surface as another mystery that Isabel and the reader must decipher: is Lucy helping Isabel, or hiding her own involvement in the secret? Isabel's sight and instincts prove to be correct; the presence is 'flesh and blood' (p.63), confirming that her detective skills are natural and, as an extension, so is the female detective. Nevertheless, Braddon immediately contradicts this perspective by depicting Isabel's inadequacies: on entering the attic she finds someone she believes is Laurence locked in a room. Newly released, he rushes past her, only to kill the real Laurence; Mr Thomas (the man in the attic) is the creature and Laurence's twin brother. Thus, Isabel fails in deciphering the mystery, and she unwittingly causes the death of her fiancé. Braddon ultimately presents the amateur female detective as ineffective and unnatural because she cannot intuit the intricate domestic situation.

This plot twist has several implications for the detective narrative and Braddon's overarching crime fiction themes. Mr Thomas is locked in the attic because he is mad, he was dropped on his head as a baby and so is 'an idiot' (p.72); the supernatural element of the creature is rationally explained, distinguishing crime from supernatural fiction. Having a madman in the attic subverts nineteenth-century traditions, such as the mad woman in the attic in *Jane Eyre* (1847), in order for Braddon to make a political point: the gender of the mentally ill person is insignificant – it is because the patient does not conform to society's ideologies that the family hide him away from the public. This theme also appears in Margaret Oliphant's *Janet* (1891) where the patriarch is imprisoned in the house and mistaken for 'some wretched creature, a madman, probably, [who] had got into the rooms' (Oliphant, 1891: 61).

Furthermore, Braddon's use of mental instability demonstrates her engaging with contemporary medical advances, such as the double brain hypothesis, which was originally theorised by Franz Gall in the early nineteenth century, and developed by Jean-Baptiste Bouillaud in the 1860s. Gall and Bouillaud thought that both sides of the brain worked together (Harrington, 1987 [1989]: 11-15); however, if the brain was damaged, then 'certain forms of insanity might result from independent, incongruous action between the two sides of the brain' (p.17), revealing that a person's suppressed desires may contradict their actions, and through the return of the repressed these hidden desires may surface and destabilise nineteenth-century social structures. Thus, the disordering of Mr Thomas's brain could reveal multiple contradictory actions, allowing several readings of his character, especially because Laurence and Mr Thomas are twins: Mr Thomas's disordered brain could be enacting Laurence's secret desires, and so they may be cross-linked. For instance, Mr Thomas is violent towards Isabel because he is enacting Laurence's desire to hurt her;

he kills Laurence because he is jealous of him; he kills Laurence because of the ‘likeness between the two boys’, and so there is a desire for self-harm (p.74); and as an extension of this, Mr Thomas is enacting Laurence’s desire to kill himself. These psychoanalytic interpretations present multiple narrations which ‘solve’ the mystery, but each confirms the traditional nineteenth-century standpoint that mentally unstable people should be incarcerated in asylums, and that women should not pursue intellectual jobs, even within the home, because they cannot see and understand complex situations. Overall, ‘The Mystery of Fernwood’ establishes many of the features that Braddon returns to in her crime fiction career, such as hidden identities, the female amateur detective, mental instability, enclosed domestic spaces, and the reader as detective.

Amateur versus Professional Detectives

Isabel’s failure to recognise the complete picture in ‘The Mystery of Fernwood’ creates a significant division between amateur and professional detectives. In Braddon’s crime fiction, this division is clear cut: amateurs are born out of personal involvement and attempt to understand the mystery through their specific experience of one situation, which can be limiting, while professionals enter through invitation and acquire specialist knowledge in their area of expertise, allowing them to solve many different mysteries. This division is verified in ‘Levison’s Victim’ (1870), ‘Mr and Mrs de Fontenoy (1870)’ and ‘In the Nick of Time’ (1898). ‘Levison’s Victim’ (1870) depicts the murder of Laura Levison by her husband, Michael. Michael, the criminal, and the amateur detective, Horace Wynward (Laura’s original betrothed), are contrasted through their physical and moral attributes, but it is the comparison of knowledge between Horace and the unnamed hired private detective

that progresses the story. Horace is described as having ‘a fierceness about the eyes – a contraction of the brows, a kind of restless searching look – as if he were on the watch for some one or some thing’ besides describing himself as “‘never ill [and...] made of iron” (Braddon, 1870: 330). Both descriptions portray him as unwavering and unstoppable in his quest; he is almost inhuman and has machine-like determination. His pseudo-animalistic traits emerge when interrogating Laura’s father. He uses verbal and physical coercion: “‘I insisted on a conversation with him [... and I]ittle by little I wrung from him the nature of these secrets”” (p.334). On discovering Laura’s father had ‘forged bills of exchange’ (p.334), Horace ceaselessly travels across Europe retracing the couple’s honeymoon route. His personal investment and dedication cloud his judgement – “‘I would shoot that man down with as little compunction as I would kill a mad dog”” (p.336) – and distort the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable force within detection; how far is too far when tracking down a murderer to bring justice? By describing Michael as a “‘mad dog”” Horace draws a parallel between himself and the criminal, while the portrayal of the private investigator contrasts with both men.

In addition to his own exertions, Horace ‘employ[s]’ a ‘private detective – a very clever fellow in his way, and well in with the police in Europe’ (p.333, 335); ‘in his way’ references the unnatural detective because of his ability to see what is unseen. The detective’s hired position is also an ambiguous one. Horace states he “‘set [his] man”” to work (p.339), placing the detective under his rule, but Horace is simultaneously under the detective’s control because he must wait for his information before he can act; the two must accept, trust and work with each other, revealing their co-dependency. It is the private detective, however, that progresses the investigation because he has additional sources available to him, providing more substantial evidence than Horace’s own efforts. For

instance, over the course of his “researches for another client” (p.334), the professional detective uncovers where Laura and Michael were married; he can transfer his skills and time from one case to another, providing him with a wider scope for potential evidence. Furthermore, the police give the detective a newspaper article detailing a woman’s death in Germany, proof that his official status means the authorities will work with him, aiding the investigation. His “natural habit of suspicion” (p.335) leads him to Michael’s lodgings in London, thus his innate instincts ensure he loses no time in traversing wrong paths. Overall, the professional detective is more effective than the amateur because he can keep himself objectively separated from the mystery and has multiple resources available to him.

Nevertheless, Horace’s personal connection in the case allows him to entrap Michael; he knows Michael will recognise his name in relation to his wife and uses this connection to his advantage. Horace adopts the disguise of ‘a gentleman in difficulties’ (p.337), knowing Michael – as a greedy moneylender – will believe he has ‘caught’ a wealthy bachelor; the criminal intends to catch the detective. In order to counter-catch Michael, Horace invites him to his house and accuses him outright of killing Laura, bringing forth Michael’s feelings of guilt. After this, ‘a girlish figure dressed in black silk [with] a pale sad face framed by dark-auburn hair’ enters the room and Michael’s reaction – “‘The dead returned to life!’” (p.340) – acts as his confession and condemns him. Aside from Braddon’s subtle intertwining of supernatural and detective fiction, it is Horace’s personal involvement that solves the crime; Laura’s sister’s faith in Horace allowed him to appeal to her for help, and she dressed as Laura in order to disorientate Michael. Horace ultimately has more power than the private investigator, because it is he who captures the villain. Overall, Horace occupies the liminal space between the criminal and the professional detective; he has an emotional desire to kill Michael, associating him with the

criminal, while his logical thinking relates to the detective. Instead of enacting the violence he had threatened towards Michael, Horace hands him over to the police, obtaining justice rather than revenge, and returning to his morally acceptable middle-class existence, while the professional detective will utilise his knowledge from this case to apply it to the next.

In 'Mr and Mrs de Fontenoy' (1870) Braddon depicts another relationship between an amateur and a professional detective, whilst also engaging with the topical crimes of her day. The amateur detective, Mr. Migson, becomes suspicious of the aristocratic couple, the de Fontenoy's, who tenant a large house and order vast quantities of food and drink from the surrounding tradesmen; their 'appearance' is a welcome sight to the deserted town (Braddon, 1870: 448). The emphasis on how the couple 'looked' and 'showed' themselves signals sight is a vital signifier in detective fiction and the ability to deconstruct this signifier is essential in detective work (p.449, 452). The townspeople, however, are not trained in deciphering these signs and so are unable to see through this disguise. Migson is alerted to the couple's ruse only when an article in *The Times* announces the death of Mr de Fontenoy; modern technological advances mean that news travels around the country fast, much like Braddon's stories, and so can be used as evidence against criminals, just as Dupin and Holmes use newspapers to solve crimes in 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' (1843) and 'A Scandal in Bohemia' (1891), respectively. For Migson, 'there arose only one solution of this mystery ... the De Fontenoy's ... were a set of swindlers' (p.453). As Heather Worthington notes:

as the century progressed and the professional, business-oriented, and increasingly property-owning middle class grew, so did "white-collar" crime: forgery, fraud, embezzlement, and other variations of theft ... By the mid-century, fear of fraud had apparently overtaken fear of murder or robbery. (Worthington, 2005: 68, 98)

Braddon engages with this fear in this story and the omniscient narrator acts as a voice for the silent reader, speaking aloud the questions that arise in the reader's mind. Having deduced this problem, Migson logically works through the obstacles of the crime using pseudo-ratiocination techniques: 'If Mr. de Fontenoy were a swindler, he carried with him much more impedimenta than swindlers are apt to be encumbered with. But then ... all those boxes [... could] contain only straw and brickbats' (pp.453-4). Migson further demonstrates his rationality by writing to a 'retired detective officer' to see if persons matching the de Fontenoys' description were known (p.454). The introduction of a 'sharp' detective through the invitation of the amateur fits the pattern of Braddon's crime oeuvre, again demonstrating the reliance the amateur has on the professional (p.458); the power balance between the two detectives is similarly matched. Without waiting for an answer from the detective, Migson confronts Mr. de Fontenoy, revealing his rash and emotional response to the crime that the professional detective rejects. Mr. de Fontenoy takes offence and leaves the town, paying his bills before exiting on the train; the developing railway network allows the criminal to escape easily before the detective arrives. On his arrival, the detective explains that the description Migson sent is of a 'coiner[... called] Slippery Joseph' (p.459). The money he paid his debts with was forged and the detective follows on the train; he uses the same technology as the criminals, but to greater effect because he brings them to justice. Once again, the amateur detective discovers the problem, but he does not logically think through all of the possible scenarios, like Isabel, while the professional rationally evaluates the situation, bringing the criminals to justice.

'In the Nick of Time' (1898) presents an unusual pairing of a female amateur detective, Mary Sedgwick, and a male professional detective, John Faunce, who helps solve

the case from another continent. This tale engages with the continually changing position of women detectives within crime fiction, as well as emerging serial detective fiction. Mary is the governess of Marjory, a wealthy heiress, who is marrying Trafford Conyers. Conyers repeats the surname of *Aurora Floyd's* villain, hinting through inter-textuality at his possibly deceptive nature, which is confirmed when he 'indicated his admiration [to Mary] in a very offensive manner' (Braddon, 1898: 3). Contrasting with Isabel, Mary is outgoing, intelligent and strong willed: she threatens to "unmask [Conyers as] a villain" (p.4). Mary directly challenges Conyers, who is both male and of a higher social rank, thus Braddon simultaneously exposes the precarious social position of lower class women, while also conforming to stereotypes of nineteenth-century woman detectives as unnatural and masculine, despite her remaining within the domestic sphere. This is strengthened by Mary being a governess and thus a 'surplus' woman of society; she is plain, over thirty and so is (usually) invisible to men and society; she is in an ideal situation to spy on others without being seen herself.

During a general discussion of "clever people" (p.5), Mary names a "private detective [... a] Mr. Faunce" (p.5), to whom she appeals for help. This seemingly random remembrance of a professional detective could be seen as coincidence, but '[t]he mystery-monger is entitled to one coincidence, not more. Miss Braddon seldom exceeds her allowance' (Bennett, 1901: 31). Braddon knows the subgenre's constraints and what her readership expects, so does not test their patience; the condensed form means the pace is faster, allowing for seemingly improbable occurrences. Significantly, Beller notes that: '[d]uring the 1890s, when detective fiction had become a distinct and immensely popular form in its own right, Braddon made successful contributions to the subgenre, perhaps most notably with ... her police detective John Faunce' (Beller, 2012: 8). Faunce is also

portrayed in Braddon's novels *Rough Justice* (1898) and *His Darling Sin* (1899), her intertextuality demonstrating her engaging with the development of serial crime fiction, such as the Sherlock Holmes stories. *Rough Justice* was published the same year as this story, but because this tale was published in a Christmas annual, readers would have already been familiar with him. Faunce, in *His Darling Sin*, is described as: 'a serious-looking, middle-aged man, of medium height and strong frame ... There was a pleasant shrewdness in his countenance, and his manner was easy without being familiar' (Braddon, 2005: 85-6); Faunce is friendly, yet detached, another key skill for a detective because he gains people's trust without forcing the connection.

Mary writes Faunce a 'document of which the most accomplished detective need not have been ashamed, so clear, succinct, and to the point' (p.6); despite her emotional investment, Mary has a logical and matter-of-fact approach which aids her instincts and relates her abilities to Faunce's. Karen Tatum argues that in *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Aurora Floyd*, 'detection is the device by which the males establish their masculine identity as separate from the feminine body' (Tatum, 2005: 110); however, in this tale, Faunce and Mary are brought together through Mary's unnatural and masculine characteristics. Over thirty years on, Braddon is valorising Mary through her similarities with the professional detective, meaning the competent woman detective is to be celebrated, not ridiculed or condemned. Faunce confirms this in his written reply, which verifies Mary's fears:

[y]our instinct did not deceive you. I have little doubt that the subject of your letter is a consummate scoundrel [I can send] documentary evidence [that proves so. The case is] so bad I cannot give you the details [other than to say] Conyers was suspected of poisoning [a young girl]. (p.6)

The detective's reference to Mary's 'instinct' prefigures the opening quotation of this chapter by demonstrating that female intuition makes women natural and effective 'criminal investigators' (Braddon, 1910: 185). Braddon has altered her point of view about amateur women detectives, but as Glenwood Irons notes: '[t]he male detective operates outside society's conventions because that is what male heroes do; the woman detective should not be a detective *because* she operates outside society's conventions, and that is not what female heroes do' (Irons, 1995: xii). Braddon conformed to this ideology in the 1860s, which is why Isabel failed in her detection, but by the 1890s Victorian society had changed its position on the woman detective allowing Braddon to give Mary mental strength and courage.

The 'documentary evidence' arrives from Faunce, providing material to condemn the villain, but before Mary presents it, Conyers traps her 'between stone walls' (p.9), caging her in like a defenceless animal whilst 'holding her by the shoulders, so that she was powerless in his grasp' (p.10); it is the physical difference between them that distinguishes their positions, intellectually they are on the same ground. Despite being situated in the traditional submissive and vulnerable position, Mary threatens: "I will tear the mask off your wicked face" (p.10).² Conyers responds to Mary's retort by placing 'his hand upon her mouth in an instant, pressing the breath out of her lips' and so (p.10), as in 'The Mystery of Fernwood', the amateur female detective is condemned for breaching the boundaries of her lower-middle-class situation and the traditional feminine role of submission. Nevertheless, Mary is saved by a group of tourists and returns to the domestic

² The continual references to unmasking echo the illustration of Braddon unmasking herself from behind her sensation fiction in Figure 6: 'Punch's Fancy Portraits'. Once again Braddon and her sensation fiction fame are associated with, if not direct criminality, a crime against middle-class social mores. Nevertheless, under Braddon's mask is a (now) socially constructed respectable Victorian woman, while under Conyers's mask is a criminal; just as Braddon exposed in her theatrical short fiction, everyone wears a mask, but it is a person's actions that they should be judged on rather than their façade.

sphere where she exposes Conyers. However, her amateur status means he is able to escape to Australia, avoiding punishment; she does not have the authority to arrest him. Thus, 'In the Nick of Time' confirms the main contrasts between amateur and professional detectives in Braddon's crime short fiction – amateur detectives have personal investments in the crimes, while professional detectives are outsiders, invited to solve the case, and it is their official status that means criminals are apprehended – while also demonstrating Braddon's uncertain position on the woman detective and her place in society.

Reader as Detective

The detective layering in 'The Mystery of Fernwood' and the direct questions to the reader in 'Mr. and Mrs. de Fontenoy' signal how Braddon places the reader in the position of the detective within her crime fiction. As Martin Priestman summarises, crime fiction's most salient feature is its emphasis on a sole central 'detective-hero' (Priestman, 2003: 4), so the reader as detective is most prominent in tales where crimes occur and there is *no professional or amateur detective* to solve the case; the reader as an extra-textual being is fully utilised, indicating Braddon's unique contribution to the subgenre. This causes a problem in classification because 'it is difficult to place most crime stories [under the title of crime, mystery or detective fiction] because so few of them involve any real mystery: whoever "dunit" is never in question' (Rzepka, 2010: 2). Braddon adopts this open approach in 'The Sins of the Fathers' (1870) because the murderer is known from the start, so no detective figure is needed to solve the case, while in 'Wild Justice' (1896) the reader is left guessing who the murderer is, complicating the reader's role as detective because there is no proof that the mystery is solved correctly. As Beller notes, another 'staple[...] of

the genre [is] the summing-up of the crime and revelation of the solution before the other suspects in the case' (Beller, 2012: 53), but in this tale there is no summary and so the reader is left in doubt.

'The Sins of the Fathers' (1870) details the marriage between Lord Deverill and Alice. The omniscient narrator notes: '[Deverill] scarcely knew what it was that he loved in her; he only knew that he did love her with a passion against which reason pleaded in vain' (Braddon, 1870: 487), signalling that reason and emotion are two opposing forces for Deverill, who 'could not bring himself to believe in his wife's love for him' (p.493). Deverill's doubts originate from within, rather than being tempered by Alice's own thoughts or actions: he looked at her 'with that subdued fondness which marked all his intercourse with the wife he loved so well' (p.492). His own uncertainty and self-doubt are contrasted by Alice who loves him "'[w]ith all [her] heart'" (p.488). Alice is presented as a dutiful wife, upholding Victorian gender ideology of the 'angel in the house', even though the tale is set back in time. When Deverill brings Alice back to his court, she shies away from public view, preferring to remain indoors, and favours her husband's company above all others. Nevertheless, it is precisely Alice's submissive countenance that makes Deverill query her love for him, prompting the reader to question whether the innocent exterior hides a vixen, or if Deverill's paranoia is unjustified.

After returning early from business, Deverill monitors Alice through 'an ill-made door, with cracks wide enough to enable a spy to see all that was taking place within the chamber' (p.498). Alice is playing music to a man in 'a priest's dress' and despite his instant jealousy (p.498), he logically deduces that the priest's attire is 'a disguise, of course' (p.498). Braddon utilises the love triangle structure she favoured in her theatrical short fiction, demonstrating that marriage difficulties feature in all subgenres, because they are

universally understood. Deverill assumes his wife has taken a lover – his irrational emotions overrule his reason – while the reader questions the situation from an outsider’s perspective. The omniscient narrator establishes this third person point of view – the reader watches Deverill as he watches Alice – while also providing an insight into Deverill’s thoughts: ‘Should he spring out upon him and slay [the priest] as he stood there? No; he must needs have a darker vengeance than that’ (p.499). By becoming a ‘spy’ rather than a detective, Deverill does not follow the professional’s logical course of action: asking Alice about her relationship with the man. Instead, despite his overwrought feelings, his cool reasoning allows him to plot their murders; the distance created between himself and Alice is extended to a detachment between the reader and Deverill as he contemplates his plans.

Deverill’s lack of objectivity in evaluating the evidence, as the reader does, or indeed questioning his wife directly, means he instead relies unequivocally on his sight. However, instead of proving to be infallible, as Smajić argues earlier, the unreliability of his sight ultimately brings about the destruction of Alice and his own happiness. After murdering them both, Deverill stages a robbery to transform his impassioned crime of meditated intent into an impersonal crime of opportunity. He hides from the characters what he cannot hide from the reader: his sense of anger, betrayal and guilt. Only after his escape does he read a letter from his wife’s father revealing that the ‘priest’ was his wife’s half-brother. The criminal learns what the reader has inferred from the beginning: appearances can be deceiving. As in Braddon’s other short fiction, the secret centres on family relations – the title of the story states outright the main theme behind the majority of her fiction – but the mystery is revealed only after the daughter has died. This murder is left unresolved for the characters, but not the reader, until Deverill confesses ten years later; even though the reader as detective solves the mystery, the crime cannot go unpunished for

Braddon who upholds nineteenth-century social ideology on criminality, so the murderer is brought to justice by his own sense of guilt.

Another tale where the reader acts as a detective is 'Wild Justice' (1896). No official detective solves this case, indeed, the case is not officially solved; the reader infers from what is said, what actually happened and why. Each chapter title is headed like a play – 'SCENE I: THE INN YARD', 'SCENE II: THE BAR-PARLOUR' (Braddon, 1896 [2000]: 133, 137) – thus, the story progresses like an unfolding drama. Braddon once again mixes genres, demonstrating detection is like reading, or more specifically watching, developing fiction; the emphasis is on sight and visual evidence. Braddon establishes the mystery in the first scene: a carriage is drenched with blood. The previous night, a gentleman had taken the carriage from the station to Miss Hillborough's ball. He returned three hours later with a second man and they were both driven to a nearby village, the second man giving directions. The carriage driver, Dorks, 'thought they were having high words inside' and along a deserted road the first man asked to stop (p.135). He got out, stating: "'I'm a going to walk with my friend'" (p.136), but Dorks "'never laid eyes on [the second gentleman] from the time he got into the carriage'" (p.136). With this basic overview of the mystery established, the reader becomes the detective, deducing who the second gentleman was, what happened to him and why they had a disagreement. Braddon includes the use of '[t]he local policeman [who] came, and scrutinised and listened, and asked questions. He tried to look wise, but could make nothing of it, inclined to think it a case of nose bleeding' (p.136). Braddon deliberately employs an inept policeman and a ridiculous solution in order for readers to fulfil the detective role and solve the mystery on their own. The first thing the reader infers is that the second man knew the area well (he gave directions), while the first man was a stranger to the place (he arrived on the train).

In the next scene, a servant from the vicarage notes that the vicar's nephew, Harold, did not return from the ball. Instead a telegram was received the next day stating that he left directly for London. The servant's idle gossip acts as a clue to the discerning reader about the possible identity of the second man. The servant further reveals Harold had broken the heart of a Miss Heron, who was the governess at the vicarage, while her father lived 'on the other side of the world' (p.140). The omniscient narrator then turns to the vicarage; the tale focusing on Harold's life and movements, implying he is a key element to the unravelling mystery. Harold's aunt complains that his letters are being returned unopened, but the vicar 'ha[d] long ago summed up his nephew's character and conduct as erratic' and so his non-appearance was not out of the ordinary (p.141). Again, no amateur detection is undertaken by Harold's family, allowing the reader to fulfil this role, while the narrator provides more evidence: 'the fact that [Harold] had not sent for his luggage awakened no unpleasant suspicions' (p.141). The narrator answers potential questions the reader may have about the practical aspects of Harold's journey, which the characters have not the insight to question.

In the final scene, the vicar's wife visits Miss Hillborough who notes an uninvited guest arrived at her ball looking for Harold: "'somebody from Australia ... I forget the person's name ... I am told they left together'" (p.142). For the trained reader of crime fiction, 'Australia' signals vital evidence – the father of the slighted Miss Heron came from 'the other side of the world' (p.140) – suggesting a possible connection and motive for Harold's disappearance. The vicar concludes that Harold 'had for some sufficient reason chosen to abandon his friends and country' and gone to Australia (p.143); there is no quest to find him. Nevertheless, the narrator again asks the question the reader is thinking, or deliberately plants the idea if the reader has not considered the option: '[a]nd the ghastly witness of the carriage? A quarrel, a scuffle – an accident of no importance, perhaps'

(p.143). The significant ‘perhaps’ modifies the statement, questioning the plausibility of the remark, aligning the narrator’s doubts with the reader’s.

The epilogue provides a seemingly unimportant thank you letter from ‘James Heron, Brisbane’ to her guardians (p.143). The letter states:

I found my daughter – alone – in a London lodging, broken-hearted, a life spoiled, a name blighted ... she would have been ... happy ... if it had not been for-

Perhaps you guess the rest, which I can’t write.

... The man who broke her heart will break no more hearts. (pp.143-4)

The letter has no reply but the significant ‘[p]erhaps you guess the rest’ directly relates to the reader’s situation; all the reader can do is ‘guess’ for themselves what has happened to Harold and why. ‘Brisbane’ suggests that Miss Heron’s father is the first man, so what happened in the carriage is left to the reader’s imagination, as is how Dorcas did not see Harold leave the carriage and where he is now. According to Beller, the subgenre’s clarification of criminal activity means that the ‘detective novel is often perceived to be a conservative genre’ (Beller, 2008: 50), but Braddon, as an author who defies conventions and reader expectations, signals that even crime fiction’s desire to impose order onto chaos, can be disrupted. With ‘Wild Justice’ Braddon defies the subgenre’s traditions of having a professional or amateur detective figure and a scene in which the solution to the crime is overtly stated. By situating the reader as the detective who must infer what has happened, Braddon expands her notion of crime fiction to include all tales where the mystery is not only not clearly defined, but also not officially resolved; thus she challenges the definition of the subgenre. This links her fictional crime to real life detection because

not all mysteries are solved; the police are not the all-seeing fact bringers they are perceived to be, and real life crime is not always neatly concluded.

Heather Worthington presents another perspective on the difficulty of defining crime fiction: '[i]n the absence of crime *per se*, that is, no murder, fraud, or forgery, it is not possible to call in the police and, in matters domestic and personal pertaining to the middle-class domestic sphere, the presence of the police is unwanted' (Worthington, 2005: 96). Thus 'crime fiction' can encompass non-crime or non-detective tales within its overarching bracket. Braddon engages with this lack of detection in 'Stapylton's Plot' (1887) when Stapylton finds a woman about to commit suicide. He has been dreaming of writing a novel where he saves a woman in distress and so when she arrives in his life he believes he has created her from his imagination. He safely removes her to his home, only to discover in the morning that she has thrown herself out of the window. A crime has been committed, but no detective is required because there is no mystery as to how she died. The tale ends just as the detective would enter the narrative and thus, for Stapylton, and the reader, the true mystery – who she was and her reasons for committing suicide – is never solved; the tale avoids the concluding resolution traditional to crime fiction. Thus, within Braddon's oeuvre, the definition of 'crime fiction' is challenged by transforming the subgenre into a form of crime/domestic/adventure fiction through readers becoming detectives and drawing their own conclusions from the evidence presented.

Mental Instability

Mental instability from 'The Mystery of Fernwood' returns in much of Braddon's post-1890s fiction, confirming her interest in medical developments in this period as originally

outlined in Chapter Two. For instance, ‘The Dulminster Dynamiter’ (1893) considers a Dean’s mental disorder as he attempts to blow-up his own cathedral. The four chapter titles structure how detective fiction is traditionally solved: the first two chapters position the suspect, ‘THE DEAN’, and ‘THE DETECTIVE’ against each other, while the last two chapters indicate the process of detection: ‘THE MYSTERY’ and ‘THE SOLUTION’ (Braddon, 1893: 469, 471, 477, 480). Braddon states how the action will develop, signalling that the norms of society will be reinstated by the end of the narrative. The reader is informed that Dean Redford of Dulminster Cathedral is restoring the crypt, while he and his daughter live sparsely to accommodate his desires. One night, ‘a burning fuse had been found – an infernal machine [a dynamite bomb] had been discovered’ and Sergeant Toome from Scotland Yard is summoned to uncover the details (p.471). Despite his hired help status, the detective ‘descended’ into the Dean’s home to interrogate the household (p.472); he arrives as if from a superior position and as an outsider situates himself above the community. He has a ‘quiet overbearingness’, ‘shrewd eyes’, and an ‘active brain’ that give him an ‘impression of power and will’, as well as being ‘robust’ (pp.472-3); these are standard nineteenth century features for a detective, so Braddon capitalises on stock characteristics. The verger, having discovered and dismantled the bomb, is interviewed first, stating he heard a moaning coming from the crypt and he saw the “glimmer of a lighted fuse lying on the ground” (p.473). On opening the locked door – only he, the Dean and the Archdeacon have a key – a man pushed past him and escaped. Sgt. Toome is direct in his questions and keeps the verger on point – “[i]nteresting from a medical point of view! But we’re not getting forwarder” (p.473) – he is interested only in verifiable facts and can direct the witness when needed without leading him.

On meeting the Dean's daughter, '[t]he detective took in everything at a glance' (p.476): he notes 'how unluxurious an afternoon tea was prepared' for her because the Dean spends his income on the cathedral (p.475). His sharp eye and logical thinking, however, mean he discerns that '[t]here was nothing of grumbling or regretfulness in her tone' (p.476), discounting her as a suspect. The narrator's assertive statements mean that the detective's deductions are stated as facts and are, thus, not questioned by the reader. Continuing his investigation, Sgt. Toome meets the Dean, the Bishop and the Archdeacon, but he removes himself by remaining aloof throughout the situation while the Archdeacon asks the questions. Sgt. Toome observes without speaking; he is an omniscient viewer of the developing action, much like the reader. Furthermore, by listening to the characters without imposing his own thoughts the detective acts like a pseudo-psychiatrist, evaluating everyone's mental state until he provides the final 'cure' for the mystery (Cope unpublished thesis: n.p). In the interview, the Dean is preoccupied with his own thoughts but does mention that one man has been visiting the cathedral often. He is "“reverent and well-behaved ... but either he is dumb, or he pretended to be, dumb”" (pp.478-9). A disabled character introduces a disenfranchised member of society; his guilt presupposed by his stigmatised status, like Mr. Thomas from 'The Mysteries of Fernwood'. Nevertheless, avid readers of Braddon's fiction would be aware that she usually champions marginalised figures – for instance, the disabled detective Joseph Peters – and so he could possibly be a red-herring. Sgt. Toome makes no comment in this interview, but 'the Dean was more than usually sensitive, and he writhed under the Archdeacon's attack' (p.479); the Dean's unnatural, almost effeminate, behaviour signals his guilt for the detective and the perceptive reader.

In 'THE SOLUTION', Sgt. Toome visits the Archdeacon stating he has uncovered the "monomaniac" who tried to blow up the cathedral (p.480): the dumb man had been drawing the building and had been locked in the crypt accidentally by the bomber, Dean Redford. The disabled character is declared "as sensible as they make 'em" by the detective (pp.480-1); Braddon defies nineteenth-century ideology by presenting the handicapped person as sane, while the socially acceptable Dean is described as a "lunatic" (p.480). In another reversal of conventions the Archdeacon calls the detective "mad" for suggesting the Dean is insane (p.481); this flippant comment emphasises the supposedly absurd solution to the mystery, whilst also implying that the characters', and the reader's, faith in the detective as an all-seeing upholder of fact should be questioned because the detective is not subject to the same scrutiny as his suspects. Braddon had previously explored monomania with Robert's unceasing desire to prove Lady Audley's guilt (Braddon, 1862 [1998]: 284), but her engagement with medical advances in this text demonstrates how the Dean's fixation on caring for his cathedral masks his repressed desire to abolish it. The Dean's daughter is now of marriageable age – suggesting he may become unimportant in her life – and his fear manifests itself into destroying the one object that could not leave him: the cathedral. Notably, as a final solution, it is the Archdeacon, not the detective, who decides to "let the matter drop" (p.482); the Dean and his daughter travel the Continent until he dies. The Archdeacon masks the incident to protect the Dean, and the church, maintaining the Victorian façade. Thus, instead of restoring order by confirming society's expectations that the criminal must be punished, Braddon's disapproval is sensed through her challenging of society's conventions: she exposes how the wealthy hide their indiscretions, while the disenfranchised are marginalised and scapegoated where necessary.

'Sweet Simplicity' (1894) addresses another form of mental instability; a young nurse is driven mad by her monotonous existence. Phoebe is hired to look after a baby born to Colonel Alderson, and she performs her duties effectively for six months, after which time the child is discovered dead at the bottom of a cliff after being taken for a walk. Also present was Roger, Colonel Alderson's nephew, who was the heir until the baby was born. The ensuing inquest provides opposing testimonies from Roger and Phoebe: Phoebe states Roger arrived while she was out walking the child, and on being requested to collect letters from the house she left them, only to discover on her return that the child was dead. Roger states that this is a "damnable lie" and that he had warned Phoebe of the dangers of the grass that led down to the edge of the cliff (Braddon, 1894 [2000]: 76), but he then left the two of them playing together. The stereotypical beautiful young woman and the disreputable young man are opposed to each other, much like Robert and Lady Audley, and it is around this dichotomy that the ensuing investigation revolves.

Mr. Lowstoff (the lawyer) turns amateur detective and investigates the character of Phoebe, which was not verified before she took the position. He visits her mother who states Phoebe is: "a difficult subject ... specious ... crafty [and] impossible to manage" (p.79); once again, behind a beautiful mask lies deception. To reveal the facts, Phoebe is interviewed by Alderson, and she 'stood in the middle of the room waiting to be spoken to, while [a servant] stood like a sentinel by the door' (p.81); she is physically caged in the room, centred in everyone's view, focused as the suspect. When confronted with an accusation she cries:

"It was just one little push – only a touch – and the cart ran down the grass, and he was gone. I couldn't have saved him if I'd tried ... Whoever it was that saw me could see how quick it was done." (p.81)

Phoebe, notably the name of Lady Audley's calculating maid, only confesses because she believes someone has seen her, rather than out of her own sense of remorse. The significant 'if' in her confession demonstrates her lack of maternal instinct to save the baby and that she remains unrepentant; she is a demonized, unnatural woman who rejects her feminine role. This presentation is confirmed by her motives for killing the child: she found nursing "dull" because she "never liked children" (p.81). Phoebe kills him to escape the monotony of her life, rather than for any advance, differentiating her from Lady Audley. This motivation reveals, what is for Braddon, a serious problem with Victorian society: what are lower-middle-class women to do if they do not fulfil the nurse/governess/actress roles and have no future marriage prospects? In returning to this issue over thirty years after she first addressed it in *Lady Audley's Secret*, Braddon demonstrates female disenfranchisement is still topical. Women were still socially and psychologically forced into these roles, stripping them of their self-control and self-worth, forcing them to undertake seemingly rational yet drastic actions, which then label them as unnatural, criminals or hysterics.

At Phoebe's trial 'a great deal was said about hysteria by the young person's counsel' (p.82); 'hysteria' being an overall term for her 'fit of passion' (p.82) that classifies her as another 'mad woman figure'. Braddon's depiction of hysteria predates Breuer and Freud's *Studies in Hysteria* (1895), however, Phoebe's motives align with their theory that female hysteria arises from repressing one's natural instincts, specifically sexual desires. They note that 'sexuality, as the source of psychical traumas and as the motive for "defence", of the repression of ideas from the consciousness, plays a major role in the pathogenesis of hysteria' (Breuer and Freud, 1895 [2004]: 1). Thus, Braddon presents a new kind of pathology for Victorian female killers; Lady Audley abandons her family to

rise socially, gaining the respectable position in society that the Victorians strived for, while Phoebe kills her charge merely because she found him “dull”, possibly resulting from her own sexually frustrated situation (p.81).³ This tale would have been too shocking for the Victorian middle-class readership in the 1860s – despite such true life cases as the Road Hill house murders with Constance Kent occurring in 1861 – but by the 1890s the Victorian interest in crime fiction and the instances of violent true crime had escalated, meaning this type of tale was now commonplace. As a result of her confession, Phoebe is ‘doomed ... to pass the rest of her life in a reformatory, which she may find even duller than the Cliff’ (p.82). The second part to this sentence complicates the meaning, because the ironic tone suggests Phoebe was an unfulfilled woman felt trapped in her situation, so Braddon challenges society’s conventions by seemingly adhering to them: the unnatural woman is institutionalised to protect society from her unruly actions, although the imprisonment ultimately increases her isolated situation without offering any productive support for rehabilitation.

Scientific Advances

Relating to the theme of mental instability, another topic that Braddon engages with is scientific advances. ‘Dr. Carrick’ (1878) explores mesmerism and chloroform and how these scientific advances impact on the individual. The title character sets up a medical practice and hires Hester as his house-keeper. As Heather Worthington notes: ‘in the Victorian age, with its tendency to idealism and hero-worship, the figure of the physician

³ After almost four decades of reading detective fiction, Braddon’s readers would be used to relying on their own intuition, especially because Braddon repeatedly places the reader as detective, to solve the mystery. Thus, another conclusion that the reader may deduce is that Phoebe is in league with Roger, kills the baby in order to fulfil her sexual desires, and is now covering for him, although this possibility is not alluded to.

was treated reverently in fictions and essays' (Worthington, 2005: 51); Carrick would be considered a respectable member of society. Carrick's patient, Eustace Tregonnell, describes his trouble sleeping and that "[m]adness ... has appeared more than once in my family. My grandfather died mad. Sometimes I fancy that I can feel it coming on" (Braddon, 1878: 4). Eustace's reference to hereditary male madness underscores the text's mystery because it confuses the motives for his later actions. Carrick recommends "[m]esmerism" as a cure (p.5) – named after Franz Anton Mesmer, mesmerism was the eighteenth-century practice of hypnotising a person so their actions could be controlled – so Eustace resides at Carrick's house for the treatment, which improves his sleeping habit and confirms his belief in 'the power of animal magnetism' (p.6). This positive account defies the association of mesmerism with 'fakery, villainy and corruption' because the remedy works to heal the patient (Willis and Wynne, 2006: 9).

However, Eustace's valet, David, becomes suspicious when the local shop-keeper informs him she had been warned by Carrick not to sell Eustace "chloroform" (p.8). David 'ruminates upon this disclosure', concluding that Carrick 'was treating [Eustace] like a lunatic' (p.8). His masculine logic deciphers the hidden meaning behind the doctor's actions; Carrick hints that Eustace may kill himself using chloroform. Independently of David's concerns, Hester witnesses Eustace executing his will, leaving the doctor a generous payment for his services. Hester becomes suspicious because Eustace is not normally "very business-like in his habits" (p.9), and so she confronts him about this incident. After he denies all knowledge, she reconsiders the event: '[i]t seemed to her as if Mr. Tragonnell, though to all appearance a free agent, had been acting under the influence of the doctor' (p.9); the two servants become amateur detectives, challenging Carrick's

patriarchal order by questioning the ‘appearance’ of the situation; they defy the traditional master/servant relationship.

Hester, though ‘a gentle creature[,] was a woman of strong will’ and she determines to ‘attack the subject boldly’ by questioning Carrick (p.10); she shows a “‘strength and clearness of mind’” that demonstrates her innate courage and conviction as an instinctive amateur female detective (p.13), unlike Isabel in ‘The Mystery of Fernwood’. *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* describes Hester as being ‘sketched with much life-like ease ... Her nature is indicated, in fact, with an accuracy and vigour that are worth all the detail of weaker writers’ (‘Literature’, 1878: 5). Braddon’s more assertive female amateur detective is a positive development in her crime fiction because she depicts female agency. Nevertheless, Braddon also describes Hester as being ‘endowed with unnatural strength’ (p.15), ‘unnatural’ signifying that her detective skills are unwomanly. Braddon is still questioning the contradictory nature of the ‘female detective’ and her place in nineteenth-century society.

After this confrontation, Hester hears footsteps and heavy breathing in a hidden stairwell that joins her bedroom with Eustace’s. On discovering David spying on Carrick and Eustace, David states: “‘It’s too much like witchcraft, the power he’s got over my master’” (p.12). Once again the association of detective with supernatural fiction – through the pseudo-scientific study of mesmerism and secret passageways – blurs the two subgenres and questions Victorian reliance on sight as an infallible marker of fact. Notably, David’s detective skills are gained from the public sphere, while Hester’s knowledge is obtained from literature: ‘she had read with deepest interest ... Lord Lytton’s “Strangest Story” [and] “The House and the Brain” [so] the doctrines of magnetic influence were not unknown to her’ (p.12). It is through their combined skills that they solve the mystery; the lower classes

revolt by asserting their collective force. They both watch Carrick mesmerise Eustace and attempt to suffocate him using chloroform in order to gain his financial recompense.⁴

Usually, ‘for the nineteenth century the release of the animal nature within, the night side, under mesmerism or in dreams, through drugs, delirium or madness, merely provided further fearful evidence of its ability to destroy rational and ordered life’ (Briggs, 1977: 21). This tale depicts the release of animal nature, not through the mesmerized figure, but through the controlling doctor; Carrick destroys ‘rational and ordered life’, which he should traditionally uphold. As in ‘The Dulminster Dynamiter’, it is the supposedly sane, socially acceptable character who is mad and challenges society. Nevertheless, what distinguishes Carrick is that he is not mad, he is ‘a man of genius whose life had been a failure’ (p.1). Carrick is sane but unsatisfied with his social position, resorting to fraud and misuse of scientific advances to achieve the social position he feels he deserves. As with ‘The Good Lady Ducayne’, Braddon explores what happens when the people who are supposed to protect us fail and become the oppressors; the basis of nineteenth-century society breaks down and it is up to the individual, like the detective, to restore order.

When evaluating Braddon’s fiction, E. A. Bennett writes that: ‘[s]he can take the morning paper and render it back again to the man in the street exquisitely transformed into something more agreeable, more gracious, and less disturbing’ (Bennett, 1901: 31). This first part is certainly true for ‘George Caulfield’s Journey’ (1879), which is, according to a review in *The Star*, ‘a grim and thrilling tale, founded on fact, and bearing the graphic power of Miss Braddon’s best work’ (‘Literary Notices’, 1879: 4). The true life event on

⁴ In ‘Poor Uncle Jacob’ (1896) Braddon again engages with poison as a means to gain an inheritance. When a rich estate owner becomes ill, his niece, Sophia, employs a nurse to look after him. The nurse acts as protector, but she also screens for unwanted attention, providing another example of a trusted member of society taking advantage of their position. The old man is poisoned, but over an extended period so the murder is concealed. When the lawyer reads the will he realises it has been tampered with, consequently the estate is put into probate.

which this tale appears to be based remains undiscovered; however, Bennett suggests that Braddon's fiction is less sensational than true crime and, therefore, her contribution to crime fiction is her ability to render crime more 'agreeable', 'gracious' and 'less disturbing' than the reality. I would counter this argument by noting that 'George Caulfield's Journey' extends the medical abuse of chloroform in 'Dr. Carrick' by depicting the successful murder of a young woman on a train, in a tale that is both shocking and disturbing. Braddon's contribution to crime fiction is thus her ability to 'take the morning paper and render it back again to the man in the street, [not] exquisitely transformed into something more agreeable, more gracious, and less disturbing' (Bennett, 1901: 31), but more challenging because she blurs subgenres and intentionally breaks down the barriers between sight and instinct, broadsides and novels, reality and fantasy, fact and fiction.

George is left to look after an invalid female on the train by her brother. He is given the man's business card and a bottle of laudanum in case she faints, but when they arrive at the station, she is dead. As he awaits her friends' arrival, George alerts the guard and a 'police-constable appeared as if by magic, and planted himself at [George's] side' (Braddon, 1879 [1884]: 138). By arriving 'as if by magic', the police are presented as having an innate sense of danger, always knowing when they are needed and being part of the scenery, as in Dickens's 'Sketches of London' (1834-5). Her friends do not arrive, the doctor pronounces that 'this poor creature has died from the effects of a narcotic poison' (p.138), and the police constable takes George into custody by 'laying an authoritative hand upon him' (p.139). In her first novel *The Trail of the Serpent*, Braddon 'wrote convincingly of police procedures' when detailing the deductive reasoning of Joseph Peters (Sussex, 2010: 87). This novel was aimed at the lower classes and '[f]or this audience, the police were unproblematic, and could be valorized [sic] as heroic. In Braddon's later works,

written when she was termed “Queen of the Circulating Libraries” with their middle-class clients, more typical anxieties are expressed about the police’ (p.88). Sussex does not elaborate on ‘typical anxieties’, but in this tale – the first short story which specifically details the work of the police force – Braddon demonstrates one example: the apprehension of an innocent person. The policeman’s ‘authoritative hand’ denotes his overruling position of influence, as well as his power over the general public, thus, ‘George Caulfield’s Journey’ shows Braddon engaging with the modern developments of detective fiction and the wider cultural impact of the law.

While in jail, George asks his fellow clergyman, Mr. Leworthy, for aid. Leworthy ‘was possibly the first clerical detective’ and he ‘locates the real murderer with ease’ (Sussex, 2010: 99). As a clergyman, Leworthy’s skills in distinguishing good from evil and right from wrong make him a perfect candidate for an amateur detective, and G. K. Chesterton later uses this type of detective in his character Father Brown. Leworthy rationally goes through the evidence: ‘[t]he first thing to be done is to have inquiries made among the cabmen and cab proprietors. The police will do all that’ (p.142). Leworthy’s knowledge of police procedure means he can follow other leads, expanding the investigation in a different direction, working alongside the police. Leworthy’s investigation discovers the ‘brother’ of the woman who died is Mr. Foy, and that in order to marry his employer’s daughter, he kills his wife, who is masquerading as his sister. For Leworthy the fact that ‘[Foy] seemed perfectly at ease [at their meeting] did not surprise [him]. To a creature of this kind dissimulation is second nature’ (p.150). The words ‘creature’ and ‘second nature’ dehumanise the villain, further separating him from the detective.

With this information, Leworthy visits the police to relate his discoveries. The police ‘had been at work all day, and had done very little’ (p.159), but once they are given Leworthy’s information they “‘contrived to bring matters to a focus ... They got hold of a half-a-dozen photographs of this Mr. Foy [and] [p]rovided with these they went the round of the chemists’ shops and found where my gentleman had bought poison”” (p.165). The sheer number of police allows them to cover a vast amount of space quickly, while the detective has limited resources. It is this advantage that produces the vital evidence which clears George of murder. The use of photographic terminology – ‘bring matters into a focus’ – again demonstrates Braddon engaging with scientific advances of the age:

photography ... is able to bring out aspects of the original that can be accessed only by the lens (adjustable and selecting its viewpoint arbitrarily) and not by the human eye, or it is able to employ such techniques as enlargement or slow motion to capture images that are quite simply beyond natural optics. (Benjamin, 1934 [2008]: 6)

Capturing an image that escapes natural vision links photography to the process of detection: the photographer/detective starts with an unclear negative/idea of the case, and slowly, as chemical/evidence is introduced, the image/case becomes clearer/focused until the light/fact is evident. Or, as Ronald R. Thomas phrases it: ‘in the eyes of the gifted literary detective – as if through the telescopic lens of a camera – neither the “truth itself” nor the guilty culprit could escape, and the true nature of things was recaptured and re-presented to the reader for more careful and accurate scrutiny’ (Thomas, 1999: 112).⁵ The use of photographic forensic science to identify the suspect, as well as a post-mortem

⁵ Braddon expands on this in *His Darling Sin* (1899) where detective John Faunce’s ‘investigation centres upon a series of cabinet photographs of Lady Perivale, Kate Dalmaine and Colonel Rannock ... through which the detective identifies doubles (Pervale and Dalmaine) as well as corpses (Rannock), in order to juxtapose the codes of truth with those of falsity and deceit’ (Tomaiuolo, 2010: 127).

proving the woman died from a prolonged exposure to arsenic poisoning, rather than one overdose of laudanum, demonstrate that technological advances are vital in improving detective skills and bringing about justice: Foy ‘was tried for wilful murder, found guilty, and hanged’ (p.166), while the possession of his picture by the police extends their incarceration of his physical self. Braddon’s depiction of scientific advances demonstrates that the horrific nature of crimes committed has increased, and the police need to stay alert to these advances to capture criminals.

Conclusion

‘Miss Braddon is human; she represents the best aspect of average humanity – that “ultimate decency” which resides somewhere in everyone. It is this quality which is the deepest root of her success’ (Bennett, 1901: 33). E. A. Bennett’s comment on Braddon supports the argument that she depicts within her short fiction, ideas, themes and issues that relate directly to her ‘average’ middle-class readership. Issues such as a woman’s place in the home and a person’s multiple selves continually surface as key themes, demonstrating that they were particularly relevant to her time, her readership and herself. Nevertheless, in her crime fiction she also depicts identity swapping, adultery, forgery and murder, indicating she also examined ‘the [worst] aspect of average humanity’. Braddon understood people, their characteristics, wants and needs, and more importantly, recognized this is what her readership desired and so she also depicts this ‘ultimate [in]decency’ in profusion.

Despite this portrayal of human indecency, her crime fiction once again proves she is a modern writer; she engages not just with scientific and psychological advances, but with the ‘science of the detective officer’ as Robert Audley terms it (Braddon, 1862 [1998]:

123), serialised detectives and the woman detective, as well as challenging and reshaping the form of the newly emerging subgenre of crime fiction through her engagement with the reader as detective. In particular, Braddon uses her crime fiction to address the era's social concerns, such as the gender division. She reveals that women, as well as men, are not only suited to solving crimes, but because of their domestic situations may be in a better position to understand individual relationships and how societal pressures are affecting them. However, she is also careful to valorise professional detectives by depicting them as more successful than amateurs because they have been trained to see what others cannot: the facts hidden behind the mystery. Braddon represents the corruption of society through her representation of many differing crimes (murder, adultery, fraud and forgery), indicating her wide-ranging approach to crime fiction, and how lower-middle-class professionals – those people who are supposed to protect society – can take advantage of people for their own gain. She challenges middle-class values by demonstrating that not everyone has “ultimate decency” (Bennett, 1901: 33); the people who are meant to protect us can be the people who hurt us, and she strengthens this argument in her domestic short fiction.

CHAPTER FOUR

BRADDON'S DOMESTIC SHORT FICTION

[N]arratives which seemed to be concerned solely with matters of courtship and marriage in fact seized the authority to say what was female ... the female was the figure, above all else, on whom depended the outcome of the struggle among competing ideologies. (Armstrong, 1987: 5)

Nineteenth-century domestic fiction was written by, for and about women and epitomised by writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, Margaret Oliphant and Charlotte Yonge. If domestic fiction 'seized the authority to say what was female', then women used this subgenre to define themselves, as well as their domain: the household. Usually, domestic fiction centres on a middle or upper-middle-class female protagonist in the home and considers the moral, societal and familial influences that affect her situation. Therefore, any topic from parental relationships, sibling rivalry, love-affairs, engagements and childbearing, to religious and financial troubles, deceptions, infidelity, illness and death, all fall under the category of 'domestic fiction'. With such a wide ranging variety of topics, domestic fiction is, overall, a loosely defined and diverse subgenre. It is easy to see how its own open-endedness invited Braddon to present what seemed like 'safe' reading for Victorian women, but actually allowed her to explore several 'unsafe' subjects, on which she inevitably focused. Domestic fiction does have some overarching features that generally hold the subgenre together. With an emphasis on introspection, subtlety and sentimentalism, domestic fiction's slow-paced nature follows a woman's journey into the marriage market, where such threats as a love entanglement, a rejection of domestic duties, a death in the family or a harmless lie that is blown out of proportion, lead to a didactic moral and educational lesson that reflects the era's 'conduct-book ideal of womanhood'

(p.252). This brief synopsis is the generic overview of each of Braddon's short stories in this chapter, while the specific themes her domestic short fiction examines are relationships that come under strain through the impact of family and friends, rejected or new lovers and economic hardships, each of which constitutes a subsection of this chapter.

Armstrong's argument that women defined the 'outcome ... of competing ideologies' suggests that through domestic fiction women writers were able to (re)define their own situations, either by commenting on a woman's restricted social sphere or by supporting a woman's place in the home. As Natalie and Ronald Schroeder note, Braddon's novels demonstrate she was alert to:

the social transformations and ideological disputes swirling in mid-Victorian culture, for marital unhappiness and instability, spousal dissatisfaction, separation and divorce are the recurrent themes in her fiction's discussion of marriage. (Schroeder & Schroeder, 2006: 15)

Braddon's domestic fiction, therefore, plays a vital role in the discussion of a woman's position in the 'competing ideologies' of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, her domestic short fiction merges these two opposing ideologies; she does not present an overtly feminist or anti-feminist view, which aligns her fiction with Valerie Sanders's provocative argument that the polarised terms feminism and anti-feminism limit the rich indeterminacy of ideological positions between these two extremes (Sanders, 1996: 1-9). Braddon's holistic approach arises from domestic fiction's status as a cross-over subgenre because it has many connections with gothic romance, social problem fiction, melodrama and sensation fiction, all of which have interconnecting and contrasting ideologies relating to a woman's place in the home. This blurring of subgenres further problematises 'domestic fiction' and because Braddon's writing is never tame, ordinary or mundane, this chapter will focus on how she

‘sensationalised’ domestic short fiction in order to move the subgenre forward, which includes depicting both sides of the woman debate in a single story. To clarify the difference between Braddon’s domestic short fiction and her sensation or crime fiction, Wolff notes Braddon ‘wrote many novels without a trace of mystery or crime, in which she explored social relationships with understanding, irony and wit’ (SV: 3). This marks the distinction between the multiple subgenres Braddon utilises in her creation of her ‘domestic short fiction’: she focuses on pre-marital/marital relationships in stories that have no criminal component, or if a crime is committed, no authoritative policeman or amateur detective is called upon because there is no mystery to solve. Overall, domestic fiction was an important cultural platform for negotiating family relations and sexual roles, whether by affirming conservative principles of the hegemonic Victorian society or by pushing the boundaries of appropriately gendered behaviour. This chapter examines the extent to which Braddon challenges or conforms to these ideologies in her domestic short fiction.

Victorian Domestic Fiction

As Nancy Armstrong argues in her groundbreaking text on the history of domestic fiction,

Desire and Domestic Fiction (1987):

I know of no history of the English novel that can explain why women began to write respectable fiction near the end of the eighteenth century, became prominent novelists during the nineteenth century, and on this basis achieved the status of artist during the modern period. Yet that they suddenly began writing and were recognised as women writers strikes me as a central event in the history of the novel. (Armstrong, 1987: 7)

Several points stand out in this quotation that have a bearing on the history of domestic short fiction: one, that domestic fiction was the key subgenre that allowed women to establish themselves as serious writers; two, that domestic fiction began with late eighteenth century fiction (made popular by Maria Edgeworth), as well as literature about fashionable society of the 1820s; three, that Victorian domestic fiction's dominant genre was the novel and so short fiction was again sidelined in its relevance to the development of a genre; and four, that the writers of domestic fiction were women writing for a predominantly female audience (male writers such as Dickens, Trollope and Thackeray also wrote domestic fiction, but this chapter focuses on women writers). Taken in conjunction with Armstrong's previous point that domestic fiction was 'concerned solely with matters of courtship and marriage' (p.5), this statement introduces the following contextualisation of domestic short fiction as a subgenre, showing how each of the women writers contributed distinct features to this wide ranging and all-encompassing category.

Jane Austen's work established domestic fiction as an emerging literary subgenre at the turn of the nineteenth-century by engaging with the moral, familial and social issues that affected a woman's position in the household for better or worse. Austen's work grew out of the late eighteenth-century novel of sensibility that focused on invoking sentimental feelings in the reader and helped to form the English bildungsroman. As Margaret Anne Doody notes:

[i]n her early fiction, Jane Austen could write with zest and confidence ... [it] is rough, violent, sexy, jokey ... It attacks whole structures, including cultural structures that had made a regularized and constricted place for the Novel [sic], as well as the very workings (in stylized plot and character) of the English novel itself. (Doody, 2010: 85)

Austen's short fiction – including her juvenilia 'Love and Freindship' (1790) and 'The Beautiful Cassandra' (1790) – mocked the dominant ideologies of society using her characteristic wit and irony; nevertheless, she had to revise her 1790s work so that it conformed to the current fashion of the 1810s. Consequently, *First Impressions* became *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Elinor and Marianne* was transformed into *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), and *Susan* likely became *Northanger Abbey* (1818). These changes, Doody argues, suggest that the novels 'may not really have been the works Jane Austen wanted to write' (p.76); she had to rewrite and restructure her short fiction into novels to satisfy the Regency publishing market. On consideration of Austen's fiction, Gilbert and Gubar note that '[a]lthough their mothers' example proves how debilitating marriage can be, [daughters] seek husbands in order to escape from home' (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 125). Austen reveals the cyclical nature of the constraints of marriage, demonstrating the lack of authority women had to break this momentum. Austen's transformation of her short fiction into novels in which her witty critique of the marriage market is subdued, though by no means destroyed, provides one possible reason why short fiction has been sidelined in the history of domestic fiction: the novel was 'tamed' in comparison to short fiction – especially juvenilia, which tended to be more crude and raw in its satire – and so short fiction can be seen as more disruptive in form, style and content because it is considered trivial, lightweight and unimportant.

Elizabeth Gaskell's domestic short fiction provides more evidence to support this argument from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Many of her short stories – for instance, 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras' (1847), 'The Sexton's Hero' (1847), 'Lizzie Leigh' (1850) and 'The Well of Pen-Morfa' (1850) – illustrate Gaskell's 'exploration of the relationship between character and environment, [which] usually [contains] a moral

message' (Foster, 2007: 111). This message relates to the fallen woman, however, instead of following the hegemonic male-centred view of sin that punishes this figure, Gaskell's tales prioritise friendships between women to redeem her. Nevertheless, these tales foreground working-class women and have an overt social, or political, agenda, meaning they cross the border into social-problem fiction. In later domestic novels such as *Cranford* (1851-3) Gaskell creates a female narrator, Mary Smith, and follows the mundane lives of three women whose main life event is their brother Peter's return, indicating conformity to domestic fiction's conventions. The text's often critically examined fragmented structure places it between a novel and a collection of short stories, showing how Gaskell challenges the male-dominated convention of the triple-decker and generic conventions in general. In this text 'Gaskell satirizes the extent to which the most minute behaviours of her fictional town are regulated by established codes, and she consistently unmask[s] the comical contradictions involved in maintaining the fiction of gentility' (Meir, 2006: 2); domestic fiction's focus on the home and its routines is mocked by Gaskell who challenges this restricted sphere. In *Wives and Daughters* (1864-6), her focus changes by 'turn[ing] the romance plot into a study of class politics in detailing the strategies by which a middle-class manager positions both herself and her daughters within the marriage market' (Langland, 1995: 22). Marriage needs a 'manager' (Mrs Gibson is like Austen's Mrs Bennet in this respect); it is an economic contract, rather than a union of love, exposing the constraints of the domestic sphere on women's opportunities. In contrast with her short fiction, these novels continue to prioritise the male-female relationship over the female-female (though sisterly bonds remain important); Gaskell's short and long fiction challenges a woman's limited sphere in different ways.

The three short stories that make up George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life* were originally published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1857 and then in volume form in 1858. Like Austen and Gaskell, Eliot began to write and publish domestic short fiction first and then progressed onto novels where she could examine character relationships in more detail. The three tales place an unusual emphasis on the male perspective – as two of the titles illustrate: 'The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton' and 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story' – challenging the female domination of domestic fiction. Against the idyllic, rural backdrop – contrasting with Gaskell's industrial setting – in 'Janet's Repentance', Eliot depicts a female alcoholic and a penitent minister who seduced a girl to ruin in his youth. These character flaws blur the boundaries between domestic and sensation fiction, showing that Eliot also relied on sensational aspects to expose social evils, along with enlivening her narratives. At the heart of these texts is a 'haunting sense of loss and loneliness [which is redeemed by the idea of t]he ideal community [being] not exactly a family, but *like* a family' (McDonagh, 2001: 50). Eliot's representation of the fabricated ideal family brought a new kind of intellectualism to the domestic short story, whilst also challenging the prevalent patriarchal hegemonic social structure. This challenge was topical in 1857 because the Matrimonial Causes Act became law this year, establishing a divorce court separate from Parliament and modifying the grounds for divorce. Men were granted a divorce when a wife's adultery was proven; however, wives had to prove aggravated adultery alongside brutality, incest, bigamy or desertion (Hansard, 2012 'Matrimonial Causes Act': online); the law was still unjust towards women. Consequently, although domestic short fiction is more moral than political, it does subtly comment on and reference wider issues that affect a woman's position in society, which further problematises the subgenre.

Eliot's intellectualism and challenge to patriarchy continued into her novels, particularly her masterpiece *Middlemarch* (1871-2), as well as her article 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists' (1856), where she argues that as readers of novels by middle-class ladies 'we are constantly struck with the want of verisimilitude in their representations of the high society in which they seem to live ... If their peers and peeresses are improbable, their literary men, tradespeople, and cottagers are impossible' (Eliot, 1856: 444). Eliot argues for a realistic depiction of people, including their flaws, so novels accurately reflect the society of the reader. Women novelists' failure to do this, George Levine suggests, is because of a 'strong sensitivity to the kind of condescension frequently shown to women novelists, a condescension that assumed their natural inferiority' (Levine, 2001: 4). If women novelists were not treated *en masse* as inferior, but with sympathy, their work would not be 'heterogeneous romances' (Eliot, 1856: 453). Thus, domestic fiction's problematical and all-encompassing definition worked in its favour because, from the 1860s onwards, the subgenre allowed authors to branch out and incorporate other aspects into the domestic narrative – such as male perspectives, the lower classes or the disenfranchised – ultimately meaning domestic fiction could more effectively reflect and challenge the established moral, social and familial ideologies of the era.

Continuing with other women domestic writers, from the mid-1850s onwards Charlotte Yonge, Elizabeth Sewell, Margaret Oliphant and Braddon progress domestic fiction in a new direction because they exemplify the subgenre's changing, though continuing uneasy, relationship with social attitudes to women's roles. Yonge's early fiction was serialized in the magazine she founded and edited: *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church*. This title highlights two important aspects: firstly, that her intended readership was younger women (aged 15-25),

and secondly, that, as a Sunday school teacher, she aimed to ‘inculcate [her] young female readership with the antifeminist values of High Church Anglicanism’ (Wheatley, 1996: 895), much like Sewell, who stresses the religious side of domesticity and relationships. Yonge’s religious ideology is foregrounded in *The Daisy Chain* (1856), which she describes as:

a Family Chronicle – a domestic record of home events, large and small ...
That the young should take one hint, to think whether their hopes and
upward-breathings are truly upwards, and founded in lowliness, may be
called the moral of the tale. (Yonge, 1856 [2004]: 3)

As this preface notes, her tales aimed at educating teenage girls in finding a calling in life that also benefits the wider society. Yonge balanced these two aims by offering her ‘publications for sale, hoping that they will be of use both to her readers and to the charities to which she ... will eventually donate the monetary proceeds’ (Thorne-Murphy, 2007: 885). By focusing on the spiritual and moral development of her characters, she ultimately promotes the hegemonic idealised nuclear family and a woman’s place within the private sphere, while all financial rewards gained from her own novels went to charity. Nevertheless, much like Eliot, Yonge used ‘sensationalistic exploitation[s] of plot’ in her stories to examine how young women cope in situations that test their strength, courage and faith (Wheatley, 1996: 896). This addition of dramatic incidents once again juxtaposes domestic and sensation fiction, a plot feature that Braddon’s domestic short fiction exploits.

In line with traditional domestic fiction, Margaret Oliphant ‘consistently foregrounds issues involved in nineteenth-century expectations of womanhood: the relationships of daughter, sister, wife, and mother (especially the last)’ (‘Margaret Oliphant’, 2012: online). In her scathing attack on sensation fiction, ‘Novels’ (1867), Oliphant writes that ‘a woman

has one duty of invaluable importance to her country and her race which cannot be over-estimated – and that is the duty of being pure’ (Oliphant, 1867: 275). This conviction surfaces in her early novel *Lilliesleaf* (1855) and continues in her series the *Chronicles of Carlingford* (1861-6) which recounts the life and times of a fictional town similar to Gaskell’s *Cranford* and Trollope’s *Chronicles of Barsetshire* (1855-67). Despite this emphasis on a woman’s duty and Oliphant’s religious themes coinciding with Yonge’s anti-feminist ideology, Deirdre D’Albertis suggests that, for Oliphant, ‘[c]onforming too closely to [the] feminine type – without the leavening influence of irony or overt theatricality – was always a problem ... it is impossible to consign Oliphant to a narrowly defined “maternal” model of authorship’ (D’Albertis, 1997: 808). Instead of marketing herself as a conformist domestic writer, Oliphant challenged the association of domestic fiction with women novelists because she ‘identified instead with male professionals such as Trollope or Walter Scott’ (p.813). Just as Eliot expanded domestic fiction to include male character perspectives, Oliphant incorporated a breadwinner self-identification into her status as a writer. She could not join the male tradition of belonging to clubs and publishing houses – though she was a recognised Blackwood’s author – but she wrote to support her family, like Fanny Trollope and Braddon, which professionalises her career and problematises middle-class women’s restricted social roles because women often had to help support the family while also remaining in the private sphere.

Overall, domestic fiction’s development throughout the nineteenth century did indeed question ‘what was female’ and women’s subsequent impact on the ‘competing ideologies’ of Victorian society (Armstrong, 1987: 5); however, no single answer emerges as the dominant voice of female domestic fiction writers. Each of the writers considered has examined a woman’s position through her particular leaning towards either religious,

societal or familial influences which continually expands domestic fiction's generic conventions: Austen wittily criticises the marriage market; Gaskell challenges the 'fallen woman' stereotype; Eliot examines male perspectives on domestic fiction; Yonge promotes women's public charitable work; and Oliphant emphasises a woman's financial need to support her family. Although, what each author has in common is her insistence that the essence of woman lies beyond the surface of their role in the domestic setting; there is an 'invention of depths in the self [which made] the material body of the woman appear superficial' (p.76). This made young women think about their purpose in life and whether or not they should challenge or conform to society's moral, social and familial traditions.

These hidden depths of domestic fiction have emerged through recent scholarship, but critics still differ on the emphasis. Gilbert and Gubar have argued that women writers had simultaneously to subvert and conform to patriarchal standards (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979: 45-92). Mary Poovey has suggested that no two women experienced nineteenth-century gender ideologies in the same way, which diversified their writing (Poovey 1989: 3). Elizabeth Langland has argued that the middle-class woman's position as a manager, employer and superintendent of the labour of others empowered her because she controlled others and erected class boundaries (Langland, 1995: 21), while Nicola Diane Thompson states that 'nineteenth-century woman novelists' inherently complicated and conflicted positions on the "woman question" ... are responsible for their noncanonical status' (Thompson, 1999: 1). What is certain, is that by the 1870s domestic fiction as a subgenre seemed to have become sterile. The emerging critical voice of Henry James encapsulates a growing 'contemptuous view of women's domestic fiction' (Habegger, 1989: 14): in 1869 he wrote that 'I have unwound this string of homely details in the belief that it may amuse mother & Alice & gratify their feminine love of the minute the petty' (James in Habegger,

1989: 14). The idea that domestic fiction is ‘minute and petty’ pinpoints the problem with the subgenre: the middle-class domestic paradise was becoming destabilised. By the end of the 1860s, the laws governing women’s domestic lives were changing. The first Married Women’s Property Act of 1870 (revised in 1882) challenged the previous 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act by allowing married women to keep any money they earned and any property that they inherited from family members (Hansard, 2012 ‘Married Women’s Property Act’: online). This fundamentally changed a middle-class woman’s position in the household, and domestic fiction either had to reinvent itself or die out because the conventional marital plot formula was inadequate to explain an increasingly complex society with its rapidly growing and diverse population of readers. This renovation of domestic fiction is where Braddon’s sensationalizing of the subgenre comes in.

Braddon’s Domestic Short Fiction

Braddon’s domestic short fiction includes the largest number of her tales and, notably, Braddon began her adult short story career with the publication of ‘Captain Thomas’ (1860), which focuses on a male perspective of the marriage market. Furthermore, all of her short story collections begin with a title story that borders the categories of domestic and sensation fiction. Evidently, Braddon actively promotes this subgenre as a main component of her short fiction oeuvre because it was popular with her readership. Domestic fiction is what her readers most related to and found interesting and thus made money in the publishing market. ‘Captain Thomas’ and the title stories are significant because they demonstrate that the subgenre, even in 1860, could expand to examine the larger implications of both a woman’s and a man’s moral, social and familial position in society;

her domestic short fiction challenges the previously explored woman writer's definition of the subgenre in several diverse ways.

Significantly, Braddon moves from an introspective exploration of a character's feelings, to focus on plot and relationship dynamics, which gives rise to several other distinctions. Firstly, Braddon removes the religious elements that Yonge, Sewell and Oliphant prioritise in their fiction; men and women act of their own accord in relation to what they believe is correct, rather than having a religious duty. Secondly, the communal ethic of female relations that Gaskell depicted is removed because Braddon prioritises individual male and female relationships, along with character self-promotion, as she does in her other subgenres. Thirdly, Braddon provides male and female perspectives on the marriage market, contrasting with the convention of the subgenre as a whole. This is highlighted in the titles of her stories which include the names 'Captain Thomas', 'Ralph, the Bailiff', 'Samuel Lowgood', 'Colonel Benyon', 'Hugh Damer', 'Sir Hanbury' and 'Sir Luke', alongside 'Dorothy', 'Milly Darrell' and 'Theodora'. This aligns her fiction with Eliot's authorial position, presenting a more balanced view of the situation; how men perceived women is vital in understanding Braddon's updating of the subgenre (Yonge and Oliphant do include male perspectives but not as thoroughly as Braddon and Eliot). Furthermore, for Braddon, the relationship difficulties that people face do not stop upon an engagement; she examines life after marriage, representing a more realistic depiction of life. This change is a consequence of Braddon's writing for an older middle-class readership with the magazines she edits, rather than younger girls like Yonge; life after marriage links to her readership's position in reality. Consequently, Braddon took this tired form, which had had its heyday in the 1850s, and 'spiced it up' by problematising the subgenre to move it forward.

Like her supernatural tales, her development of domestic fiction in a new direction is inextricably linked to her sensation fiction; there is no clean break between the two subgenres. Braddon's growing reputation as a writer of 'startling' and 'defect[ive]' 'evil' challenges her ability to become a respectable domestic fiction writer ('Miss Braddon: The Illuminated Newgate Calendar', 1868: 23-5). But that, I would argue, is exactly the point. As Henry Mansel notes, sensation writers sought '[e]xcitement, and excitement alone' (Mansel, 1863: 482), and Braddon, especially at the beginning of her career, cannot keep clear of sensational elements in her writing. She challenges, reinvigorates and modernises domestic short fiction specifically by sensationalising it; this is her forte. According to Kate Mattacks, Braddon's sensationalisation of fiction is because the publishing market controlled her; she was 'doomed to re-enact the formula of *Lady Audley's Secret* ... and to perform the sensational displays that secured her financial status at the price of artistic integrity' (Mattacks, 2001a: 88). This is evident from the main stories of her edited collections – *Ralph the Bailiff* (1861), *Milly Darrell* (1870-1), *Weavers and Weft* (1876), *Flower and Weed* (1882), *Under the Red Flag* (1883) and *All Along the River* (1893) – because it is these tales that confuse the boundary between sensation fiction and domestic fiction most acutely. This is specifically due to the length of the tales: each of these stories makes up the first two volumes of Braddon's three volume story collections, so they could be categorised as novellas. The extended length of the tales significantly impacts on 'short fiction' as defined in the Introduction to this study, as well as the mode of writing as a whole. Braddon can go into more depth, complicating the plots and more fully developing the psychology of the characters, all of which signals that sensation fiction takes precedence over domestic short fiction in these longer tales for Braddon.

This priority is also reflected in the main themes of these stories: *Ralph the Bailiff* considers the double subversion of a master under his bailiff's control, while the mistress discovers her maid is the master's true wife, meaning she is the unlawful bigamous wife; *Milly Darrell* examines the love triangle between Milly, her lover and her step-mother, and includes the step-mother's attempted murder of Milly to gain access to the beloved; 'the plot [of *Weavers and Weft*] is simple enough', states a hostile response in *The Saturday Review*, which then provides half a page of confusing plot twists centring on the virtuous poor being preyed on by the villainous wealthy class ('Weavers and Weft', 1877: 334); *Flower and Weed* depicts a poor girl found in the woods who is restored to health and educated by a middle-class young lady (the title suggesting ambiguity between which woman is the flower and which the weed); *Under the Red Flag* retells a woman's quest for vengeance after thinking her husband murdered in the Paris Commune; and *All Along the River* details the life of a child-wife, left alone after marriage because her husband goes to Burmah to serve with his regiment. Thus, Braddon's title stories challenge the social conventions of women in passive victim roles, constrained to the hearth as virtuous heroines, as well as short fiction as a mode of writing.

Having argued that Braddon's sensation and domestic fiction crosses over in the length of her title stories, there are several distinct and vital differences between the two in the structure of her specific 'short fiction'. Contrasting with sensation fiction's long development of several interconnecting criminal and romantic plots, domestic short fiction has one clear engrossing outline. This plot focuses solely on marital relations, rather than sensational elements, such as a step-mother's hatred of her step-daughter in *John Marchmont's Legacy* (1863) or the development of family relations in response to a crime as in her serial triple-decker sensation novels *Birds of Prey* (1867) and *Charlotte's*

Inheritance (1868). Braddon also removes sensation fiction's fondness for serious crimes such as murder, bigamy and arson, in favour of having no crime, or, if a crime is committed, no detective figure is needed because the characters restore order. This adaptation simultaneously reduces the mundane elements of domestic fiction (religion, charity) in preference for the more sensational, though non-criminal, aspects of attempted seduction and death, while still maintaining a difference between the two subgenres.

In keeping with sensation fiction there are several elements that do overlap in her domestic short fiction. Her tales are set in the nineteenth-century middle-class home, which is significant because fiction in general 'helped to formulate the ordered space we now recognise as the household [...] and used it as the context for representing normal behaviour' (Armstrong, 1987: 23). Braddon used domestic fiction to examine what 'normal behaviour' entailed for the nineteenth-century woman and so her setting engages with the popular debate about a woman's place in the home. Furthermore, '[t]he Victorian idealization of the middle-class home is essentially a private place, a shelter against the turbulent seas of social change' (Mintz, 1983: 13-14), but by keeping this setting in her domestic short fiction Braddon uses the inherent claustrophobic atmosphere to build suspense within a shorter narrative; it is hard to keep a secret in a contained space and the fear of being exposed creates tension. This building of suspense also demonstrates Braddon's rejection of the usually slower paced narrative in favour of the short story's condensed, faster-paced momentum. This is evidenced by the titles of her short tales, which play up the sensational elements with the inclusion of words such as 'Revenge', 'Secret', 'Rival', 'Escape', 'Entanglement' and 'Temptation'. These titles, along with the previously mentioned balancing viewpoint, maintain an awareness of the dangers that women should be alert to when entering the marriage market. The final distinction between these two

subgenres stems from readers' interests in these dangers: domestic fiction focuses on the woman's emotional journey through marriage and how she reacts to these dangers, while sensation fiction prioritises what the dangerous situations are. The domestic life that nineteenth-century England upholds is fraught with peril and so ultimately the short tales relate to domestic fiction's engagement with a woman's moral, social and familial position. Thus, Braddon's adaptation of the sterile subgenre allowed her to break out of the restrictive, purely sensational, domain of sensation novels, as well as the outdated mode of domestic fiction, to create 'sensational' domestic short fiction that '[w]e should not assume [are] merely abbreviated [sensation] novels' (Roberts, 2011: 375).

Family and Friends

One of the main concerns in domestic fiction is how outside forces – such as society's condemnation, friends' opinions, sibling rivalry, parental disapproval and economic hardship – impact on engaged/married couples. These are particularly pertinent to the middle-class marriages of Braddon's domestic short fiction because this class was seen to uphold nineteenth-century moral values. Braddon explores each of these influences throughout her fiction, but 'Dorothy's Rival' (1867) and 'Old Rutherford Hall' (1871) particularly emphasise parental pressure. In 'Dorothy's Rival' Mrs. Bolton does not approve of her daughter Dorothy's match because she is used to her being 'innocent and childlike still', while her father considers it to be "a poor match for the wench" (Braddon, 1867: 98-9); they refuse to acknowledge that their daughter has grown up and continue to control her life because they believe they know best for her future. Nevertheless, the fiancé, Matthew Wall, gains their trust and acceptance because he 'had so far proved himself a

very worthy and efficient member of the Church' (p.99); religion plays a significant role in achieving domestic harmony. This faith is questioned by idle town gossip: Mrs. Bolton is influenced by the theatrical 'sigh[s]', 'groaning' and comments made by her acquaintances – "I have nothing to *say* against him" (p.101) – who spitefully disclose Matthew has been visiting an out-of-the-way house within his parish. Significantly, it is the man's reputation that is called into question and the subsequent impact it would have on the woman's life that Braddon explores, rather than depicting a disreputable woman, as in Gaskell or Braddon's own sensation fiction. This change in focus illustrates that even if the woman is virtuous, she can be ruined by a corrupt man (who could easily move on to prey on another girl), and so, because marriage is fraught with danger for women, they should rely on their parents' advice.

In an attempt to protect her daughter, Mrs. Bolton accuses Matthew of having a mistress, prioritising idle town gossip over his self-built virtuous reputation. Instead of focusing on Dorothy's reaction to the news, the omniscient narrator focalises on Mrs. Bolton: 'The parson's wife sent Dorothy to bed ... and immediately sat down and began to cry. She had her cry out, and then consented to answer her bewildered husband's inquiries' (p.105). This reaction is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates that the mother does not confide in the father, the head of the household, before making accusations; the unruly woman assumes dominance because it is a domestic matter, supposing her position as a wife and mother gives her priority in understanding the situation. Secondly, Mrs. Bolton controls Dorothy's actions because she physically removes her from the story; she cannot control Dorothy's feelings and so clings to the power she does have, and thirdly, Mrs. Bolton's reaction takes precedence over Dorothy's; Dorothy and Matthew's faith in each other is not questioned, the tale's focus is the mother's

concern for her daughter. This is reinforced when the conclusion reveals that Matthew has been helping a blind, deaf and dumb girl learn to talk: the narrator communicates Mrs. Bolton's remorse at her conduct, rather than Dorothy's relief that her fiancé is not having an affair. Mrs. Bolton's reminder of the marriage plot – “I'd rather see my Dolly the wife of so good a man than riding in the squire's chariot” (p.107) – despite being the last line, is somewhat overshadowed by the mother's penitential charitable donations towards the girl and sidelines the mother's near-destruction of her daughter's happiness. Ultimately, the daughter knew better than the mother, so parental interference is revealed to be almost as dangerous as idle town gossip.

In a tale that does prioritise a child's concern over parental disapproval, 'Old Rutherford Hall' supports Wolff's statement that 'MEB far more often dealt with fathers and daughters' than other relationships (SV: 372). This story depicts both the woman's and the man's relationships with their fathers and their concern for the marriage being rejected. Contrasting with reputation being the deciding factor as in 'Dorothy's Rival', the basis of this refusal is family pride: Christabel's father owns Old Rutherford Hall, while Frank's father owns New Rutherford Hall; there is a rivalry between the families that dates back generations. This pride means that both fathers restrict their child's acquaintance with the other, though they do not disapprove of the other directly: Christabel's father objects to any potential fiancé being more concerned with “commercial” factors than his daughter's merits (Braddon, 1871: 5), while Frank's father 'looked daggers at his son' because he neglects a wealthy heiress in favour of Christabel (p.12). The parental disapproval, therefore, actually relates to how the fathers view each other; they cannot see past their hatred for each other to observe the impact it has on their children.

Instead of taking this disapproval to heart, Frank openly disobeys his father and walks Christabel home, allowing him to propose and save her wedding dowry from theft. After his heroic escapade, Christabel's father can no longer object to Frank, and Frank's father believes 'it evidently mattered so very little to his son whether [he approved or] not' that the two families are united through the engagement of their children (p.18); children are the future and marriage is the means by which old feuds can be ended. As an ironic intimation of their future, the narrator notes that they 'were married, and were just the sort of couple to live happily ever after' (p.18); however, Christabel's mistaken identity as the ghost of a woman who was slain by her husband in a fit of passion, provides an ominous foreboding that their future life might not have the fairy tale ending alluded to, as well as revealing Braddon's blurring of generic boundaries. Overall, both of these tales demonstrate the physical and emotional power parents have over their children; despite being of age, their life is not their own because until they marry, their financial and emotional wellbeing is controlled by their father. By concluding both tales with domestic fiction's traditional ending of marriage, Braddon's writing prioritises a woman's place in the home and so aligns with Yonge's and Oliphant's ideological standpoints; however, 'markets could both limit and liberate popular writers, who were able to manipulate generic conventions in order to allow readers to interpret texts oppositionally' (Liggins and Duffy, 2001: xiii). Braddon's writing for middle-class women readers restricted her to this traditional ending, but her exposé of men and women marrying to escape parental pressures also aligns her domestic short fiction with the feminist argument that women's options are limited and marriage could be their only means of freedom. Thus, Braddon's fiction is neither feminist nor anti-feminist; she deliberately places herself within the liminal space between the two, just as Gilbert and Gubar suggested earlier. Braddon continually image-

manages not just her own public/private self, as argued in the Introduction, but also the ideology of her fiction to appeal to a wider readership.

However, parental disapproval is not the only family constraint that affects the engagement of a couple. Sibling rivalry, which can create a tangled love triangle, also pressurises the domestic situation of an engaged couple. Braddon explores this problem in several tales – ‘The Zoophyte’s Revenge’ (1871), ‘In Great Waters’ (1871) and ‘If She Be Not Fair to Me’ (1880) – demonstrating that sibling rivalry ‘consists of a widespread and diverse family of phenomena, [though] is by no means ubiquitous’ (Mock and Parker, 1997: 2). ‘The Zoophyte’s Revenge’ depicts the strained relationship between an upper-middle class Lady, Leonora, and her dependent brother, Reginald Ravenscroft. Reginald’s ‘placid and lamblike condition’ places him in the traditionally feminine passive role in comparison to Leonora who has wealth and an “awfully business-like” attitude (Braddon, 1871 [1873]: 67, 71), giving her the more conventionally masculine feature of wielding the power in their relationship, where economic factors outweigh gender considerations. After leaving the army, Reginald returns to live with Leonora and intends on marrying Mary Corks, a brewer’s daughter. Leonora expresses her indignation by reducing his allowance and Reginald counters by considering the coal trade as a profession; the power battle between them subtly continues. He deliberately suggests a trade that he knows she would object to in order to infuriate and emotionally exploit her, making the prospect of marrying a brewer’s daughter more appealing. Thus, contrasting with Sanders’s reference to Hegel’s theory from *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807), Leonora and Reginald are not ‘untainted by the urge to mastery’ (Sanders, 2002: 6); their sibling relationship is built on this ‘urge’ because their bond subverts the traditional brother-sister connection.

Reginald proposes to Mary but her father will not consent unless Leonora approves. As a result Reginald ‘felt quite desperate – felt as if he could drag his sister to [the brewer’s house] by main force’ to secure their union (p.95); physical dominance is all the control he has over his sister and he knows that power is useless. Instead of using brute force, he follows Leonora’s advice and establishes himself in a trade, pork-butchery, which he hides from his sister. This secret makes Leonora the subject of her servants’ jokes – ‘the butler ... exchanged a subdued grin with his subordinate’ (p.106) – meaning the power struggle between them also disrupts the balance between the mistress and her servants. Their unequal domestic situation expands to include all dependants and staff, demonstrating that inter-class relations are also a consideration in domestic fiction, be they sidelined from the main engagement narrative. On discovering his trade Leonora accuses Reginald of exacting his ““revenge”” (p.111), to which he replies it was ““an act of self-assertion”” (p.112). He rejects his languid approach to life by assuming his sister’s ‘thoroughly business-like air’ in order to ‘vanquish[...]’ her authority and establish himself as the patriarch (p.110, 113). As John Tosh argues:

the complete transition to manhood depended on marriage ... only marriage could yield the full privileges of masculinity. To form a household, to exercise authority over dependents, and to shoulder the responsibility of maintaining and protecting them – these things set the seal on a man’s gender identity. (Tosh, 1999: 108)

The terms ‘privileges’, ‘authority’, ‘responsibility’, ‘maintaining’ and ‘protecting’ relate marriage to the patriarchal ideal of power and control and so by marrying, Reginald gains a highly regarded position and duty, not only in his new middle-class marriage, but also in his sister’s household. Reginald’s identification with his sister’s characteristics means that ‘brother and sister find themselves in one another’ (Sanders, 2002: 6), and this blood bond

confirms societal power relations by placing him in control of two households. Furthermore, the ending also reveals a wider social issue: Braddon's expansion of domestic fiction to include a male perspective confirms 'Old Rutherford Hall[']s' argument that a man's marital options, if not his professional choices, are also limited by the same moral, social and familial restrictions that encumber a woman's choice.

Another problem that affects an engagement within the category of sibling rivalry is the love triangle. These only occur when the siblings are of the same sex, and notably, Braddon focuses on two sisters because it allows her to explore the problems women face within the marriage market more acutely, when the family tie intensifies the jealousy, bitterness and self-sacrificial attitudes of the siblings. This situation is gently satirised in 'In Great Waters' because the tale opens with: '[t]here were two of them – Jeanne and Marie, sisters ... [i]t would have been strange if between two pretty girls there had not been at least one lover. There was' (Braddon, 1871 [1877]: 229). This direct opening establishes the basic plot outline of both sister-sibling tales, 'In Great Waters' and 'If She Be Not Fair to Me': a man falls in love with one sister, without knowing that the other sister loves him. The rejected sister sacrifices her happiness for the chosen sibling by not revealing her true feelings. The main focus of 'In Great Waters' is the psychology and inner feelings of the rejected sister, Jeanne, reflecting domestic fiction's traditional convention of interiority and self-sacrifice. Jeanne felt the 'great and bitter' loss and the 'burden' of not revealing her secret (p.234), her heartache contrasting with Marie's seeming 'indifference' to her betrothed (p.234). This 'distast[e]' for him arises from Marie's falling in love with a rich scoundrel (p.239). As in her theatrical short fiction, Braddon imposes a second love triangle intermixed with the first to complicate the woman's position, signifying her different options: a trustworthy fisherman or an untrustworthy socially elevated flirt. The dilemma is

resolved when the rake dies in a boating accident during a storm, so the story's title has a double meaning: 'In Great Waters' literally references the waters which drown the lover, while metaphorically relating to Marie's socially precarious position of being engaged to one man and loving another. After his death, Marie joins a convent and her ex-fiancé marries Jeanne years later. In relation to domestic life's social etiquettes, Langland notes 'how effectively power may operate when its manifestations appear insignificant and inconsequential' (Langland, 1995: 8). In this tale Jeanne's silent devotion and self-sacrifice are presented as 'insignificant' and 'inconsequential' but they are consequently triumphant. The fact that both sisters vie over one man's affections also highlights another problem for society: there were more women than men in rural country villages; 'redundant' women who cannot marry need to find another way to support themselves or retire from society, like Marie (Greg, 1862: 434-60).¹ Overall, Braddon conservatively punishes the wayward sister and rewards the loyalty of the other, demonstrating didactic endorsement of female moral behaviour in accordance with nineteenth-century society's patriarchal ideology, but, simultaneously, Braddon subtly indicates her sympathy for feminism's exposé of a woman's precarious situation on the marriage market.

Braddon's later tale 'If She Be Not Fair to Me' uses this sibling rivalry love triangle structure for another purpose: she explores current debates surrounding the woman question. In this tale, the older sister, Blanche, is replaced by the younger, Antoinette, in the hero's regard. Blanche's successful *début* describes how she was 'written about in fashionable journals'; however, she 'had not yet learnt to consider dressing well and looking lovely the sole end and aim of a woman's life, but she had certainly become fully

¹ In 'The Splendid Stranger' (1870), a woman's beloved elopes with her best friend and so she continues to live with her sister and they support each other by working on a farm; the 'redundant' women are financially secure because they are united in their sisterhood, rather than vying against each other. Braddon advocates a united female front, like Gaskell, as a response to contemporary debates about a woman's position.

aware of her value from the fashionable point of view' (Braddon, 1880 [1884]: 231). The materialistic vocabulary of 'value' and the repetition of 'fashionable' demonstrate Braddon's engagement with contemporary society's money-orientated values rather than a woman's moral attributes, leading Blanche to believe that her looks alone will 'lift her to a much higher place in the social scale' (p.231). As Emma Liggins notes:

Braddon's writing of this period [from the 1870s] is much more engaged with the woman question than reviewers recognised, exploring various responses to current contentious debates about fashionable young women, women's leisure and female attitudes to money, which developed alongside feminist agitation about education, employment and women's earnings. (Liggins, 2004: 74)

Blanche's concern for, and reliance upon, her appearance to rise socially coincides with Braddon's broader social attitude towards the woman question: that the 'quest' for a husband in order to leave the parental home illustrates women's restricted options, rather than a means of freedom, contrasting with her early stories 'Dorothy's Rival' and 'Old Rutherford Hall'.² This is evidenced by Blanche's being 'taught' by other fashionable women how to speak and dress – 'the proper tone for a young woman ... was a languid' one (p.234), "[w]e wore white silk gowns with green velvet sleeves and sashes" (p.236) – which leads her twice to refuse the eligible Mr. Tremayne. After four years, they meet again, and during this gap 'Blanche Ferrier's career was, in actual practical result, a failure' (p.254). The search for a husband and domestic harmony is a 'career' for women because they had no other way of advancing socially and financially, and Blanche is deemed a failure because she has not fulfilled her social obligation. Although, this is not for lack of

² This negative view of women's lack of options is supported by Blanche's friend, Louie, who states that she "wish[es she] were a man and a soldier" because she could then break free of the village in which she has lived all of her life (p.245). Braddon challenges gender, as well as social, barriers in her attempt to illustrate women's frustration at their lack of opportunities in life, aligning her with a feminist ideology.

offers; Blanche has refused several suitors because she did not love them. Ultimately, she wishes to marry for moral rather than material grounds, coinciding with Braddon's overall didactic educational lesson for women within her domestic short fiction.

During these four years Antoinette has matured into adulthood and, though she is not as 'striking as Blanche' (p.257), because she does not enter fashionable society, she maintains her own individual characteristics and is not altered into a 'fashionable' young woman; in accordance with Armstrong's opening argument, Antoinette 'seize[s] the authority' to define herself as a woman separate from society's values. Antoinette learns from Blanche's experience – 'she had cut open the drum of fashionable life, and found that it was hollow within' (p.259) – and avoids the socially accepted 'career' of searching for a husband in London by marrying Mr. Tremayne on his return. Antoinette still conforms to society's restricted options for women, like Jeanne, demonstrating that '[a]lthough Braddon's critique of marriage is serious and acute, her feminist vision is ultimately moderate: she advocates reform, not revolution' (Schroeder & Schroeder, 2006: 25); nevertheless, because Antoinette refuses to rise socially for material gain and marries for love, Braddon does represent a more moral and progressive outlook on marriage that suggests mercenary marriages should be the exception rather than the rule. Ultimately, Blanche's realisation that while 'she had been falling in love with Claude Tremayne ... he had been falling out of love with her' leads her to feel 'the truth, the bitter, unpalatable, humiliating truth' (p.260); not only was she replaced by her younger sister, but society's restrictive ideology and its flattery of her physical appearance meant she lost her chance of true happiness. Ultimately, Braddon blurs the supposed dichotomy between feminism and anti-feminism by having both sisters desire marriage and a place within the restricted

private sphere, while simultaneously demonstrating how conforming to society's conventional expectations can ruin a woman's opportunities.

Rejected/New Lover

As well as parental and sibling influences, the couple's relationship can also be affected by changes between themselves: one partner falls innocently out of love with the other, or, more commonly for Braddon's fiction, a third person is introduced to create another love triangle situation. Braddon's continual exploration of this three-person structure demonstrates that she found the rejected/new lover complication to be the most dangerous aspect of both a man and a woman's reputation. The fact that she uses this structure in her middle-class tales about love and marriage, alongside her theatrical short fiction and sensation fiction, reveals that the temptation of straying from the virtuous path is a universal theme; it is not just the socially ostracized lower class members of society that encounter these risqué situations. Braddon's synonymous link with the transgressive and subversive nature of sensation fiction could mar her reader's opinions and analysis of sensational domestic fiction, so this section will reiterate the distinction between the two. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Braddon depicts these domestic trials from both a female and a male point of view, and in her tales 'Captain Thomas' (1860), 'My Unlucky Friend' (1869) and 'Colonel Benyon's Entanglement' (1872), Braddon specifically focuses on the problems men face when searching for domestic bliss.

'Captain Thomas' outlines the dangers of a quick engagement where neither person understands nor trusts the other. The tale opens with Benjamin Strothers's critical overview of his past loves:

I hold it as rule, that nine men out of ten are unfortunate in their first attachments; and I hold it as another rule, that it's a very good thing for them that they are. If my first-love had been successful, I should have united myself to a young lady of thirty-five [when I was] nine and three-quarters.

(Braddon, 1860: 471)

The ironic, comic and condescending tone of the first person male narrator contrasts with the usually sedate tones of domestic fiction, but it serves to illustrate Braddon's mocking of the middle class's ideology of marriage from the beginning of her short story writing career. Even the renowned British tea party does not escape a scathing attack: 'the end and aim of that snare and delusion ... is to sit in an uncomfortable position in an uncomfortable chair ... inflict grief upon your digestive organs [and] utter articulate inanities' (p.471). This challenging of respected British traditions culminates in Benjamin's calling his proposal to Rose 'the old, old pitiful, hackneyed worn out, new and original, eminently successful farce' (p.473), while her reaction typifies the universal feelings of women: 'the blushes, the smiles, the tears, the little trembling hand, the surprise, and all the shabby old properties thereunto belonging' (p.473). The oxymoronic descriptions of both his proposal and her acceptance demonstrate Benjamin's contempt for conventions that encumber relationships and a true expression of feelings.

During the course of their engagement, it emerges that Rose had 'an infatuation' with Captain Thomas, which Benjamin considers as a 'blow struck' (p.473); the existence of a previous admirer proves that Rose does not conform to society's prescribed ideal of pure and untainted womanhood. Instead of confronting Rose, Benjamin overhears that Captain Thomas has returned and that 'She – my "future" – was kissing Captain Thomas, or Captain Thomas was kissing her; it didn't much matter which. Ruin either way!' (p.475). Abandoning her on the eve of their marriage, Benjamin receives a 'Breach of Promise of

Marriage' for £1000 damages (p.475), because Captain Thomas is Rose's long-lost cat. Braddon punishes Benjamin because he presumes Rose's guilt and abandons her (making her subsequent ability to remarry harder because of the taint against her name), rather than attempting to save their relationship. Thus, the male narrator's comic attitude is his undoing; he did not take the domestic situation seriously so his reputation and financial standing are left in '[r]uin' (p.475). Being Braddon's first tale, it is significant that she published it under her gender-ambiguous pseudonym 'M. E. Braddon'. The nineteenth-century middle-class readership of *The Welcome Guest* could have assumed her to be a male author presenting the man's perspective. Instead, a woman writer presents how she thinks a man perceives the marriage market, allowing her to explore a more masculine, disillusioned condemnation of the domestic situation. As Wolff's previously quoted comment indicates, Braddon's 'irony and wit' when critiquing the lack of communication within the domestic sphere artfully conceals behind her staged public persona an attitude that would have been unconventional for a woman writer at this time.

The next two stories consider a man falling in love with an unsuitable woman. In 'Colonel Benyon's Entanglement', Herbert Benyon is rejected by his first love, only unknowingly to fall in love with his friend's divorced wife, while in 'My Unlucky Friend', John Marlow is engaged to a woman who jilts him, only to fall in love with her daughter years later who repeats the pattern. Both tales explore the impact failed relationships have on men's emotional lives and so there is an emphasis on introspection. In fact:

[t]he emotion of love was rarely presented as being as lastingly central to men, although the short story's capacity to exploit an expanded moment increasingly offered a medium which emphasized men's emotional vulnerability, and the degree to which fantasy and longing can rule men's private lives. (Flint, 1996: vii)

Furthermore, the fact that they have a slower-paced narrative that sidelines the ‘unfeminine’ behaviour of the women through reported speech, separates these tales from what could be considered a problematical cross-over with sensation fiction. Both tales begin with the arrival back from India of the male protagonist: Herbert Benyon ‘was not happy’ because he had a ‘sense of his own isolation’ (Braddon, 1872: 70-1), while John Marlow ‘grew singularly depressed in manner’ on the return journey (Braddon, 1869: 84). Both men have no family (parental, sibling or marital) to welcome them home, providing a sense of belonging and companionship. Herbert and John’s main emotional attachments are to their friends, Fred and Frank, respectively. Herbert’s meeting with Fred was the only event he ‘looked forward to with any ray of real pleasure’ (p.71), while Frank helps John reduce ‘the fatigue of the journey’ (p.84). For the travelling soldier, male homosocial bonds are the only chosen and constant relationships they know, because even marital relationships break down. For example, Herbert returns home to discover Fred has divorced his wife after she left him for a previous lover whom she supposed dead after seeing an advertisement in the newspaper. This sensationalist plot device is reflective of *Aurora Floyd*’s fake newspaper announcement of the death of James Conyers, but because it is reported indirectly it is sidelined in favour of Herbert’s love for his friend. Herbert’s ‘manly sympathy’ is expressed in a letter he writes to Fred (p.73), demonstrating male homosocial bonds can heal the pain caused by marital relationships and that it is not from a lack of emotional attachment that Herbert is ‘uninterested’ in affairs of the heart (p.71).

Continuing with ‘Colonel Benyon’s Entanglement’, after a prolonged illness, Herbert’s emotions are stirred by Mrs. Chapman, his nurse. The tale is published in two parts, so Braddon utilises the extra space to develop the introspective emotions of her male

protagonist in accordance with domestic fiction's conventions. After believing her to be his 'lost sister' and then his 'false love' Herbert is relieved to discover that she is an unpaid nurse and not 'only a hireling' (p.216); his concern over class confirms Braddon's alignment with domestic fiction's traditions because it removes the possibility of an inter-class marriage. On the discovery of his feelings, Herbert's heart is awakened and he abandons all thoughts of returning to India, instead establishing himself in a tranquil domestic sphere in England; marriage is the preferable option even for the man, aligning Braddon's fiction with hegemonic nineteenth-century ideology. Nevertheless, on her revelation that she is Fred's divorced wife Herbert is 'crush[ed]', 'stupefied' and 'stunned' (p.224); the harsh sibilant sound patterning signifying the openness he had embraced is destroyed. Marriage for a man can be just as, or even more, important than for a woman for providing happiness and a stable position in society and the loss of this position also has disastrous results (Herbert has to return to his wandering soldier lifestyle). Mrs. Chapman reveals that her father and step-mother forbade her marriage to the man she loved and committed 'domestic persecution ... and daily reproaches' against her until she consented to marry Fred (p.225). This 'ordeal' again illuminates the control parents have over their children and the destructive ripple effect it can have on other people's lives (p.225), an effect Braddon explores throughout all of her short fiction. Mrs. Chapman leaves Herbert 'sitting in the quiet burial-ground' where the revelation was made (p.226). Herbert suffers in his isolation, while she dies in a remote convent in Belgium, like Lady Audley. Once again, the wayward woman is punished by death signalling Braddon's didactic punishment of immoral women, but it is Herbert's return to India having 'suffered [a] recent heart-wound' that closes the tale. This has a lasting impact on the reader that signifies Braddon's

expansion of feminism's challenging of separate spheres to include a male perspective (p.227).

'My Unlucky Friend' continues with John's discovery that his previous love's daughter, Margaret, is a governess to Frank's sisters. Margaret awakens John's 'childish weakness' (p.87), suggesting that nostalgia for his past is a significant factor in his love for her. The tale is narrated from Frank's perspective, meaning the reader gains an outsider's objective point of view of the marital situation, rather than John's personal outlook. This difference means John and Margaret's engagement is presented as a 'superstitious ... fatality' (p.89), rather than a positive development; the relationship is one-sided and so there is no equality between them. Frank discovers that Margaret has a prior attachment, so John releases her from the 'matrimonial snare' (p.93). In similar phraseology to 'Captain Thomas', the male narrator's description of the traditions of nineteenth-century society disputes matrimony as a means of happiness, confirming Braddon's subversive outlook on marriage and domestic fiction as a subgenre.

In conjunction with a man's unhappiness in the domestic sphere, Braddon's domestic fiction also considers how and why women find the home restrictive. Significantly, tales considering a woman's questionable reputation are published at a later date than those concerning male issues of domestic disharmony, signifying that a woman's unhappiness in the home was a more scandalous concept because it defies the Angel in the House ideology. As Liggins notes, many domestic fiction writers sought to prove that women wanted 'a larger sphere of action' (Liggins, 2004: 78); thus, having considered the trials and tribulations of getting engaged, Braddon's domestic fiction also examines women's desire to escape marriage's limited sphere. This freedom can only occur, however, through the death of a woman's husband, her unlikely ability to gain a divorce,

her abandoning her husband for work or her elopement with another man. Braddon focuses on this last option, which led to her being accused of relying on extramarital affairs to entertain her readers because ‘a marriage without a suspicion of unfaithfulness is a dull affair’ (‘Novels of the Week’, 1875: 331). Braddon’s fiction, short or long, cannot be described as ‘dull’, but this reliance on affairs means these domestic tales are the ones which most closely border the distinction between sensational domestic fiction and pure sensation fiction. This boundary is specifically blurred in the titles of tales which consider a woman’s potential downfall, because they are overly dramatic: ‘A Very Narrow Escape’ (1869), ‘On the Brink’ (1870) and ‘Drifting’ (1893). Nevertheless, because of the consciously slowed narrative, an emphasis on introspection and a didactic moral message, ‘On the Brink’ can be classed as sensational domestic fiction, while the faster-paced narratives of ‘A Very Narrow Escape’ and ‘Drifting’, along with the inclusion of a semi-successful elopement, means they cross the border into pure sensation short fiction. A detailed examination of these stories will now illustrate this difference.

‘On the Brink’ and ‘A Very Narrow Escape’ have similar beginnings: Esther and Alice, respectively, are both married to men who are over ten years their senior and whom they do not love. Esther marries Joshua because of family obligations: her father ‘would have taken any opposition to his will in no very pleasant spirit’, and because her marriage would provide extra ‘assistance’ for her siblings, her mother’s ‘pathetic pleading’ persuades Esther to accept Joshua’s proposal (Braddon, 1870: 325). Once again, parental and sibling influences are the reason for a woman’s loveless marriage, which negatively impacts the rest of her life. The economic help Joshua provides Esther’s family makes her respect, but not love him, signalling that marriage for love is the only acceptable and morally correct path. This is confirmed when, for both married couples, domestic happiness arrives with the

birth of their child (the child embodying the life and soul of the woman's marriage), but both children die within the first few months. There were two opposing views on the religious meaning of the death of a child: that it was a 'trial intended as a spiritual challenge which could purify the parents' souls', or that 'a benevolent God had removed their children early from an unhappy world of pain, sin, temptation, and doubt' (Jalland, 2000: 122-3). The death of these children confirms Braddon's ideological standpoint that unequal marriages (in love, age or financial standing) do not provide happiness and so these child deaths are a punishment to the couple. The children's deaths widen the void in both couples' feelings for each other, a gap that they do not communicate about or attempt to breach because they have misunderstood each other from the start.

After the death of her child in 'On the Brink', Esther begins idly to 'wonder[...]' about her husband's employer who owns the gardens next to their cottage (p.333); she day-dreams as an escape from her dull reality. Braddon signals the dangers of a woman's fancy when she meets Stephen Lyne: when introduced to the married couple, he vows to win Esther's love. Stephen invites Joshua and Esther to wander round the gardens, and to Esther 'it seemed like walking in Paradise' (p.335). 'Paradise' obviously refers to the wonder and promise of the Garden of Eden, with its hidden association of evil, and it is here that Esther realises '[w]hat a miserable little place her own parlour seemed after a brief glimpse of splendour' (p.336). For a young housewife who is confined to the home, property, wealth and decorations are the serpent that destroys a limited marital sphere. Stephen's seduction of Esther happens gradually; Braddon is careful to note that it is a slow development over many months. Stephen's first visit happened when the 'rain lasted a long time' and after this he 'made many visits to the little cottage, and sat many hours' (p.337). The repetition of 'many', along with the short, sharp line '[a]nd so the time went on' (p.339), emphasises

the long, meandering process of Stephen's seduction. In contrast with this elongated seduction, in 'A Very Narrow Escape', the seduction of Alice by her husband's friend, Edgar, is a fast-paced affair: he 'took to approaching the house [to visit her and...] he always found Alice in her sitting room' (Braddon, 1869: 198). The change of time frame is further highlighted by the husband's clerks being 'quick to remark upon the length and frequency of these morning calls' (p.198), demonstrating that the fine line between Braddon's sensational domestic fiction and pure sensation fiction derives from the difference in narrative pace, which has been crossed in 'A Very Narrow Escape'.

To complete his seduction in 'On the Brink', Stephen arranges for Joshua to be away on business overnight, using this opportunity to persuade Esther to elope with him. Esther believes this love is 'the beginning of her new life' (p.341); she has been reborn and so can move on from the death of her child and her loveless marriage. Although, her guilt oppresses her and is portrayed through the narrator's preoccupation with her thoughts and emotions – '[w]eakly, blindly, helplessly she gave her life into this man's hands' (p.344) – the continuing dream imagery that creates a 'shapeless horror in her own mind' (p.344), and through the repetition of the fact that 'she had no thought of turning back' (p.344). This introspection places the emphasis on Esther's thoughts and emotions, rather than her actions – and so differs from 'A Very Narrow Escape' which contains a forged letter and a semi-successful elopement on a steamboat – even though there is a physical fight between Stephen and Joshua (who deliberately contrives to return home a day early, catching them before they elope). As punishment for her actions, Esther nurses her husband back to health and confesses her sins. Joshua forgives her and Esther's redemption is complete when another son is born who brought with him 'sweet domestic peace and a tranquil happiness' (p.350). Braddon reveals that even though domestic harmony was broken by the woman's

disloyalty, the husband accepts his role and responsibility in the marital breakdown, and that forgiveness, rather than punishment, is the morally and socially correct way to move forward, particularly because it reaffirms the nineteenth-century nuclear family, instead of advocating familial breakdown; thus, '[e]ven in her most radical criticism of contemporary matrimony ... Braddon does not advocate the abolition of marriage or condone free love or extramarital relations' (Schroeder & Schroeder, 2006: 21).

As argued, 'A Very Narrow Escape[']s' reliance on fast-paced action, rather than a slow-paced introspection of feelings, to progress the tale confirms an alliance with pure sensation fiction. The fact that Braddon returns to the exact same situation of a woman's desire to escape her marriage over twenty years later in 'Drifting' demonstrates that this dilemma still haunts Braddon's consciousness and remains of interest to her readership. As



Figure 14: 'Drifting', 1893, *To-day A Weekly Magazine Journal*

the provided illustration shows (Figure 14), Braddon once again utilises a steamboat as the means of elopement (possibly referencing Maggie's aborted elopement by boat in *The Mill on the Floss* [1860]), aligning this tale with pure sensation fiction, rather than sensational domestic fiction, because of the extreme lengths the man has gone to in order to seduce the woman. The boat represents the freedom Laura gains by eloping, but her head in her hands signifies her realisation that her freedom has come at too high a price. Her reputation is ruined and there will be no reunion with her children. The additional rejection of her children, as well as her husband,

reveals that the time elapsed since the previous two stories means that Braddon can push the boundaries of sensation fiction further; children can increase a woman's confinement, rather than providing emotional support that she may not get from her husband. In addition, 'Drifting' is written through the use of dialogue and stage directions, like a play, suggesting that Braddon blurs not only the boundaries between sensation and domestic fiction, but also the barrier between 'real' life and performance, adding to the sensational plot. Overall, a comparison of 'On the Brink', 'A Very Narrow Escape' and 'Drifting' reveals that the borderline between sensational domestic fiction and pure sensation fiction is dependent upon the pace, tone and action of the narrator and characters, as well as confirming Braddon's continual exploration of the liminal space between feminism and anti-feminism.

Economic Hardships

The great northern metropolis, Loomborough, is one of the wealthiest provincial cities in the United Kingdom ... Its law courts, town-hall, exchange, clubhouses, warehouses, emporiums, boast an architectural magnificence ... Loomborough has swollen into a brick-and-mortar octopus, and with each of its hungry suckers has absorbed [the outlying] village[s ... it is like a] seething and bubbling ... commercial witches' caldron.

(Braddon, 1874 [1877] 'Sir Hanbury's Bequest': 338-40)

The imagery of a town swelling and absorbing little villages with its 'suckers' emphasises the pseudo-vampiric nature of nineteenth-century commerce that spread its influence across an entire country and affected all of its inhabitants. This effect was supposed to be positive because it meant the town in general became wealthier, employing more hands to produce products for capital gain. Nevertheless, Braddon's opening of 'Sir Hanbury's Bequest' presents an alternative view of Victorian commerce. While the financial sector meant the

town in general became prosperous, in her tales Braddon depicts the negative impact it had on the individual and on the relationship between the couple. Therefore, while the previous two sections explored the potential disruption other people had on a couple, this section considers how economic hardships affect domestic harmony. It examines whether these difficulties separate or unite the couple involved and whether or not financial issues impact differently for the woman or man. As Allen Horstman notes: ‘most Victorians were not clear that the primary purpose of marriage was happiness: marriage was for children, family, economic benefit and spiritual uplift; it provided the basis of organised society. But happiness?’ (Horstman, 1985: 22). The previous sections placed a particular emphasis on how an unequal love match was detrimental to the happiness of both partners, while this section examines whether Braddon maintains her condemnation of unequal couples who marry for financial reasons, rather than love, and so utilises Horstman’s argument. This section is further split between financial problems before and after marriage, revealing once again that Braddon is all encompassing in her depiction of the domestic situation; she presents a realistic picture of domesticity so that her mainly female readership can relate to, and learn from, potential pitfalls in their own lives. The tales to be considered in this first half are ‘Found in the Muniment Chest’ (1867), ‘Hugh Damer’s Last Ledger’ (1873) and ‘Sir Hanbury’s Bequest’ (1874), which all focus on the financial problems that obstruct the progress of a love match.

When discussing the impact nineteenth-century commerce had on a couple, it must be noted that there were two forms relating to the two spheres of Victorian life: the public economic exchange and the private emotional exchange. David Toise has examined this division in relation to Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1848): ‘Dombey’s economy is based on the exchange of goods, while Florence’s is an economy based on the exchange of feeling’

(Toise, 1999: 338). Domestic fiction is in a unique position to examine the differences between these two types of commerce because it focuses on the relationships between men and women when they are at their most tentative. Jeff Nunokawa has further argued that domesticity ‘offers a vacation from the pressures of the market economy, or translates the terms of its divisions and divisiveness from the marketplace where they are inverted and exacerbated into a sphere of romance where they are resolved’ (Nunokawa, 1994: 13); the home is the sphere where the financial exchange is marginalised because the values of exchange are different. Nevertheless, in her short fiction, Braddon is preoccupied with marriage as a financial *and* emotional exchange: the two spheres and types of commerce work in conjunction with each other. This is most prominent in the three tales mentioned because in each there is a difference in social standing between the man and the woman, where the woman has a private fortune while the man is publicly penniless in comparison. Respectively, Fredrick is an office clerk, Hanbury Hexam had his wealth unlawfully inherited by another strand of his family, and Hugh Damer loses his money through gambling. The loss of money reduces the likelihood of the men being accepted as suitable husbands, because marriage is promoted as an economic contract, rather than a love alliance, that needs to be financially equal to be sustained. So, instead of marrying the wealthy women and using that money to solve their own financial problems, Fredrick, Hanbury and Hugh work to earn their own living before returning to claim their loved ones.

This insistence on making their own way in the world demonstrates that nineteenth-century concepts of masculinity played a vital role in the economic, as well as emotional, standing between the couple. As noted by John Tosh in *A Man’s Place* (1999):

In a pamphlet entitled *How Men are Made* (1859), the popular Baptist writer William Landels declared that men ‘do not simply grow’; they are made,

‘not by passively yielding to an internal pressure, but by the putting forth of an internal force which resists and masters, if it cannot change, the outward’.
(Landels in Tosh, 1999: 111)

Thus, for Landels, men are constructed by an ‘internal force’; they must be driven and focused because masculinity, like financial wealth, has to be earned. This ‘force’ is manifested outwardly by having self-control and maintaining one’s position within society; hence economic viability is a vital element to prove one’s right as a man to take a wife. Traditionally, the husband must provide for the wife and any children; he should not be financially dependent upon her. This relates to the idea that manhood ‘resists’ and ‘masters’, because it aligns nineteenth-century manliness with the patriarchal dichotomy of dominance and submission. Fredrick, Hanbury and Hugh must make their own fortune so they can join their wealth to their beloveds’, rather than appearing to marry the women for their money.

This problem is explored in detail in ‘Hugh Damer’s Last Ledger’ when Hugh and his friend discuss how marrying Laura, even though he loves her, would be a “base” and “sordid” idea: Hugh states that he “couldn’t *sink* to the position of a *dependent* on my wife [... it is] a man’s deepest degradation” (Braddon, 1877: 288-9). Accepting financial help from a woman whom the man should support adversely affects his masculinity, because, as ‘The Zoophyte’s Revenge’ has previously demonstrated, whoever has the wealth has the power. A further complication is that Laura’s father is suspicious of the match: “if a man is poor, it’s difficult to get rid of the notion that he’s more or less a fortune-hunter” (p.34). Thus, to ensure the marriage is an equal exchange of emotions, the man and woman should be socially and financially on a level; the two work in tandem to counteract the inequality that Braddon had previously punished in her domestic short

fiction. Thus, it is not only women who are affected by this financial/emotional dilemma, as Liggins has pointed out:

[t]ypically, [Braddon's novels of the 1870s] invite the reader to sympathise with women facing social restrictions around earning and spending money whilst implying that the mercenary spirit of the modern woman could not be reconciled with the womanliness expected of the Victorian heroine.

(Liggins, 2004: 79)

Nevertheless, Braddon's domestic short fiction also invites the reader to realise that men are under a similar pressure; they too face social restrictions based on economics if they appear mercenary and an advantageous financial match cannot be reconciled with the ideal masculinity expected of the nineteenth-century hero.

Accompanying the problematic financial difference between Hanbury and his beloved, Dorothy, is the additional complication that Dorothy's wealth was lawfully entailed to Hanbury. Hanbury's father brought a chancery case against Dorothy's father as the current owner of the large Hexam estate and proved his right to the claim; however, 'the statute of limitations had extinguished the claimant's remedy' and his father killed himself (p.344), much like the Jarndyce and Jarndyce case in Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852-3), where Richard Carstone dies after putting too much faith in the outcome of the chancery claim. Hanbury's life story demonstrates that a sole endeavour to gain money can lead a man to ruin if undertaken for the wrong reasons (financial gain for the sake of having money and a higher social position), rather than acquiring money for a worthwhile cause (such as being able to marry). From this financial disaster, Hanbury was left penniless, so he works his way up through the family business using his 'energy and a firmness' to make a reputable name for himself (p.354). '[E]nergy' and 'firmness' relate to Landels's

description of a man utilising his 'internal force' to establish himself in work, proving his masculinity; Hanbury marries Dorothy on his own merits, just like Hugh Damer, because both men demonstrate that a lack of economic wealth does not translate into a lack of moral wealth. Thus, a family feud, as in 'Old Rutherford Hall', is once again resolved by the union of the two children, but only if they are financially and emotionally equal.

Another financial dilemma affecting an engagement is a death in the family that changes expected legacies; either the claimant's prospects are not met, or another claimant inherits a fortune unexpectedly. As 'Sir Hanbury's Bequest' has demonstrated, not getting a claim one is entitled to produces a devastating ripple effect on the rest of the family; however, in 'Found the Muniment Chest' Braddon explores the impact of potentially having the inheritance removed after years of living comfortably. This removal affects different members of the family in diverse ways: for Barbara's father it means ruin because, as a bibliophile, he would have to sell his collection to refinance the inheritance he has spent, while Barbara would lose her high social standing, allowing Fredrick to propose because they would be on an equal economic and emotional ground. Nevertheless, Braddon does not follow this predictable plotline. Instead, Fredrick proves his masculinity by comparing himself to 'Theseus' and having the 'courage' to go to America, ascertaining that the other claimants are deceased (Braddon, 1867: 10). Barbara maintains her wealth and social standing, and because Fredrick proposed during her financial and emotional ordeal their union is blessed. Notably, it is the men in these tales who have to prove that they have the moral and emotional worth to balance out the economy of the public/private spheres; Braddon again expands the feminist argument for equality by affirming that men must embrace typically feminine attributes, such as morality and caring for others, in order to secure an equal and happy union. Even so, as the ending of 'Hugh Damer's Last Ledger'

meta-fictionally notes: '[w]hen the happy sound of wedding bells rings out upon the air, one can generally guess the end of the story; although there are those who do come to grief, and ruin worse than death, after marriage' (p.125). This direct reference to the creation of the story as a story reveals that Braddon does not trust the conventional happily-ever-after ending that even an economic and emotional equality brings to a relationship, and so in 'The Lawyer's Secret' (1861), 'Christmas in Possession' (1868) and 'Sir Luke's Return' (1875), Braddon examines financial and emotional problems after marriage.

Significantly, in 'The Lawyer's Secret', the secret once again relates to an inheritance that a woman should receive on the death of a family member. Ellinor must marry her uncle's adopted son to gain her fortune, placing her in a dangerous position: if Ellinor does not marry Henry she loses her inheritance, but if she does she ties herself to a man she does not love. Her lawyer, Horace's, 'excellent, sensible and business-like advice' is to marry Henry (Braddon, 1861: 605), suggesting that '[a] mercenary marriage might prove the only viable alternative to the ennui of the single life' (Liggins, 2004: 77), though it does mean that this marriage is established as an economic rather than an emotional transaction. This imbalance of emotional/economic worth is emphasised by contrasting Henry and Horace as two opposing forms of masculinity. Horace is a valued family friend and guardian whose advice Ellinor trusts completely, although he is characterised as 'cold', 'powerless', 'listless' and 'laz[y]' (p.607), countering Landels's ideal nineteenth-century masculinity; while Henry has 'force, determination, self-reliance, perseverance; all those attributes, in short, which go to make a great man' (p.606), contradicting his supposedly mercenary agenda because he epitomises Landels's ideal.

Nevertheless, after Henry and Ellinor's marriage, Henry restricts her spending, intensifying the problematic situation she has been placed in: the wealth she should have

gained on marrying him, legally transfers her husband. Ellinor, however, resents him only because it curbs her almsgiving; she values charitable giving, rather than self-indulgent spending on luxuries. Henry's miserly attitude counters his depiction as the heroic Victorian man, but the reader is alerted to a mystery surrounding Henry, Horace and Ellinor's inheritance by Braddon's meta-fictional writing. In 'Chapter II: In Which a Secret is Revealed, But Not to the Reader' (p.605), Horace discloses to Henry that he speculated with Ellinor's inheritance and lost, so she is unknowingly penniless. This revelation is not disclosed to Ellinor, or the reader, until the last chapters, again prioritising the reader as the detective figure, confirming Braddon's blurring of generic boundaries. This secret also explains the difference in the emotional/financial worth of the two men: Horace has no emotional or economic value because he has cheated Ellinor out of her inheritance, while Henry married Ellinor knowing she was penniless. Thus, to counter Ellinor's emotional wealth, Henry illustrates financial *and* emotional riches: he dedicates himself to his profession to keep them financially afloat. Consequently, the contrast between the two men proves that the ideal husband needs to have emotional as well as financial merit so that he is worthy of the woman's values.

A more extreme case of financial difficulties after marriage is depicted in 'Christmas in Possession', in which Augustus leaves his wife, Clara, over the Christmas period to visit his family, while she remains at home, dealing with the creditors he owes. Being abandoned by her husband, Clara has no power or authority to keep control of the house, which becomes possessed by the creditors. The wife is left to suffer alone as the furniture is marked for auction, and Jiffins, the 'man in possession', moves in (Braddon, 1868 [1877]: 251). The extent of this financial loss expresses the vulnerable position a wife is put in, if her husband recklessly spends their money and leaves with no notice of

returning. Once again, Braddon's domestic short fiction acts as a warning to her mainly female readership about the dangers inherent within marriage, as well as signalling to her male readers the unacceptability of Augustus's conduct, because it defies Victorian masculine ideology. Augustus returns as the auction starts, but only after a fatal shooting 'accident' has killed off the first in line to the family estate; the family is reunited in their emotional and financial wealth, which overtly aligns the tale as conforming to Victorian hegemonic ideals. Nevertheless, as Liggins notes in relation to *Taken at the Flood* (1874), '[e]ven though men are quite as capable of squandering money on pleasure – Sybil's spendthrift husband can only pay off his bills after a timely inheritance – this is never seen as a cause for concern' (Liggins, 2004: 82). The same can be said for 'Christmas in Possession', because the conclusion focuses on Clara's abundant generosity in rewarding Jiffins with ten pounds, 'about a thousand percent for his loan' (p.251), distracting the reader's attention away from the fact that Augustus had bankrupted the family, left his wife alone in a vulnerable situation, and potentially murdered his kinsman to pay off his debts, to focus on her economic extravagance. The husband's public financial economy does not match his wife's private emotional worth and so the reader is left not with the sense that the ideal nineteenth-century family is intact, but with a concern that this situation may recur due to Augustus's failed masculinity.

Braddon's later tale, 'Sir Luke's Return', extends the previous themes of emotional and economic worth when Sir Luke arrives at the family estate to distribute his riches. Knowing that his financial standing presupposes an emotional and moral dilemma as to whom he can trust, he swaps positions with his servant to discover "“what stuff [his family is] made [of]”" (Braddon, 1875 [1877]: 311); just as in 'Sir Hanbury's Bequest', commerce and financial wealth are demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on the happiness of an

individual. Sir Luke's deception reveals who emotionally values him and who only covets his economic wealth, like a modern variation on *King Lear* (c.1608), proving that financial and emotional riches are two separate economies that are valued differently. Ultimately, Sir Luke rewards those who did not expect an inheritance because they treat him, as a servant, with respect, while those who mocked him and preyed on the supposed Sir Luke's wealth are disregarded. Thus, this tale serves as a didactic moral lesson for Braddon's readership by supporting the previous tales' ideological message that emotional wealth is worth more than financial success in life. This is confirmed because the young man who 'spoke with manliness and modesty' about his love for the potential heiress is rewarded with his marriage to her (p.317), because they both love each other and are equally financially rewarded by Sir Luke. Overall an examination of Braddon's tales about economic hardship demonstrates her ultimately moderate feminist position, because although all of the women and men desire marriage, they achieve this through a financial and emotional equality.

Conclusion

Armstrong concludes *Desire and Domestic Fiction* by stating '[t]he ideal of domesticity has grown only more powerful as it has become less a matter of fact and more a matter of fiction' (Armstrong, 1987: 251). Braddon's domestic short fiction supports this notion because she represents a wide range of domestic situations in her sensationalised domestic short fiction which all promote an economic and emotional equality between partners. From examining Braddon's domestic short fiction several other issues have arisen. Mainly, Braddon has modernised the subgenre in conjunction with her readership's expectations. This updating inevitably centred on her sensationalisation of the subgenre, because this is

her forte, but also because the subgenre needed to examine the more contemporary issues surrounding a woman's growing dissatisfaction with her place in the private sphere, including debating a man's position in the home. Braddon's sensational domestic short fiction is separated from her pure sensation fiction in several distinct ways. There is a lack of mystery surrounding the engaged/married couple that needs solving; sexually active females are textually erased or punished in favour of morally chaste women; there is an emphasis on introspection, as well as characterisation and plot; the conventions of the short story as a genre mean the narrative pace is much faster than in traditional domestic fiction, but the tone is more sentimental overall; and the reader's interest lies in how the characters feel and react to a specific dilemma, rather than the situation itself being foregrounded in the tale. Thus, Braddon's domestic short stories may not conform to all of the traditional conventions of the subgenre in each tale – in fact Braddon deliberately challenges these outdated domestic fiction traditions – but taken as a whole, her tales focus on key aspects of the form, expanding the loosely defined subgenre in order to push the boundaries of acceptable reading for nineteenth-century women.

As Kathy Psomiades notes: '[n]ovels written from 1865 to the end of the century drew upon theories about the relationship between marriage and larger social structures that ultimately inflected their metaphorical and structural uses of marriage' (Psomiades, 2010: 53), and Braddon's short fiction is no exception. The fact that she prioritises the romance plot, with the woman ultimately marrying the man and entering the domestic sphere, which is grounded within the patriarchal tradition, suggests that Braddon believed a woman's place was in the home, aligning her fiction with traditional Victorian values. This is seen most prominently in the tales about family and friends and rejected and new lovers, because these are the stories in which women are placed in morally and emotionally compromising

situations and are punished if they show reprehensible characteristics. Nonetheless, Braddon, alongside other women writers of the nineteenth century, such as Gaskell and Eliot, examined the ‘mechanisms of middle class control’ (Langland, 1995: 8), and challenged this male socially constructed structure by depicting women attempting to find a wider social sphere for themselves. Braddon’s more feminist leaning is most notable in her tales about economic hardships because in these stories she promotes a financial equality between men and women as a means of achieving a balanced and fair marriage. Furthermore, Braddon also included male perspectives to demonstrate that a wider view needs to be adopted in order to promote male and female equality, which is based on financial *and* emotional wealth. Consequently, as this chapter has demonstrated:

[d]omesticity, like feminism in nineteenth-century England, was contested terrain. We need to be able to understand varieties of domestic fiction not devoted to promulgating an individualist, depth-model of the self. In other words, even on the level of representation, the “domestic woman” never spoke with “a single voice”. (D’Alberty, 1997: 812)

Braddon’s short fiction also does not speak as “a single voice” because she deliberately transcended conventional plotlines (for example, examining the problems faced after marriage, as well as during an engagement) to create ambiguity and narrative tension; she dissected the boundaries between experimental and conventional, radical and conservative, expression and repression, feminist and anti-feminist, domestic and sensational fiction. Thus, attempting to label Braddon’s fiction as either anti-feminist or feminist is ultimately difficult and reductive, because it threatens to over-simplify her diverse and sometimes oppositional insight into a woman’s position in society in her deliberately liminal writing.

CHAPTER FIVE

BRADDON'S CHILDREN'S SHORT FICTION

What do we know of the mystery of child-nature, child-life?

(Jameson, 1854: 117)

Throughout the nineteenth century ‘the child’ was established, not only as a separate part of society, but ‘childhood’ became a rite of passage for young people. The separation of children and adults occurred through laws that protected young children from hard labour, and Lionel Rose’s *The Erosion of Childhood* (1991) documents the developing legislation for factories and mines in relation to child workers and their health and education (Rose 1991: 8-18). Furthermore, many charities protected children who were left vulnerable after being orphaned, becoming homeless or were maltreated by their families. For instance, Dr. Barnardo established his first children’s home in 1867 (Barnardo’s, 2011: online), and ‘[i]n 1889 – the year in which English and Irish societies amalgamated to form the NSPCC – came the early crowning achievement of the passage of the Prevention of the Cruelty to Children Act’ (Rose, 1991: 238). Each of these laws and charities recognised a child’s right to ‘childhood’ and children were consequently established as a subsection of society in their own right. Thus, Victorian society began to believe that ‘all children ... were entitled to enjoyment of the experiences of what constituted a “proper childhood”’ (Cunningham, 1991: 1). These laws and charities mostly affected children from the lower and working classes, rather than middle or upper classes, therefore, the distinction between classes was a continuing factor impacting on how ‘childhood’ was experienced and its subsequent representation in literature.

Braddon herself was actively involved in many charitable children's organisations in the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. As William Babington Maxwell notes:

[w]ith the wide publicity afforded by *Truth* my mother started the very first of the funds for giving country holidays to poor children. Known as "Mrs. Maxwell's Holiday Fund," it grew rapidly. And when my mother handed the management over to Lady St. Helier its growth was well maintained.

(*TG*: 138)

Braddon's own diaries for the years 1894-1911 have entries referencing the children's charitable work she undertook: on 20th January 1894 Braddon refers to a 'Children's Tea at Reading Room – 58 Children'; on 7th April 1896 she notes a 'Children's Tea at Infant School'; on Christmas Eve 1909 she hosted a 'Children's Tea Party'; and in 1911 Braddon held two more 'Children's Tea Part[ies]' (*SF*: Reel 7-10).¹ This demonstrates children were a significant aspect of Braddon's life, especially when considering her own household; Braddon became a step-mother to Maxwell's five children and she and Maxwell also had six children of their own (of whom only five survived), all before they got married. Within the family setting the two groups of children seem to have liked and trusted each other, and despite her demanding work commitments, Braddon was a constant presence in their lives. As W. B. Maxwell continues to note: '[t]he power that [Braddon's] noble spirit exercised could banish querulousness, anger, and all evil humours. From an early age I adored my mother' (*TG*: 12). Maxwell perpetuates Braddon's constructed matronly image by suggesting she cultivated her family relations because they were of vital importance to her;

¹ This was not the only charitable work Braddon undertook. She also 'contributed large sums [to pensioners], founding and endowing old age pensions for printers. Moreover hospitals and philanthropic societies can very rarely have appealed to her in vain' (*TG*: 283). Braddon's charity for printers is also commented on in *The Athenaeum* which states that Braddon gave '272l. [to the Printers' Pension Corporation.] This is the fourth pension that printers owe to Miss Braddon's generosity' ('Literary Gossip' 1908: 764).

she did not neglect her motherly duties. Thus, Braddon's household would be a constant reminder to her of the importance of children in the home.

Furthermore, with the development of 'childhood' through compulsory education and the mass production of illustrated books, children's literature was not only established as a subgenre in its own right, but was completely transformed during the Victoria era. The didactic style that had been dominant at the start of the century changed in the 1840s, altering the focus to entertaining, as well as educational, stories. There was also an increasing differentiation between boys' and girls' reading, aiming to maintain the division between the sexes. In consideration of nineteenth-century children's writer Mary Molesworth's statement, that 'writing *about* children is by no means the same thing as writing *for* them' (Molesworth, 1893 [1976]: 342), this chapter focuses on Braddon's children's literature through a wide range of her subgenres: Braddon's writing as a child, her writing about children for adult readers, her writing for children, and finally her autobiographical account of her own childhood. The themes this chapter will consider are whether Braddon uses children and childhood as a means of upholding Victorian cultural values or as a way of promoting social reform, because, '[i]n much Victorian discourse, children are seen as mutable subjects who can transgress the social boundaries that adults cannot' (Berry, 1999: 6). This transgression is amplified through the oral traditions of children's literature because parents can impress their values onto future generations by reading aloud to their children. Another issue is what Braddon's use of children's literature, in all forms, discloses about her own view of the 'mystery of child-nature, child life' (Jameson, 1854: 117). For instance, what does Braddon reveal about the inner psychology of children and the development of their creative processes; does she treat children

differently depending on their class; and does she perceive childhood as a formative period of a person's life?

Braddon's Writing as a Child

Before the influence of her own children, Braddon, as a child herself, had an active interest in writing. Childhood is a person's formative years, and it was at age six that she received a writing desk from her godfather:

my first desk, which was the delight of my childhood, and which I used and abused by cramming it with more paper than it would hold comfortably, I had for nearly thirty years, before I gave it to my son, shabby but not dilapidated.

I had a desk, and now I felt that I could really write ... one of the treasures of my desk was a stick of sealing wax ... every evening saw me at my desk. (‘BKE’: 113-15)

The sense of excitement, joy and ‘delight’ Braddon describes at the arrival of her writing desk demonstrates that she was a born writer; she ‘felt’ that this was her natural, chosen occupation. Braddon's autobiography, entitled ‘Before the Knowledge of Evil’ (1914), has obvious religious associations and I would argue that the arrival of the desk – which is made of wood like the tree of knowledge – unlocks Braddon's literary talent, symbolising her fall into temptation and her subsequent adult life of ‘sin’ as a Victorian woman author of sensation fiction. Her descriptions of the ‘treasures’ that came with her desk signify her zeal for her favourite activity, which found her ‘every evening’ at her desk creating her own literary ‘treasures’; this determination became characteristic of her professional authorial ‘self’. The importance of the first desk is also described by Edith Nesbit in ‘My School

Days' (1896-7), published in the *Girl's Own Paper*. Nesbit had 'an old mahogany bookcase with a deep top drawer, that let down to form a writing-table. Here I used to sit and write – verse, verse, verse – and dream of the days when I should be a great poet, like Shakespeare, or Christina Rossetti!' (Nesbit, 1896-7: 788). The desk for Nesbit symbolises the transition from childhood to adulthood, because when she was fifteen her mother read and helped to publish her poetry. The same was also true for Frances Hodgson Burnett who describes how, when a child, she was 'so eager to try [her poetry] on Mamma' (Burnett, 1893: 204). The desk for Braddon, in contrast, indicates that writing had always been a way for her to express herself, whether her thoughts, feelings or beliefs. It was this essential middle-class childhood experience that gave Braddon the ability to write – she had an education and could afford luxuries such as writing implements and paper – as well as her first sense of self as a writer, which she developed into a career only later in life. The fact that Braddon states she 'used and abused' her desk contradicts the evidence that she must have kept it well maintained to pass it on to her son, Gerald Melbourne Maxwell, just as she passed on her writing talent to another son, William Babington Maxwell. Writing was obviously treated as an inherited family talent that was released by the acquisition of a desk.

It was at this desk that Braddon wrote her first childhood stories; it was the gateway to opening up her imagination to express her inner world. Unlike Lewis Carroll, the Stephen children and the Brontë siblings, Braddon did not have a family magazine in which to 'publish' her childhood fiction, however, she notes that '[t]he interval between the ages of eight and twelve was a prolific period, fertile in unfinished MSS' (Braddon, 1893 [1897]: 110). Several fragments of these stories have survived as vital examples of fiction by a child, and they provide an insight into Braddon's childhood psychology. As Christine Alexander notes, there are two possible relationships writers have with their juvenilia: they

either view it as a vital development of their authorial selves (like Braddon), or they reject it as infantile and embarrassing (Alexander, 2005a [2006]: 70-97). Because there is no indication of Braddon's intentions for her juvenilia – she may have written them for her own personal perusal, for family and friends, or with the intention of a wider public readership through eventual publication – it is impossible to ascertain whether or not her writing was restricted by an imagined adult readership or if she was able to embrace the freedom of the creative process as a child.

One example of her childhood writing is Braddon's first attempt to write a story at that desk. It was:

a pale copy of one of those old fairy tales that were deeply imprinted upon my brain. The proud elder sister who treated her younger sister cruelly, made a scrub of her, till the fairy came along, disguised as a shabby old woman, and put both sisters to the test, and everything was set right in a flash.

I was not thinking of Maggie when I wrote that unoriginal story, but Maggie was an older sister, and the whole race of elder sisters from Cinderella's downwards was an evil, and though Maggie was not actually cruel to me, she sometimes sent me upstairs to fetch her handkerchief, a liberty which I resented. (‘BKE’: 117)

As Alexander notes, ‘[i]mitation is the way children learn. It involves not simply copying but reworking of and experimentation with an original’ (Alexander, 2008: 18). To develop this argument, imitation relies on a shared literary experience; Braddon is assuming that, if anyone else were to read her story, in order for her tale to be effectively understood they would have to be familiar with ‘Cinderella’. Fairy tales were originally written for adults, but they became popular reading for children during the pre-Victorian era with the rise of children's chapbooks. The Brothers Grimm's *Popular Tales*, illustrated by George Cruikshank, was also published in 1823-6 for adults and children (VictorianWeb, 2012:

online). Indeed, Braddon mentions that she ‘much loved and much dreaded [the] story of Red Riding Hood – and the wolf’ (‘BKE’: 3), revealing the juxtaposition of pleasure and fear created by these traditional tales, even when adapted for child readers. With this assumption of a shared knowledge – as Braddon states fairy tales are ‘deeply imprinted’ upon children’s minds from an early age – these stories are ideally suited to adaptation because of their ever evolving nature. The common tropes of fairy stories – the family home, sibling relationships and good versus evil – are usual themes adopted by children, because these situations are what their childhood worlds consist of.

Braddon’s specific imitation of ‘Cinderella’ is noteworthy because of its family connection. ‘The choice of a model’, Juliet McMaster argues, ‘is necessarily an identifying decision’ (McMaster, 2005a [2006]: 189), thus, as a child, Braddon felt that she fundamentally related to Cinderella. Considering Braddon’s elder sister Maggie did not enter her life until she was four (‘BKE’: 17), and this tale was written two years later, it implies the introduction of a sibling relationship had a large impact on Braddon’s life: she was no longer the sole focus of her mother’s attentions. As the child psychologists Melville and Frances Herskovits argue, the interruption of the mother/daughter relationship by another sibling can cause ‘a sense of rejection and neglect’ (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1996: 183). Thus, by choosing to write about the ‘evil[s]’ of ‘elder sisters’, Braddon draws on the shared experience of sibling rivalries, signalling her feelings of mild animosity and ‘resent[ment]’ towards her sister, even if the tale was not directly about Maggie. Braddon’s reworking of ‘Cinderella’, therefore, illustrates her creative process: she chooses a tale that she relates to and adapts it to suit her own personal history. Furthermore, by rewriting her relationship with her sister, Braddon repositions and redefines herself as the heroine of the

story, and by extension becomes the heroine of her family, displacing her sister as the main focus of her mother's attention.

The issue of multiple readerships provides three separate possibilities for her motivation behind writing this tale. If the story was produced for herself, Braddon uses fiction to document her personal history and make sense of her anxiety, without reproach from her family. Alternatively, if the tale was written for her family then Braddon draws on their shared domestic experience, explaining to her mother and sister her inner feelings of displacement. Finally, if Braddon wrote her tale with a future public readership in mind, she signals that their shared literary experience demonstrates more generally how sibling relations and rivalries affect individual children. Any of these options are possible, meaning Braddon blurs the boundaries between being a fiction writer and representing the self in literature. This early example prefigures Braddon's more developed skills as an adult writer of representing her multiple selves in literature, her ability to intertwine fact and fiction, and her preoccupation with how sibling rivalries affect adults. Moreover, Braddon's choice of the short story as her means of expressing her inner world – rather than poetry like Nesbit or Burnett – suggests this genre was a mode she felt comfortable with and could adapt to suit her purpose, which she continued to do over the rest of her writing career.

Writing liberated Braddon, as it did many other Victorian girls, from the sedate reality of everyday life: school work and domestic skills. As her reworking of 'Cinderella' illustrates, reading was another way in which girls could escape into an alternative world, so alongside her evolving writing skills, Braddon had a highly developed reading ability. In her autobiography she provides a detailed overview of the books she read – such as fairy tales, Walter Scott's *Kenilworth* (1821), John Anderson's *The Wizard of the North* (1840), Mary Lamb's *Mrs. Leicester's School* (1809), Johann Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson*

(1812), Dickens's *Nicolas Nickleby* (1838-9) and Shakespeare – texts that evidently sparked her active imagination. In particular she describes Maria Edgeworth's *The Parent's Assistant* (1795) as 'a new friend' ('BKE': 169), demonstrating how emotionally sustaining and influential fiction was to her. Resulting from the texts she read, Braddon's writing style became more sophisticated and she created her own original storylines, rather than reworking others, as illustrated in her 'unfinished MSS', 'An Old Arm Chair' (c.1845).

Braddon wrote this tale aged ten while at boarding school and she describes it as her 'first serious, painstaking effort in fiction' (Braddon, 1893 [1897]: 114), but she also notes it flowed from her 'juvenile pen' with elements being 'average [for] juvenile fiction' (p.114, 112). Her juvenilia is vital in understanding her childhood influences and imagination, helping to situate her as one of the most popular Victorian writers. The tale depicts an old honest couple who are 'the virtuous poor of fiction' (p.113), among whose prized possessions is an arm chair that is a family heirloom. When the family default on their rent, the landlord's agent seizes their household furniture and out of spite rips the chair open and an 'avalanche of banknotes fell out of the much maligned horsehair stuffing' (pp.113-4). Many authors' juvenilia anticipates their adult fiction's themes: for instance, Lewis Carroll's 'use of puns and his interest in the apparent contradiction between the literal and metaphoric meaning of words can be found in all of Carroll's juvenilia' (Bump in Susina, 1992: 12), while this tale reveals Braddon's early affinity for sensational plot twists depicted with a dramatic flair. This sensational influence is innocent though and the tale ends with a neat climax that restores the balance between good (the couple) and evil (the landlord), a further fairytale characteristic of her childhood writing. Thus, while depicting the maltreatment of the poor, this tale illustrates Braddon's naive child view that good people are rewarded in their time of need, a trope she continues throughout her later

fiction. Significantly, the tale also centres on lower-class family relations; her childhood reading of Dickens's depictions of the poor obviously influenced her conception of 'The Old Arm Chair' as the poor are 'virtuous'. Within her childhood domestic fiction, Braddon instinctively takes the side of the underclass; she bases her view on the economic differences between the classes, which becomes a recurrent theme within her adult fiction.

Beyond this sensationalism, Braddon's story demonstrates her parodying and practising adult behaviour through the old couple's dialogue:

"Well, wife, I think that would do, what think you?" said old Robert Gray.

"We have ten shillings. We could buy that and something else," said his wife.

"Let's have it. With all my heart, we will have it, sir." (Braddon in *SV*: 39)

This language is another trademark of her later writing, because '[e]ven at ten, MEB gave circumstantial detail and wrote vivid dialogue' that engaged her readership (*SV*: 38). This 'vivid' language is reminiscent of stage melodrama showing how Braddon at an early age replicates theatrical techniques in her short fiction as a means of expressing herself. However, Braddon's mastery of language has more of an impact than that. By learning to control language through the process of writing fiction, Braddon by implication and extension, could control her world. She makes her characters fit her own needs and uses them to interpret the confusing adult world around her. Nevertheless, the conversation between the married couple shows Braddon performing these societal roles as a child; she is learning to understand the adult world by replicating and therefore assimilating societal norms of behaviour.

In her next tale, 'The Kingdom of Boredom' (c.1849), Braddon describes how 'Ennui was the King and Indifference the Queen; in which fashions were the prime ministers that came and went ... in which the highest of high treasons was to think or to feel

or to act' (Braddon in *SV*: 112). Although it does not have her later authorship's subtlety and panache, this mocking allegory of Victorian England is more sophisticated than 'The Old Arm Chair'; through exaggeration Braddon vehemently critiques the adult attitudes that surrounded her and that she encountered in the books she read. The satirical use of 'Ennui' and 'Indifference' signals what Braddon as a child thought was the problem with English class inequality: the lack of motivation and concern for the nineteenth-century poor. Her comments demonstrate that reading and writing, as well as her own observational insights, expanded her childhood independence of thought, allowing her to express her dissatisfaction with the upper classes in a creative manner.

Unlike the Brontë siblings who created their own imaginary new worlds, Gondal and the African empire of Angria, Braddon deconstructs her own allegory by stating that the Kingdom of Boredom is 'London in September' (p.112). September was London's unfashionable season because the upper classes had left for the countryside and Parliament was adjourned (Hansard does not record any Parliamentary debates from mid-August to December). Braddon depicts the '[i]ndifference' the upper classes felt for the lower classes: they do not care that the poor are left to struggle for work and shelter in London while they are gone. The upper classes are portrayed as lazy and arrogant, so the imaginary becomes reality. Braddon's child mind distorts and intertwines fact and fiction to comment on the unfair political class structure of society without fear of recrimination; she can support the underclass by stating it outright, rather than having to subtly hide it as she does in her adult fiction. Thus, Braddon's naive view, as evidenced in 'The Old Arm Chair', is undermined in her tale written four years later; she has learnt to detect hypocrisy and double standards.

London as the land of Boredom acts as a backdrop for family relations: a woman gives birth to twin sons, of whom the elder, Douglas, becomes a leading languid figure of

the land, while the younger blind son, Philip, strives to use his minimal income for good (twins being another element of the continuing fairytale influence). At forty-six Douglas is a widowed 'cynical hypochondriac' (p.113), while Philip has died leaving a son and daughter, who are invited to the ancestral home just as the tale leaves off. From the basis of this beginning Wolff states that '[i]t is a safe guess that the blind Philip was actually the elder and therefore lawful heir ... Presumably Philip's son is returning to wreak his overdue vengeance upon his uncle and cousin' (SV: 113). This supposed ending is reasonable because, as is usual for her later fiction, 'the mainspring was provided by a crime committed long before the story had begun' (p.113), and this would prefigure Braddon's sensation literature that hinged on mistaken or swapped identities. Alternatively, this may not be the case. Wolff could be anachronistically developing the plot in light of Braddon's elder self's sensation influence, distorting what could plausibly be a domestic story with a conventional restoration ending: Philip's daughter marries Douglas's son to unite the family. Either way the initial setting continues Braddon's support for the underclass from 'The Old Arm Chair', revealing that her inner imaginary life still centres on family relations and political issues.

Writing by children is a vital area of study because it reveals what 'for the child writer, is an imperfectly comprehended but endlessly interesting adult world' (Helsing, 2006: 954). Although Braddon's childhood manuscripts are few, the remaining stories offer valuable insights into her childhood imagination, how she used literature to make sense of the adult world and the experiences that prepared her for her later career as a writer. Her juvenilia reveal elements of the social and personal contexts of her childhood, which she expands on in her autobiography, and the influences that continue to infiltrate her fiction, such as her family, her literary preferences and her political beliefs. These many influences

resulted in her creation of multiple genres of childhood fiction as well as a blending of these different subgenres (retelling fairy-tales, domestic fiction and political satire), which she develops in her later writing career. Her childhood fiction, furthermore, demonstrates Braddon's awareness of class distinctions, her sympathy for the underclass, and her ability to identify hypocrisy and pretentiousness. She also writes with considerable wit, while family rivalry and competition emerge here as key themes she develops later in life.

Braddon's Writing about Children for Adults

Within Braddon's novels children are often a key factor in family relations or pivotal in how adults are viewed by the reader and other characters. For instance, Helen Talboy's abandonment of little George to become Lucy Graham indicates her self absorbed amorality, while Aurora Floyd's son signifies her redemption from sin. Furthermore, as Natalie and Ronald Schroeder note, Braddon's early novels centre on 'courtship, marriage, and spousal relations' (Schroeder and Schroeder, 2006: 18-9). Although their analysis of six novels between 1862 and 1866 does not include children, they briefly note that when Eleanor and Monckton marry in *Eleanor's Victory* (1863) '[t]hey soon have children, and Eleanor thus ... confirms her womanly nature' (p.160), and that '[t]he marriage of Isabella and Gilbert [in *The Doctor's Wife*] survives on illusions, and its fundamental sterility is only underscored by the absence of children (a significant difference from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*)' (pp.84-5). These child characters, or lack of them, suggest that Braddon depicts children only in relation to adults, so they are not fully developed on their own; they are either sentimental symbols or used as lynchpins in the plot. This implies children are unimportant, which is unusual considering the influence they had in her family home, her

charity work and her own interest in writing as a child. In her short fiction about children for adults, however, there are specific moments when Braddon develops child characters and utilises the child protagonist, and, because these instances are sparing, they should be taken seriously for their purpose and effect.

‘My First Happy Christmas’ (1861), ‘For His Son’s Sake’ (1905) and *The Christmas Hirelings* (1893) centre on the presentation of children and childhood² and were originally published in journals aimed at an adult readership: *Welcome Guest*, *Cassell’s Magazine* and *The Lady’s Pictorial*, respectively. Nevertheless, Tara Moore has stated that ‘Braddon wrote *The Christmas Hirelings* for children’ (Moore, 2008: 499); however, Braddon’s intended readership is not that simple. In the volume reprint of 1894 Braddon’s preface states: ‘I had long wished to write a story about children, which should be interesting to childish readers, and yet not without interest for grown-up people’ (Braddon, 1893 [2001]: 9). By writing for both adults and children, Braddon was ‘careful to resist such a category’ of purely children’s fiction (Mattacks, 2001b: 1). This story was written after her fiction for children (to be analysed in the next section), suggesting that Braddon no longer wished to associate herself solely with this subgenre; adult fiction was more important to her. This study will therefore regard *The Christmas Hirelings* as a text for adults, but the deliberate dual readership will be taken into account.

When developing a child character, authors had several choices. They could adopt the Evangelical view (children are born with original sin) or the Romantic view (children are born innocent); they could take a sentimental or realistic portrayal; or they could adapt

² For this study’s purpose, ‘My Daughters’ (1860) will not be analysed because it does not focus on a child character. Instead, it details a father’s complaints about how reading literature constantly changes his daughters’ ideals of the perfect man and he fears they are beginning to act like the heroines of novels they read, meaning they are becoming unmarriageable. The essay concludes with a moralistic message that instead of reading, young women should be occupied with charitable deeds, a theme which links this text to her other writing about children for adults.

their representation through the subgenre they wrote, for instance domestic, adventure or fantasy literature. ‘The idealization of the child as pure and innocent’ Michel Ginsberg argues, ‘is related to the idealization of family and home as protective, natural spaces’ (Ginsberg, 2010: 94). Notably, all of Braddon’s tales about children for adults appear in her domestic fiction, situating the child at the centre of the family, suggesting Braddon maintained innocent and realistic perspectives on childhood, because she based her fictional children on real life situations and settings, and her own family life supports this argument.

Although connected by their intended audience, each of the tales adopts a different perspective: ‘My First Happy Christmas’ contains a first person account of an adult reflecting on his own childhood; ‘For His Son’s Sake’ has a married couple deal with the death of their son from a third person perspective; while *The Christmas Hirelings* depicts three children visiting a family, also from an omniscient perspective (Braddon does not write directly from a child’s point of view). Each of these different perspectives, however, has one common theme: charity. As in her writing as a child, Braddon’s concern for the Victorian poor through her championing of the underclass resurfaces in her writing about children for adults where she actively promotes charity through social and self reformation. Her change to an adult readership meant Braddon could appeal to the people who could make a difference in society, centring on children to create empathy in her mainly female readership. Furthermore, Braddon emphasises the relationship between children and Christmas: ‘My First Happy Christmas’ is a reflection of a child’s wonder at his first Christmas away from boarding school; *The Christmas Hirelings* has three children ‘hired’ for Christmas to entertain a family, while ‘For His Son’s Sake’ depicts how a hospital bed helps improve a child’s life over the Christmas period. Returning to the connection between Christmas, children and charity over a period of forty years, confirms a commitment to the

Romantic portrayal of children, albeit a sentimental one; she reaffirms the special connections that Dickens helped to establish in the 1840s. This relationship remained paramount in society throughout the century, reconfirming every child's right to a "proper childhood" as an important stage in their development (Cunningham, 1991: 1).

Chapter Two linked Christmas and supernatural tales together, and 'My First Happy Christmas' continues this common theme, while additionally intertwining children and charity. This combination once again links to *A Christmas Carol* (1843) – specifically Scrooge and the ghosts' relationships, and the effect this has on Tiny Tim – thus Braddon capitalised on the continuing success of Dickens's text and the subsequent popularity of Christmas fiction aimed at or about children. Braddon's tale focuses on an adult male's reminiscences of the first time he experienced the delights of a middle-class Christmas and was described in the *Brighton Herald* as 'a piece of genial writing worthy of Dickens' (LL: 125).³ The plot develops along similar lines to Dickens's text, although the narration is from a first rather than third person perspective. The oral delivery style – "I find some little difficulty, at this distance of time, in describing it to you correctly" (Braddon, 1861: 315) – provides a rambling, friendly tone suitable for Christmas entertainment, although it also serves to question the narrator's reliability. The effect of this is that the connection between children's literature, supernatural fiction and their oral traditions is compounded; Braddon once again blurs the boundaries between subgenres in her short fiction.

The front page illustration clearly advertises the tale as a Christmas story (Figure 15), and the '[i]llustrations of fireside story-telling idealize the relationship of the family in a way that would have appeared seductive to potential consumers skimming for the illustrations' (Moore, 2009: 56). This opening picture hints at the following content, relying

³ The date for this review is notably 22nd December 1860 while the story was not published in the *Welcome Guest* until January 1861. The reviewer probably read the tale in advance to inform readers of what to buy.

on the adult readers' preconceived notions about Christmas. The depiction of Father Christmas, a Christmas tree, the theatre/pantomime, holly, family gatherings, dancing, playing games, eating and almsgiving are all supported by the long list of what Christmas should be about at the start of the tale:

Christmas ... meant home, and love, and roast turkey, and unlimited wedges of rich plum-pudding, smothered with brandy sauce, and handfuls of chestnuts, and piles of golden oranges, and bilious attacks, and kisses under the mistletoe from pretty cousins, and blindman's buffs, and hunt the slippers, and so many, many glorious things.

(Braddon, 1861: 313)



Figure 15: Title page of 'My First Happy Christmas' by M E Braddon, 1861, *The Welcome Guest*

The sense of excitement created by these 'glorious things' and the front page illustration confirm Braddon's representation of childhood as a sentimentalised period. Christmas places children at the centre of attention, suggesting that the 'idealize[d] ... relationship of the family' was universal because everyone could relate to such images.

The alluringly idealized image of Christmas, however, is relevant only to the upper and middle classes and Braddon undermines their expectations by the unnamed narrator's

revelation that he is an orphan who is left at boarding school while the other children go home for the festive season; an episode reminiscent of Scrooge's visit to his old school with the Ghost of Christmases Past. Braddon emphasises the emptiness of an orphan's life through her use of punctuation: 'I never wrote to mine [parents], because they were —' (p.312). The significant '—' symbolises the child's loss of love, happiness and innocence, while his lack of a name signifies his ever present yet never publicly recognised position; his anonymous character extends, almost into caricature, to symbolise all orphans. Braddon thus depicts one possible reality of Christmas for orphans: the fantasy of Christmas remains only a fantasy for the Victorian poor; her textual reality being that 'little shivering boys were left all alone' (p.313). The narrator's rhetorical question: '[i]s it a wonder, then, that I hated Christmas?' (p.313), acts as a reminder to the middle-class reader that their 'shared' experience, as represented by the opening illustration, is not shared by everyone.

Continuing the structure of *A Christmas Carol*, the Ghost of Christmas Present is recognised in one man's kindness: a navy officer takes the boy home and provides the wondrous spread that was alluded to in the illustration, comparing Christmases between the different classes, while also promoting charity to relieve the hardship of the poor. The orphan revisited the officer's house every Christmas while he attended boarding school, proving that his aid was not a one-off donation; unlike Dickens's wider social reform message the charity is provided only at Christmas. Braddon does not address the overarching economic differences between the classes as an issue that needs to be fully resolved; she promotes Christmas charity to placate middle-class guilt. Furthermore, the officer's kindness is not permanent: when the narrator revisits the officer's house later in life he discovers it has been demolished and they are building 'a great grim Elizabethan workhouse on the site of the ... hospitable place' (p.314). Time has progressed and

society's Want and Ignorance which fuel the suppression of the poor have become worse, not better. Even though workhouses were an industrial form of poor relief, they were impersonal; helping the poor individually not only financially benefits the recipient, but the donor is emotionally benefited too.

Once the festivities end the boy returns to school and on his way he has a dream sequence where he is taken to a cemetery. Resembling the ghost of Christmases Yet-To-Come, a goblin arrives and orders him to “tumble in” to his grave (Braddon, 1862: 211);⁴ it appears he is dead, his return to earth representing what awaits orphans if they are not helped by society. Braddon utilises the supernatural tale convention of intertwining social problems with paranormal elements to argue that the Victorian poor are the real ghosts of Christmas that haunt society. Thus, Braddon adapted her predominantly domestic tale to include supernatural elements to communicate her message of social reform to her middle-class readership, as she did in her supernatural fiction. At the conclusion, the boy, who only imagined the goblin, returns to school by falling into the grave; it is only through a metaphorical death that the orphan is able to reintegrate into society and create a positive future for himself.

Braddon's return to a charity theme in her 1905 story 'For His Son's Sake' demonstrates that after forty years, nothing has changed; the same economic differences and need for social reform persist, as does Braddon's desire to get her message across to her readers. In this tale a married couple's son dies and in their grief they donate a cot to a hospital that cares for ill children. One Christmas, a girl occupying the bed requests to see the donor, to thank him for his generosity. Sally embodies the poor child whose mother is “better” off without her (Braddon, 1905: 77); having no dependant meant her mother

⁴ This reference refers to the unedited 1862 *Halfpenny Journal* version of 'My First Happy Christmas' and the full reference is listed with the 1861 *Welcome Guest* publication in the bibliography.

could keep her job in service. Instead of being allowed to re-enter society like the orphan, Sally dies after a painful illness and Braddon adopts a literal rather than metaphorical approach, compounding her message about the importance of charity. By making the hungry, ill and abandoned characters children in both short stories, Braddon projects adult fears onto vulnerable children to stimulate her readers' sense of compassion and guilt; Christmas stories deliberately 'aroused readers' expectation of sentiment and 'used Christmas emotionalism to make arguments for social reform' (Moore, 2009: 39).

This manipulation is continued in *The Christmas Hirelings*, which outlines the life of Sir John Penlyon. Sir John disinherited his daughter because he did not approve of her marriage. Years later his friend, Mr. Danby, invites three children, Moppet, Laddie and Lassie, to visit for Christmas to liven up the festivities. Braddon's family home setting presents a familiar location for her readership, allowing them to relate to the tale. At the start, Sir John argues the middle-class perspective on Christmas and charity:

“What does Christmas mean to any British householder? ... an overwhelming shower of ... reports of every imaginable kind of philanthropic scheme for extracting money from the well-to-do classes – schemes so many and so various that a man will harden his heart against the cry of the poor rather than he will take the trouble to consider the multitude of institutions that have been invented to relieve their distress.” (Braddon, 1893 [2001]: 12)

Sir John's remark reflects Scrooge's selfish sentiments, but *The Christmas Hirelings* manages to evade a direct plea for the poor by focusing instead on familial charity. Braddon argues for self-reformation through engagement with the needs of children, as Dickens does with his manipulation of the readers' emotional attachment to, and middle-class guilt for, the life of Tiny Tim. To achieve this emotional sympathy for the children, Braddon evolves her previous caricatures of unnamed orphans and ill children into realistic, rather than

sentimental, characters, personalising the family and making them sympathetic to her readers. In fact, Braddon's text 'manages to transcend its own sentimentality' (SV: 355), because '[t]he living models for the three children were close at hand, dear and familiar to the writer' (p.9); Braddon draws on her knowledge of children she knew.

One way Braddon makes her child characters realistic is by contrasting them to Sir John's constructed view of children. He thinks children "always have colds in their heads; they don't know how to treat decent furniture; they would scroop the heavy chairs on the oak floor; they would leave prints of their horrid little thumbs on my books" (p.15), which serves to seal his likeness to Scrooge, rather than offering a more accurate representation of children. The three children are nothing like Sir John's expectations; Braddon juxtaposes his negative view with her reality, arguing that the two are completely different. To make the children realistic, Braddon recreates children's language and actions, particularly in relation to Moppet. Her child voice endlessly questions her surroundings: "Why don't you say your prayers dreckly you're dressed, like we do?" (pp.45-6). Other comments present her perceptive and forthright nature – "I'm sorry you don't like us, Mr. Old Gentleman" (p.38) – while she mispronounces other words: "veway" or "twemendously" (p.40, 57). Braddon's innocent, yet realistic, portrayal of Moppet shows how she gains power over Sir John; she is outspoken, quirky, entertaining, individual, and most importantly, respectable, even though she is poor. Braddon continues her representation of the poor as good, honest and reputable people who are worthy of charity.

These innocent childhood traits influence the 'vindictive' Sir John (p.17) – whose rigid patriarchal beliefs have turned him into a lonely old man – to adopt Moppet's 'childish' nature (p.71), completing his self-reform into a kind and generous man. This reintegration into society through the influence of a child is a common theme within fiction,

such as George Eliot's *Silas Marner* (1861), and again links *The Christmas Hirelings* to the effect Tiny Tim has on Scrooge, a connection which is developed when Moppet becomes dangerously ill, scaring Sir John into realising his feelings for her: "“You had no right to bring that little child here – and let me love her – let her grow into an old man's heart. Think what sorrow you have made for me – a sorrow at the end of my life – if she is to die.”" (p.78). Sir John's outburst, however, suggests that he thinks only of himself, rather than of Moppet, and this is reflected in the fact that his charity leads to self-reform only, it does not develop, as it does in Dickens's tale, into a wider form of social engagement.

When the tale's conclusion reveals what the reader has inferred from the beginning, that the three children are Sir John's grandchildren by his disinherited daughter, the children are restored as accepted members of the upper classes. This signifies Braddon's belief that children are key to maintaining family relations and that they do not deserve to be punished for their parents' actions. As Monica Flegel notes: "“[r]ags to riches” narratives, particularly ones that focused on children, were quite common in nineteenth-century British literature” (Flegel, 2009: 61) – Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838) being a prime example – so Braddon again capitalises on an established literary trope to engage her readers' attention. Furthermore, 'piety is a major component in education and in educative texts, and therefore appears prominently in reconstructions of Victorian childhood' (Johnston, 1999: 524). However, in this text it is not the children who need piety, it is Sir John who must forgive his daughter, accepting her back into his life. The dual readership corrodes the boundaries between adult and children's literature, meaning everyone learns that generosity towards disadvantaged family members leads to self-reform, which in turn

is a kind of charity, as well as emphasising that people's need to resolve their own family issues is a prerequisite to helping strangers.⁵

Despite this positive message, however, Sir John 'might be tricked into loving his granddaughter; but he would not be tricked into forgiving his daughter' (p.84). As Mattacks suggests, 'Braddon's representation of Sir John as a snob capable of love but not forgiveness denies the plot a positive conclusion' (Mattacks, 2001b: 5). If an emotional reaction to literature became a pre-requisite for the Christmas story to engage readers in social reform, then Sir John's lack of emotional reconciliation with his daughter means the ending only half satisfies the readers' expectations, confusing the moral and didactic purposes of the story. In a similarly established family situation, Elizabeth Gaskell's 'The Old Nurse's Story' (1852) reveals an alternative ending where reconciliation between a father and daughter also never happens, but the ghost child enacts revenge on the family; forgiveness and charity are essential to personal and social betterment. The disengagement of Sir John with his daughter does, however, show that writing about children is unpredictable and not always happy. This is a more realistic portrayal of life; adults cannot always fully reform, even after a child's influence.

In her fiction about children for adults, there is not one consistent line by which Braddon engages with children; she depicts a mixture of child characters, from the realistic and the sympathetic, to the sentimental and caricatured. Because Christmas texts were strongly didactic, all of Braddon's tales about children for adults have a moral message promoting charity, whether social or familial. Despite this message, however, her tales tend to focus on middle-class charity, rather than redressing the economic differences between classes, suggesting they only placate her readership's feelings of guilt, although this goes

⁵ 'A Good Hater' (1872) details a child helping a betrayed man come to terms with his loss and find happiness for the man and woman who wronged him; Braddon depicts the power of children to heal past wounds, leading to self-reformation.

against her own charitable instincts. Braddon's portrayal of children also reveals her own view of childhood: children are innocent and important in binding a family together. Therefore, Braddon's writing about children for adults argues that children are entitled to a secure childhood where they are protected from society's evils.

Braddon's Writing for Children

Following Braddon's writing about children for adults, which she started to produce in the early 1860s, there is a notable gap before she started to write specifically for children in the early 1880s. Braddon stopped writing about children until she had become a 'decorous and lady-like wom[a]n [like the other writers] who dominated the field of nineteenth-century children's literature – such as Mrs. Gatty, Mrs. Ewing, Mrs. Molesworth, Jean Ingelow, Frances Hodgson Burnett' (Knoepflmacher, 1983: 14), rather than a scandalous 'fallen woman' who wrote sensation fiction. Once Braddon had cemented her respectability in society, she could join the ranks of respectable women writing Victorian children's literature. Furthermore, '[w]ith the Industrial Revolution and the growth of capitalism, the child would become a niche market with its own products, including books, illustrations, toys and games' (Rudd, 2010: 3), and Braddon – being current with all new developments – capitalised on this burgeoning niche market once she was in a respectable position. In line with David Rudd, Clare Bradford further notes that 'the development of publishing for children in Europe coincided with the heyday of European imperialism' (Bradford, 2010: 39), an association made explicit in Braddon's children's writing. The two texts she wrote/produced for children centre on empire, race and colonialism, but despite this imperialist link, significantly, both texts are described as 'fairy tales'. In the preface to her

edited collection *Aladdin* (1880) the stories are introduced as ‘marvellous fairy-tales of the East’ (Braddon, 1880: 5), while *The Good Hermione* (1886) is a rewriting of Queen Victoria’s rule in the ‘fairy tale’ fashion (Braddon 1886: 60). Braddon develops her interest in rewriting fairy tales as a child into her writing for children because she knew this subgenre would appeal to her target readership; it is these fairy tale elements and the post-colonial implications of the text that this section will focus on.

Braddon commenced her children’s writing by editing her own collection of *The Thousand and One Arabian Nights* (c.800). Carnell notes ‘Braddon may have written the page long preface, but probably no more than that’ (Carnell, 2009: online),⁶ but she chose the three best known tales – ‘Aladdin’, ‘Sinbad the Sailor’ and ‘Ali Baba’ – to complete her volume.⁷ Like most fairy tales, these stories would be fairly well known to a child reader, even if they had not read them; thus, Braddon situated herself within an established literary market by adapting previously successful tales. It was only once she had established an association with children’s literature that she developed her own original tale for children. *The Good Hermione*, subtitled *A Story for the Jubilee Year*, was produced in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Victoria’s accession on 20th June 1887. The tale is notably about a past queen who was universally loved by her people and thus, by telling *The Good Hermione* as a story of the past, Braddon defined the present of Victoria’s reign.

In her autobiographical account of her childhood, Braddon comments on books she received as a child, noting that she read:

⁶ Carnell does not surmise who the writer of these tales is if it was not Braddon, and there is no acknowledgement of the writer in the book. Like her editorship of *Belgravia*, it seems unlikely that Braddon would have been merely a figurehead or an editor with little input; it is more likely that she had control over the translation, the illustrations and, thus, the impact of the text, and so this study will comment on the volume’s presentation as Braddon’s own contribution.

⁷ These three tales were not part of the original *Arabian Nights*, but were collated by Antoine Galland in his French translation of 1704-17 entitled *Les Mille et Une Nuits, Contes Arabes Traduits en Français* (‘Arabian Nights’ 2009: online).

that book which had been the joy of many generations of children, the delightful *Swiss Family Robinson*! That was a book of which I never wearied, while the superior book *Robinson Crusoe* exhausted my interest before I had read twenty pages, and was never finished. In contrast to the unattractive form in which Defoe's immortal work was presented to me – a forbidding little volume of small print, without a single picture, the *Swiss Family* was a fat octavo of open print with many engravings, and at once endeared itself to me. ('BKE': 170)

The differences between *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Robinson Crusoe* had a lasting impression that influenced her own writing for children. Like Carroll's Alice, who preferred books with pictures, the manufacture of Braddon's *Aladdin* is similar to her favoured presentation of *The Swiss Family Robinson*: it is 'a fat octavo ... with many engravings'. The collection is marketed as a gift to give to children for a special occasion, such as a Christmas present, enticing children to read it, and adults to buy it (Figure 16). In particular, the rich olive green material contrasts with the beautiful gold embossed writing of the volume's title and the

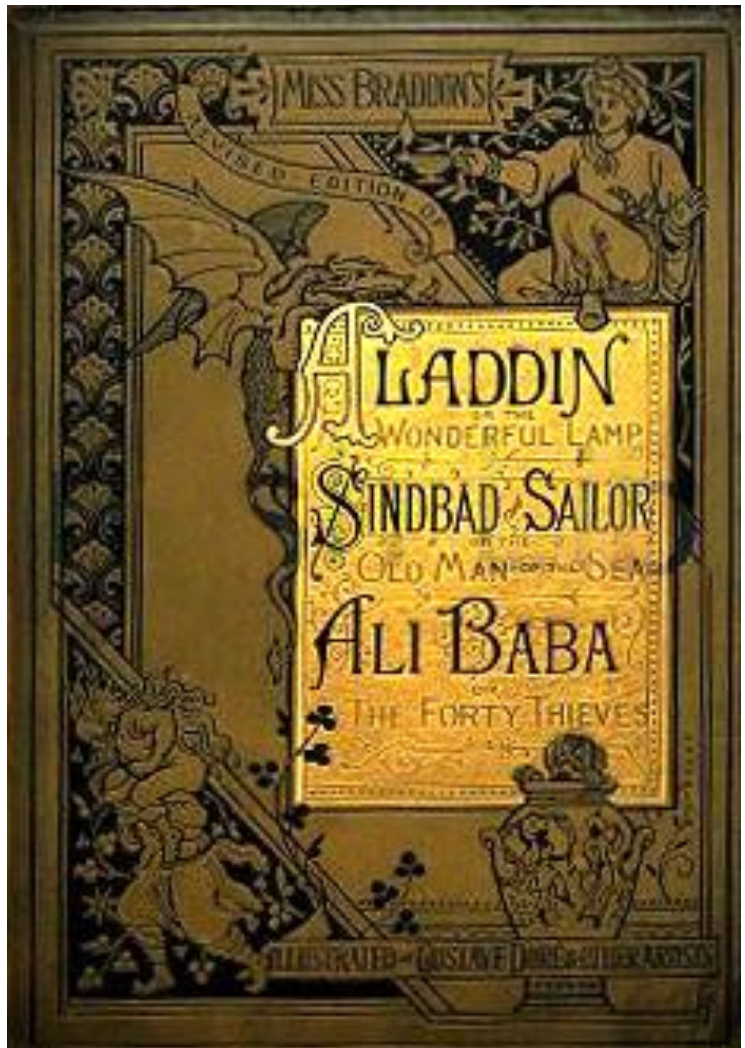


Figure 16: Miss Braddon's Revised Edition of *Aladdin*, 1880, Front Cover

two Arabs, an urn and a snake-like dragon enhance the child's anticipation of what is to come, increasing their desire to read the volume. This production technique was previously used by Dickens to great effect: *A Christmas Carol* was 'bound in salmon-brown and gilt' in order to 'make the book as physically attractive as possible, a Christmas present in itself', and in response the volume was 'greeted with almost universal delight' (Slater, 2009: 220). Furthermore, the chosen titular font, with its archaic swirls and varying style for each story title, creates a pseudo-authentic reproduction of the original *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* cover, but with a contradictory contemporary design to appeal to her modern readership. This 'authenticating' technique problematises *Aladdin* because it blends the historical and fairy tale elements of the stories. If the child reader knows the history of these tales this device emphasises the combination; however, if the stories are new then the plots of the tales become more realistic; fantasy becomes reality (or history), maintaining innocent childhood belief in fairy tales.

The illustrations by the prominent artist Gustave Doré, provide *Aladdin* with magical drawings to capture the imagination of the child reader and to distinguish her version from other editions (Figure 17). One review in *The Athenaeum* states: '[t]here are several woodcuts, of which those by "other artists" have not the merits of M. Doré's. Miss Braddon's versions of the tales are full of spirit, and will answer their purpose' ('Christmas Books', 1879a: 804). This comment suggests the volume was well received and the illustrations are a vital aspect to the collection as a whole. In her preface to *Aladdin* Braddon notes that:

Only such an artist as Doré, who is still more a poet than a painter, could give form to the pictures which every young reader conjures up, before his dreaming eyes, in the winter twilight, as he sits poring over the stories that he loves with all the earnestness of early affection. (Braddon, 1880: 5)

Braddon is aware that Doré's illustrations will be the main attraction to adults and children, so her prioritising of the pictures over the text suggests that they are what capture the 'dreaming eyes' of child readers. This is emphasised on page one of 'Aladdin' where the image occupies the main middle section, while the text is sidelined to the top right hand corner and the bottom (Figure 17); however, the format, structure and vocabulary are also of importance.

In an essay of 1886, the prolific children's author Mrs. Molesworth notes that certain qualities are vital to creating successful children's books; they 'should be written in such a style and in such language that the full

attention and interest of the young readers should be at once enlisted and maintained to the end without any demand for mental straining or undue intellectual effort' (Molesworth, 1886 [1976]: 505). Thus, the

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.



IN the capital of one of the richest and most extensive kingdoms of Cathay, there lived a tailor whose name was Mustafa, who had no other distinction than that of his trade. This tailor was very poor, as the profits of his business barely produced a subsistence for himself, his wife, and a son, with whom God had blessed him. Mustafa's son, whose name was Aladdin, had been brought up in a very negligent manner, and had been left so much to himself, that he had contracted the most vicious habits of idleness and mischief, and had very little respect for the commands of his father or mother. Before he had passed the years of childhood, his parents could no longer keep him in the house. He generally went out early in the morning, and spent the whole day in playing in the public streets with other boys, about the same age, who were as idle as himself. When the boy was old enough to learn a trade, his father, who was unable to have his son taught any other business than that he himself followed, took him to his shop, and began to show him how he should use his needle. But neither kindness nor the fear of punishment was able to restrain Aladdin's volatile and restless disposition; nor could his father by any method make him industrious, or teach him to interest himself in his daily occupations. No sooner was Mustafa's back turned than Aladdin was off, and returned no more during the whole day. His father repeatedly punished him, yet still Aladdin remained incorrigible;

Mustafa, to his great sorrow, was obliged to abandon to his idle, vagabond kind of life. This behaviour of his son gave him great pain, and the vexation of not being able to induce him to pursue a proper and reputable course of life, brought on a fatal disease, which at the end of a few months put an end to his existence.

Figure 17: Miss Braddon's Revised Edition of Aladdin, 1880, Page One

author should consider the age of the intended readership when constructing the written text. In *Aladdin*'s preface Braddon comments that Mr. Lane's previous 'translation, though painfully prolix, is admirable in its fidelity to the style and spirit of the text' (Braddon, 1880: 5); she has read other versions of the tales, suggesting that the source for her own version was Edward Lane's *The Thousand and One Nights* published in 1847, although she also references Galland's 1704-17 version of the tales indicating her wider knowledge. In the BBC's 2011 documentary *Secrets of the Arabian Nights*, the presenter Richard E. Grant notes that 'Edward Lane drastically censored his translation for the Victorian family [and as a result of this] many children's versions were published around this time [which] drew heavily on Lane's sanitised translation' (Grant, 2011: BBC). Robert Mack continues by arguing that 'Lane's version is very archaic' in its language (Mack, 2011: BBC). Braddon adapts her edition so it is more child friendly; it is less 'prolix' while still maintaining 'fidelity to the style and spirit of the text' (Braddon, 1880: 5), which also involves considering the oral dissemination of the tale.

Braddon maintains children's literature's oral tradition in *Aladdin* through the implied dual readership of the child listener and adult reader. Like other fairy tales, *Aladdin* would be read within the family home: adults would read the stories aloud to children, as Braddon suggests in her preface: '[y]ears pass, and we read the unforgettable tales to our children, and wonder at their freshness and reality. Centuries hence they will be as fresh and vivid as they are to-day' (p.5). It is this oral tradition that keeps these stories alive for the listeners.⁸ Later in the decade, Andrew Lang began producing a collection of *Fairy*

⁸ In addition to this dual readership, a separate oral narrative is supplemented by pantomime productions of 'Aladdin'. The first pantomime version was written by John O'Keefe and was performed in 1788 at Covent Garden, and frequent productions over the next few decades meant it became an established part of the repertoire of Victorian pantomime (Witchard 2009: 37). This is another way in which the tales of *The Arabian Nights* may become known to child readers/listeners and transmitted across cultures without their having read the original text.

Stories from 1889-1910, containing tales from around the British Empire. He also wrote a preface for each collection and in the opening to *The Pink Fairy Book* (1897) he observed that '[a]ll people in the world tell nursery tales to their children' (Lang, 1897: vii), confirming their popular appeal to children and adults alike.

Elaine Showalter also comments on this oral tradition when she argues that fin-de-siècle male writers were writing against the 'matriarchal legacy of George Eliot' and the dominance of female writers in the literary marketplace (Showalter, 1999: 76).⁹ To do this, male writers produced literature specifically for boys, but '[w]hat did it mean to write for boys? For one thing, boys' fiction was the primer of empire. Little boys who read will become big boys who rule, and adventure fiction is thus important training' (p.80). *Aladdin* may not be a direct example of the 'male quest romance' that Showalter examines (p.81), but its engagement with boys' adventure narratives from the exotic East means it enters into dialogue about empire. It can be argued that because *Aladdin* is only an edited collection, Braddon could not fully challenge this male dominated subgenre; however, despite the lack of a woman's voice in the tales – all of the stories concentrate on boys having adventures – Braddon's overarching female preface prefigures these masculine narratives. She introduces the stories to the parents and children and her preface also replaces Scheherazade's narrative frame from the original *The Thousand and One Nights*, introducing a feminine aspect to the predominantly male adventure stories. Thus, Braddon questions the male author's right to dominate the empire adventure subgenre by producing children's adventure fiction that was suitable for both girls and boys.

⁹ This study's Introduction situates Braddon as a major figure in this emerging feminised literary marketplace through her prolific production of novels, these novels' high demand in Mudie's Circulating Library and her own editorship of *Belgravia* and *The Mistletoe Bough*.

With *The Good Hermione* Braddon further challenges the male-dominated subgenre of adventure fiction. Significantly, the text was published in 1886 for Queen Victoria's Jubilee. After editing *Aladdin*, Braddon now had the confidence to write her own tale based on empire, thus *The Good Hermione* is a development of the female adventure story. Braddon's preface once again undermines the male dominance of this subgenre and links to her pseudonym, Aunt Belinda. By not adopting a male or non-gender specific *nom de plume* (such as Babington White or M. E. Braddon), Braddon reinforces her female contribution to the adventure subgenre. More specifically her position as an 'Aunt' situates herself, and the text, within the domestic family sphere, signifying again that writing is a suitable occupation for a woman with a family. Braddon expands the familial position of 'Aunt' by creating another framing female narrative in the preface which states:

THIS story was written for my nephews and nieces, and their playmates and schoolfellows. If grown-up people will condescend to read so simple a version of a great History, their appreciation will be very pleasant to
Aunt Belinda. (Braddon, 1886: 3)

This comforting auntly persona was a common form of narrative voice in the nineteenth century often used by women writers. Charlotte Yonge utilised this auntly voice in her series of texts entitled *Aunt Charlotte's Stories of...* from 1873-93, and Sanjay Sircar provides another example from Mrs. Molesworth's *Tell Me a Story* (1875): in this tale 'a woman with a daughter named Sybil announces that she will tell the short stories that follow to her nieces and nephews' (Sircar, 1989: 4). Braddon is aware of the current trends in writing children's fiction and the necessity to write for a dual readership, but she also expresses her intention to write for *both boys and girls*. Young women, argues Braddon, were also interested in tales of empire and should not be excluded from this literature.

This auntly voice from the preface continues as the narrator for the entire text, who resurfaces through direct asides to the child listener, serving as a comforting, familiar and trusted voice. In the opening lines the narrator talks directly to ‘you little ones’ and repeats references to ‘my dear children’ and ‘you good children’ (p.7, 32, 49). This auntly voice, however, rather than elevating the child listener to the level of the implied adult reader, or indeed having the ‘adult come[...] down to the level of the child as part of the compact between teller and listener’ (Sircar, 1989: 7), means the narrator patronisingly talks down to the child. This tone is emphasised by the didactic nature of Braddon’s children’s fiction when she writes: ‘averted. If you don’t know the meaning of that last word, you must look it up in your dictionaries’ (p.62), which is reminiscent of Charles Kingsley’s ‘[y]ou do not know what that means? You had better, then, ask the nearest Government pupil-teacher’ from *The Water-Babies* (1863) (Kingsley, 1863 [1920]: 83). Furthermore, the use of the word ‘tarradiddles’ in the text’s opening sentence shows Braddon using childish words (p.7), rather than the supposed adult equivalent (‘lies’, or notably ‘fairy tales’, *OED*). This tone relates to Braddon’s intended class readership because she was writing specifically for ‘English children’ and the narrator later talks directly to ‘you over-fed middle-class children’ (p.57). These words might have been familiar to her intended readership and so would create the ‘sense of relaxation’ that is vital to writing children’s literature (Sircar, 1989: 1), but they may also distance children from her fiction because Braddon subtly and ironically criticises their class status, as she did in her writing about children for adults.

Nevertheless, this ‘sense of relaxation’ problematises the text because the auntly voice hides Braddon’s political commentary from the child listener/adult reader. The plot of *The Good Hermione* is ‘an elaborate parable of Queen Victoria’s reign’ (SV: 340), in which Victoria is depicted as Queen Hermione of Lyonesse. The chapter titles provide a sense of

how the tale and Victoria's life are constructed, examples being: 'From the Nursery to the Thrown'; 'The Glass Pleasure Dome'; 'The Mutiny of the Brown Skins' and 'Peace at Home and War Abroad' (p.6); the text outlines her life, the main events and the political upheavals that occurred. Emphasising her engagement with an empire narrative, Braddon describes 'the plot' of Queen Victoria's reign like an adventure story and references Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485) in the name Queen Hermione of Lyonesse – Dame Lyonesse is rescued by Gareth from her imprisoned tower – thus, Braddon uses a well known story to validate her original tale. Within *The Good Hermione* there are also other disguised political characters: 'Lord Melbourne is "Lord Mellifluous" ... Disraeli "Sligh Boote" ... Prince Albert "Pulcher" [and] Gladstone "Woodman"' (SV: 340). These names confirm that Braddon is writing for a dual readership, much like her tale *The Christmas Hirelings*, because they are satirical caricatures of their real-life counterparts. For instance, Gladstone was a woodsman for whom the 'felling of trees became a central occupation' in 1858 before he became Prime Minister (Jenkins, 1995 [2002]: 190). This fictionalises Victoria's reign for the implied child listener, while also adding political humour for the adult reader.

Furthermore, the fairy tale guise that mythologises Victoria's reign allowed Braddon to hide her critique of Victorian Britain's ideologies of race and colonialism. Hermione's kingdom contains many different cultures, which are described once again using suggestively satirical names such as the 'Cheap Loafers' (for the working class), the 'Turbans' (for the Arabs) and the 'Tartars' (for the Scots) (p.57, 87, 97). These races are therefore portrayed as the 'Other' who should be subjected to the Queen's control, in accordance with Victorian Britain's colonial values. Nevertheless, Braddon develops her exploration of empire by openly discussing the effect of colonisation: the narrator states

that '[w]ar may be glorious for a nation, but it is terrible for the individuals who make up that nation' (p.102). Braddon emphasises the pain and loss that war brings to individuals, rather than merely outlining the positive outcomes colonisation has for the nation. By doing this, she refocuses the text to comment on the damaging effects war has in real life, rather than maintaining the mythological, fairy tale aspects that could suggest that war is overtly beneficial. Contrastingly, the narrator further mentions that '[i]t was a good thing for the young men of Lyonesse that they had the big eastern world in which to push their fortunes' (p.103). Braddon notes that empire is about making a 'fortune' and that the overall results of colonisation can also be beneficial to individuals, thus she ultimately supports Victorian Britain's colonial empire.

This mythologizing of Victoria's reign is established in the opening sentences, which are also significant in their detail of the other techniques Braddon uses and are, therefore, worth reproducing in full:

Most English children have heard of the ancient kingdom of Lyonesse, which was sunk forty fathoms under the sea in the dim long age, before the days of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Now I daresay all that story of Arthur and his Knights, and his foolish Queen Guinevere, seems to you little ones, to have happened a very long time ago; but ages before the reign of Arthur, and before even the tree that made the great King's table had begun to grow, there lived and reigned over the kingdom of Lyonesse a Queen who was happier and greater than good King Arthur, of whom you have been told so many tarradiddles, and who lived for a hundred years, and reigned for more than three-quarters of a century over a prosperous people.
(p. 7)

Unlike Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, which comments directly on the contemporary political situation, Braddon sets her tale 'in the dim long age' of the past, distancing her comments on contemporary politics of colonial rule from her fiction. As well as being a

further reference to Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, the mention of 'King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table' also connects to Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King* (1856-85), although Braddon believes Queen Victoria's rule was more moral than Arthur's because her reign was not tainted by a corrupt court. This inter-textuality has several implications: it reveals Braddon's fictionalisation of the monarchy to historicise the figure of Queen Victoria; demonstrates her participating in the wider cultural framework of the time; allows Braddon to pay tribute more directly to her Queen; and excites the child listener's interest in the coming action.

These opening two sentences also reinforce the notion of the text as a 'fairy tale' (p.60); the 'ancient kingdom of Lyonesse, which was sunk forty fathoms under the sea' combines reality, history and fantasy, as did *Aladdin* and her writing as a child. Notably, the original manuscript preface read: '[i]f grown-up people will condescend to read so simple a version of a truly great story...' (*SF*: Reel 1). Braddon, on changing 'story' to 'History', recognises the difference between the two and she deliberately chose to blur this distinction, strengthening the mythologizing of Victoria's reign so the reputation of her empire will continue into the future, long after it has ended in reality. Furthermore, the exaggerated statement that the Queen 'lived for a hundred years, and reigned for more than three-quarters of a century' makes Hermione, and thus Victoria, seem almost mythical in herself (Queen Victoria was actually eighty-one when she died and she reigned for sixty-three years). Therefore, the Queen is established as the heroine, not only of the tale, but also of the nation for future generations.

In writing for children Braddon produces fiction for a specific niche market that maintains its own conventions. In both *Aladdin* and *The Good Hermione*, Braddon engages with the oral tradition of storytelling by associating her fiction with fairy tales. This situates

her fiction within an already established mode of children's literature, making her tales more acceptable to the adult reader/child listener. Significantly, Braddon also writes for both boys and girls, meaning she challenges the presumption that texts based on empire were specifically written *for boys by men*, destabilising the masculine subgenre of adventure fiction. Thus, with her children's fiction, Braddon not only ultimately and conservatively supports the empire, but she simultaneously and radically argues that women should be able to enter this political sphere.

Braddon's Writing about her Own Childhood

As Mary Jean Corbett in *Representing Femininity* (1992), Linda Peterson in *Traditions of Victorian Women's Autobiography* (1999) and David Amigoni in *Life Writing and Victorian Culture* (2006) have all noted, Victorian women could write about their lives in several ways: autobiographies, diaries, letters, journals, memoirs and disguised within their fiction. Braddon maintained several of these options, including a diary for the years 1890-1914 and an autobiographical account of her childhood; presumably she was going to continue to write her entire life. Although Braddon wrote this account, however, there is no record of how it materialised onto paper; she could have typed it herself, dictated to a typist, or spoken aloud to a shorthand note-taker who typed it up at a later date. No matter which way it was created, Braddon has edited the work because her handwritten corrections are present on the manuscript. The account is leisurely and follows several tangents – as Gabrielle Malcolm notes it has a 'stream-of-consciousness style' (Malcolm, 1999: 130) – suggesting that she spoke it aloud, reminiscing while someone else wrote it down.

Much like her writing as a child, Braddon's intentions for her autobiography are unknown, creating many possible readerships. Braddon is a performer and because her life was shrouded in ambiguity and consisted of many controversies and misunderstandings, this autobiography implies an attempt to clarify the facts of her life, now that she was in a secure position with no monetary or literary pressures. Wolff and Carnell have both surmised that Braddon hinted at her life within her fiction before this time,¹⁰ and she could now set the record straight by explaining her life outright: no regrets, no characters, no metaphors, no hiding. Some details are incorrect, for instance, if we credit Braddon's account, she was born 'late at night on the 4th of October in the year of Queen Victoria's accession' in 1837 ('BKE': 2), but 'Braddon's true birthdate was actually October 4, 1835' (SV: 19), but these mistakes are few. This error suggests her reminiscences are unreliable and Braddon noted she 'has suffered from a bad memory all of [her] life' ('BKE': 6); she may be remembering her childhood through rose tinted glasses, idealising her past and associating herself with the accession of a much loved monarch, or deliberately representing herself as younger. Nevertheless, in the Introduction, I argue that Braddon constructs each of her different personas and this is supported throughout her acting, writing and editing careers where Braddon tried to maintain her personal privacy; she refused many interviews (only allowing four which were conducted by personal friends), and she did not give photographs of herself as gifts. It seems unusual, then, that she would, at the end of her life, begin a detailed account that so strongly focused on her personal self, rather than her careers. In conjunction with the multiple selves argument outlined in my Introduction, I would argue that this autobiography is another constructed self; she created another persona with which she could image-manage her childhood and which safeguarded

¹⁰ Writing about one's personal life within fiction was one of the autobiographical techniques exploited by Victorian women authors, such as Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* (1847) and George Eliot in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860).

her private life. Autobiographies can be utilised in several possible ways and this account will be discussed as an example of Victorian women's autobiography of childhood; a snapshot of history in the 1830-40s; an exploration of the inner psychology of a child; of revealing Braddon's nostalgia for a time past; to identify what Braddon thought about childhood; to explore how she makes a case for a child's right to have a childhood; and finally to examine the relationship between Braddon's childhood and her writing by, for and about children.

Unlike most other women writers, Braddon does not disclose her reasons for writing her autobiography. 'Women writing between 1850 and 1920', Elizabeth Winston notes, 'need[ed] to assure readers of their womanliness [which] results in apologies, disclaimers, and words of self-deprecation' (Winston, 1980: 94). Braddon does not conform to this tradition, implying that if she intended to publish this account, she felt no need to apologise for her life, or that she was more self-assured than her sister writers. Alternatively, if Braddon wrote her autobiography for herself, to regain her lost youth, reminisce about times past and escape from the present, then she would not need to include these 'words of self-deprecation' because it was composed for her own benefit. To complicate this debate, Braddon could have written this account for her family despite there being no dedication; she may have wished her children to understand her life, or simply be passing on family memories to future generations for their amusement.

Braddon's autobiography focuses on many traditional aspects of childhood that emerge in her general children's fiction: family relationships, education and the games children played – themes that have arisen in 'The Old Armchair', *The Christmas Hirelings* and *Aladdin* – demonstrate they are common for all children and are suitable subjects for children's literature. This focus positions Braddon's autobiography within the 'tradition of

family memoirs', rather than 'a tradition of spiritual autobiography' or an account of 'artists' lives in the form of *chroniques scandaleuses*' (Peterson, 1999: 4) – Linda Peterson's three main categories of Victorian constructions of women's autobiography. Peterson continues to note that '[t]he critical responses and rhetorical choices of Victorian editors allow us to sense the immense pressure on women to make their life writing domestic, their self-conceptions relational' (p.25). Thus, Braddon's focus on her family could result from external pressure, rather than her own desire to reveal her personal life. This argument is quite limiting though. The meandering and dreamy pace gives a sense that Braddon enjoyed recounting her childhood and that she needed to retell her past. Furthermore, at the end of the nineteenth century there was a growth in girlhood autobiography, categorising it as a subgenre in its own right. This newly forming literary field included Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The One I Knew the Best of All* (1893) and Edith Nesbit's 'My School Days' (1896-7); Braddon yet again kept abreast of the continually evolving publishing marketplace.

The specific date of her composition – 1914 – is also important because it marks a turning point in Britain's history; the country had moved on from Victoria's 'Golden Age', through Edward VII's and onto George V's reign. Braddon bridges her childhood account during Victoria's early sovereignty, with the emerging modernist era that challenged the conventions of the past, encapsulating the evolving status of 'the child' in society. Her account was composed post-Freud, whose psychoanalytic theories on the 'sexual manifestations of childhood' had a major impact on how childhood was viewed at the beginning of the twentieth century (Freud, 1905 [1949]: 51), but it was also pre-World War One, thus, Britain as a nation was just about to change dramatically. 1914 became a time of loss of innocence for the country, and Braddon may have broken off her girlhood

reflections because of this; the slowness and purity of childhood that she depicted in her previous children's literature, and which correlated with her own experiences of childhood, were destroyed. This rapidly declining security, intertwined with her nostalgia, supports the idea of Braddon's attempting to return to an earlier, happier and more stable time; she was trying to recapture her childhood innocence.

Within her autobiography Braddon dedicated a substantial amount of time to describing each of her childhood impressions of her family members; a typical aspect of Victorian women's autobiography. Braddon describes her father as:

an agreeable gentleman in spotless linen ... who was associated with brown paper bags of winter fruit ... I liked Papa, he was always kind ... [but] Papa was nobody's enemy but his own. That was what I heard about Papa when I was old enough to be told things ... [he] would give his last five pound note to a hard-up friend although he had to leave his clerks without wages on Saturday, and to leave his wife to tell them their employer had gone out of town and would not be home till Monday. (‘BKE’: 23-5)

Her father, by entering from outside with ‘winter fruits’, is a stereotypical image depicting the hierarchies of the nineteenth-century family in the 1830-40s: the father is associated with the outside world, work and exotic food, while the rest of the family remain indoors. However, Braddon's description is more complex than this. Her mixed account of her father reveals Braddon, as a child, working through the difficulties of life: she ‘liked Papa’ but was told that he was not a reliable businessman, husband or father. She repeats adult conversations and phrases (‘Papa was nobody's enemy but his own’), much as Maisie does in Henry James's *What Maisie Knew* (1897), incorporating them into her own idea of who her father is. Braddon employs her constructed inner child's psychological viewpoint to revert to her confused or unaware state, calling into question whether or not her childhood

beliefs are her own. It was only later in life (after her mother had died) that she discovered the reason for her parents' split, so her childhood account emphasises the lack of understanding children have about adult life.

Contrasting with her father who was sidelined in her autobiography, Braddon describes her mother as a parent who had:

what is called a quick temper, but as it was neither a sullen nor a sour temper it had never made her a less lovable creature than Heaven meant her to be ... her generosity, her candour, her unselfishness and utter absence of vanity or self-esteem, mean thoughts or envy, made up a character that I have rarely seen surpassed for sweetness and charm. ('BKE': 145)

Braddon's depiction of her mother indicates her protective and cautious persona, and Braddon's childhood reflections continue to centre on her relationship with her mother as the most important development of her early life. In fact, Gabrielle Malcolm argues that her autobiography 'reads as a tribute to her mother, and Fanny Braddon comes across as the heroine of the piece' (Malcolm, 1999: 131), conforming to the presentation of the Victorian mother as the 'angel in the house'.

In addition to her parental descriptions, Braddon states that '[a]mong the events that mark the progress of my third and fourth years I remember the arrival of my sister from Cornwall ... Maggie was kind, and I accepted her as a sister, but she was horribly grown up, fifteen at least, and I had no use for her' ('BKE': 17). Braddon's return to the emotional distance between the sisters – as alluded to in her reworking of 'Cinderella' – provides an insight into adult psychology: sibling rivalries and childhood events have a lasting impact upon children. This statement also reveals children's inner egocentric personalities – the world centres around them ('I had no use for her'). Braddon's brother, Edward, was closer

to her in age, so their relationship did not suffer this same problem (although this can also be attributed to their gender difference):

It was always happiness for me to have my brother, who was nearer and dearer than my sister ... everybody else admired him tremendously, and I, perhaps, most of all. To be with him was the highest privilege. I was allowed to have my cot next to his bed one night, and he told me a story.

('BKE': 39)

These two descriptions present contrasting views of sibling relationships – one close and one distant – reflecting the two approaches to childhood autobiography as outlined by LuAnn Walther: the first is motivated by 'the need to emphasize childhood adversity, to portray oneself as not having been spoiled by overindulgence' (Walther, 1979: 69), relating to Braddon's estranged relationship with her sister because she was not 'overindulg[ed]' as the youngest child, while the second approach of having 'the desire to present childhood as an Edenic, blissful state, a time of past blessedness' is represented by her loving memories of her brother's special treatment of her – possibly because he is connected with family holidays and his association with the oral tradition of children's literature that Braddon valued (p.69). Thus, Braddon does not conform to either stereotyped approach to childhood autobiography; instead, she presents her difficult and unusual childhood with the balanced viewpoint of her maturity, indicating its construction as another multiple self.

This dual perspective of the child subject and the adult writer is also depicted in Dickens's semi-autobiographical novel *David Copperfield* (1850), when Copperfield states: '[t]his was the state of matters, on the afternoon of, what *I* may be excused for calling, that eventful and important Friday [the Friday he was born]' (Dickens, 1850c [1981]: 3). This adoption of a dual perspective, much like the narrative layers in her children's fiction, is

significant because Braddon read this text as a child and was strongly influenced by it, although Malcolm develops this connection by arguing that:

Dickens' [sic] portrayal of a pattern of childhood experiences in his opening chapters is the *template* for Braddon in 1914. By drawing direct comparisons and mapping her true experiences against David Copperfield's fictional ones, she is claiming her own early Victorian childhood as her greatest influence. (Malcolm, 1999: 129)

Braddon's identification with a fictional male child strengthens the argument that she internalised the books she read, influencing her own construction of self and her subsequent writing. Malcolm goes on to argue that Braddon's childhood upbringing also informs her later Romantic, picaresque novels, while I argue that Braddon's representations of childhood in her short fiction by, for and about children demonstrate her more realistic portrayal of children (*The Christmas Hirelings*), whilst emphasising their sense of loss, anger and confusion ('My First Happy Christmas', 'Cinderella'). This outlook confirms her own view that childhood is an important part of a person's development, thus she makes a case for a child's right to have a happy and secure upbringing.

Her endless reading of books, association with fictional characters and emotionally distant relationship with her sister, present Braddon as a child who was isolated for most of her early years. She describes herself as 'a solitary child' ('BKE': 58, 86), and as 'an only child' ('BKE': 68), although having no playfellows did not make her 'unhappy' ('BKE': 15). As Valerie Sanders has argued, 'if we were to identify one single theme that unites all the major autobiographical texts, including novels, written by women in the nineteenth century, it would be consciousness of solitude' (Sanders, 1989: 69). Braddon's loneliness is emphasised by her continuing references to the 'endless seeming days and nights' of her

childhood ('BKE': 5), as well as the 'boredom' ('BKE': 33), 'vexation' ('BKE': 6), and the 'inexpressible melancholy – the vague sadness of a child who does not know what sorrow means, and yet is sad' ('BKE': 7), caused by her lack of friends: 'I had plenty of dolls, but no small companions, nor any cat or dog to adore and torment after the childish fashion' ('BKE': 10). '[C]onsciousness of solitude' may be the theme that unites women's autobiography, but boys also felt this isolation, as noted by John Ruskin:

the law was, that I should find my own amusement. No toys of any kind were at first allowed [...and so I] could pass my days contentedly in tracing the squares and comparing the colours of my carpet; - examining the knots in the wood of the floor, or counting the bricks in the opposite houses.

(Ruskin, 1885-9 [1978]: 11-2)

These descriptions of the slowness of childhood demonstrate children's lack of understanding about time, and their lack of control over their own lives because they are subject to the wishes of their parents.

Braddon further describes misunderstandings of her feelings of isolation by her experience of the theatre:

I was taken there to see some performance of dogs and monkeys, with mamma, my godfather, and Mrs. Allen. At the music of the band, and the beat of the drums, and the lights and wonder of it all, my first theatre was too much for me, and I burst out crying, whereupon Mamma thought I was frightened and I was handed over to Mrs. Allen, to be taken home, ignominiously hustled out of that wonderful place to walk through the lamp lit streets with my nurse.

('BKE': 18)

Anna Jameson writes that a child 'can give no account of that inward, busy, perpetual activity of the growing faculties and feelings which it is of so much importance that we [as

adults] should know' (Jameson, 1854: 117). Thus, Braddon's inability to explain her emotional burst of tears as excitement rather than fear reveals another reason for a child's inner sense of solitude: adults cannot fully understand children because they (now) have an imperfect comprehension of what it is like to be a child.

This sense of isolation leads 'many women autobiographers in the nineteenth century [to] recall[...] having lived a dual life in their childhood and adolescence, preserving the imagination or ambitious daydream world from the knowledge of sceptical adults' (Sanders, 1989: 58). This split is illustrated in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's fictionalisation of her childhood, *Aurora Leigh* (1856), where Aurora outwardly conforms to her aunt's constraints while inwardly making a separate world in her mind:

I kept the life, thrust on me, on the outside
Of the inner life, with all its ample room
For heart and lungs, for will and intellect,
Inviolable by conventions. (Browning, 1856 [1978]: 1.477-80)

Braddon continues by noting that 'I was always silent about things that interested me profoundly – silent even with my mother' ('BKE': 85). By not even revealing to her closest companion what she found 'profound', Braddon exposes that her separation into her multiple selves can be traced back to her childhood, because this was the time that society's ideologies were pressed upon her; from an early age nineteenth-century women writers learnt the necessity to separate their private and public lives. Nevertheless, in his autobiography *Father and Son* (1907), Edmund Gosse notes he too 'found a companion and confidant in myself ... There were two of us, and we could talk with one another' (Gosse, 1907 [1935]: 33). Gosse's statement reveals that this split between inner and outer 'selves' at childhood is not gender specific; all children realise that what they are told by

their elders and what they discover for themselves can be two contrasting opinions or facts, and so they learn to hide what they know.¹¹ In relation to Gosse's split self, Howard Helsinger notes that '[t]he rest of his childhood is dedicated to the preservation of that secret self' in order to maintain his individuality (Helsinger, 1979: 58), while Braddon not only preserved her childhood split self, but developed multiple personas to safeguard her respectability.

The distance between adulthood and childhood emphasises one of the main problems with autobiography: memory and its destabilisation. Despite Braddon's repeated assertion 'I remember' ('BKE': 6, 27, 94, 165), she alludes to this problem through the misunderstandings and memory lapses she had whilst writing her autobiography – '[a]t this distance in time I cannot be sure' ('BKE': 122) – as well as her retrospectively filling in the gaps of her narrative: 'but I can imagine now' ('BKE': 98); 'Before the Knowledge of Evil' replicates the process of memory, destabilising her sense of self within the narrative, as well as making the reader question her narrative's truthfulness and reliability. This is compounded by her passive use of 'I remember' – 'I can remember nothing in the room that interested me' ('BKE': 7-8) and 'I seem to remember' ('BKE': 71, 93) – as well as using other people's memories to inform her account: 'I remember them as repeated by my mother and sister, rather than as heard in my seventh year' ('BKE': 62). This technique was also used by Charles Darwin who states: 'I have been told that I was much slower in learning than my younger sister Catherine' (Darwin, 2007: 16); Braddon's child persona, as outlined in her autobiography, may be constructed by members of her family, rather than from her own memory.

¹¹ Braddon references children's split selves in *The Christmas Hirelings* (1893) because Moppet, Laddie and Lassie are pet names, their real names being Mary and John (Lassie's other name is undisclosed); thus their childhood names hide their original identities from Sir John, allowing them to be accepted into the upper classes on their own merits.

Braddon's individuality is brought forth in her autobiography through the embedded, fleeting references to her elder self. Because Braddon did not document her adult life, these allusions to her older self are worth exploring here, especially because she discloses intimate details about parts of her life that she had, before now, tried to suppress. After a detailed account of her uncle and his relationship with her when she was a child, Braddon reveals that:

thirty years after when I had a fever and was delirious – one of my dreams was of my Uncle William coming home, and of our going to meet him as he came up some long narrow passage out of the ship. That long dark passage was the way from a better world, for he had been dead many years when I dreamt that dream. ('BKE': 129)

Braddon's mention of her 'fever' which made her 'delirious' references her attack of puerperal fever from 1868-70, which occurred after the deaths of both her sister and her mother (she also gave birth to her daughter Rosie in this period). At the time, Maxwell covered up this illness by finding another author to finish the novel she was writing, but now she can reveal this part of her life without shame or fear of being publicly criticised or condemned.

'Autobiography must do more than report', Sanders argues, 'it must explore the meaning of a person's life, and interpret it, so that both the writer and reader are enlightened by the study of an individual's growth to philosophical, as well as physical maturity' (Sanders, 1989: 4). This detailed account of Braddon's childhood – the document is one hundred and eighty-five pages of typescript and only reaches the age of nine – suggests that she would continue to focus on her personal life instead of her careers, indicating that the 'maturity' she found is the revelation that she values her familial persona

over her authorial and editor identities. Nevertheless, considering both her diaries and autobiographical account were written towards the end of her life, her reflections may be coloured by her elder self's priorities – her family – and thus this priority is merely the dominant 'self' at this period of her life.¹² Laurel Brake affirms this argument in her study of obituaries: autobiographies are written in order to avoid 'the messy scramble at the point of death to control the media and avert scandal, fix representation, and to suppress, repress and displace available meanings' (Brake, 2006: 167). Thus, through her (re)conceptualisation of herself in her autobiography, Braddon explores the inner psychology of a child's mind in order to defend a child's right to childhood; justify her writing; cement her popularity; publicly defend her reputation by shaping and controlling her family 'self-image'; and construct her legacy for future readers.

Conclusion

From her many and versatile types of children's writing, Braddon can be considered a children's writer because her short fiction reveals how important children are to family relations; how essential they are in demonstrating, continuing and challenging society's cultural mores; and consequently how important they are to the future of the country. In all of her representations of children's literature, Braddon presents childhood as a formative, important period of a person's life that should be kept sacred. The fact that she writes as a child and reflects on her childhood demonstrates her early interest in the inner psychology

¹² In her diaries Braddon usually wrote a word or two about the activities of her day (for instance, 'went hunting' [*SF*: Reel 7]), but they also contain additional information, such as lists of books she read and who she read them out loud to. David Amigoni notes that when Romily "'read aloud" the life of Elizabeth Fry, presumably to his surviving sister Lucy, [it] identifie[d] him as [the] responsible centre of a household' (Amigoni 2006: 4), and so by reading aloud to Maxwell (because he was ill), Braddon assumes the position of the 'responsible centre of a household', reinforcing her family 'self' as her valued identity.

of children, their shared isolation and confusion, and her belief that this period is of vital importance to developing literary and creative processes and so should be nurtured. Thus, Braddon upholds the burgeoning nineteenth-century perspective on the newly established period of 'childhood': that of the innocent and realistic portrayal of children which makes them sympathetic to her readership. Braddon's fiction also argues that children should be taken seriously as members of society because adults do not realise how much children think, question, understand, and perceive things that adults do not, making them vital in developing society for the better. Furthermore, Braddon's rewriting of fairy tales, support for the underclass and the need for charity continually resurface in her work by, for and about children, showing how she impresses upon children the need for social reform, but contrastingly also the need to conform to society's values. Braddon's children's literature thus teaches children how to integrate into society.

CONCLUSION

While [late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century feminists] theorize, unrecovered Victorian women's writings, printed on acid paper, crumble into permanent and irretrievable oblivion ... The consequence of delay will be the permanent silencing of the majority of popular female Victorian novelists by permitting physical disintegration of their works.

(Poster, 1996: 289)

Carol Poster's argument that Victorian women writers' works need to be saved from oblivion due to the oxidization of the acid paper they were printed on, rallies efforts to save these non-canonical authors, preserving them for future generations to read, enjoy and study (p.287-306). Braddon, Ouida and Broughton are the examples she cites of those whose work has been sidelined by canonical male nineteenth-century writers like Dickens, Reade and Collins. However, Poster makes one outstanding error in her argument; she focuses on these authors' novels, overlooking issues surrounding the already marginalised genres of short fiction, poetry, plays and non-fiction, which it has been the purpose of this thesis to save from obscurity. Being short, sharp and successful, Braddon's short fiction is an underexplored literary landscape that offers a unique insight into the life and times of a popular Victorian woman writer and, thus, fully rewards critical examination.

Because Braddon was so popular with her readership, contemporary and modern critics have too readily dismissed her as a hack and therefore undervalued her work. It is only since recent scholarship has praised her sensation fiction and begun to branch out into her other literary subgenres that her short fiction has risen in academic esteem. It has been the aim of this thesis to further promote Braddon's recognition by demonstrating why her short fiction should be considered, not just in conjunction with her novels, but as a crucial aspect of her oeuvre, in turn encouraging more study of her other neglected genres, such as

her non-fiction or travel narratives. Despite the novel's domination of the nineteenth-century publishing market, Braddon utilised short fiction in a unique and powerful way. She was not disparaging towards the genre because it was considered less prestigious than novels. Instead, she attempted to popularise it in order to expand her literary output, develop her literary techniques and help showcase the capabilities of a much ignored female authorship. Thus, if Braddon's short fiction is not taken into consideration as an integral part of her oeuvre, then the range of genres, subgenres and experimental techniques she engaged with is not fully appreciated. Moreover, she found it liberating to work in a genre that was critically side-lined because it gave her creative freedom in contrast with the tightly structured three volume novel. In particular, its form meant Braddon could focus on one particular subject, allowing her to create a tale more intimate and explicit than a novel. Braddon also used this space as a matrix for her literary craft, experimenting with various social, political and familial themes. Short fiction's marginality in contemporary critical discourse meant she could subtly rework the constraints of generic conventions, even while seemingly adhering to them, to produce tales that challenge a woman's and the child's place in the home, class relations, gender ideology, the economic and emotional constraints of marriage for both men and women, and scientific/medical progress. Braddon's short works actually reveal her at her best, because the genre demands more care and attention from the author, not only in neat plotting and tightly-constructed writing, but also by prioritising character development in a short space of time, something which her sensation fiction was severely criticised for lacking: as Henry Holl noted 'character is subordinated to incident and motive to action' (Holl, 1871: 173). Furthermore, as Coleen Denney argues:

Braddon did not want her name associated with a 'masculine standpoint', with writing that disregarded Victorian middle-class standards, or with

‘Podsnappery’, as she coins Dickens’s term here. Her reputation had always been based on being a woman author. (Denney, 2009: 54)

Thus, Braddon’s short fiction offers an insight into not only the genre’s position as an art form in nineteenth-century Britain – how it was highly regarded by authors, readers and publishers, but disregarded by the circulating libraries and contemporary literary critics – but how Braddon redefined the genre from her specifically female perspective. She balanced the fine line between subversiveness and conventionality in order to create short fiction that had mass appeal. Short fiction, therefore, was a genre that suited Braddon as a nineteenth-century woman writer; it was more adaptable, freer from most stylistic conventions and, thus, more challenging for authors.

Braddon consistently moved between literary genres over the course of her writing career in search of a market in which to found her reputation, and once established, she continually adapted her fiction to maintain her popularity and readership. As Susan Whitehead notes, ‘[s]hort stories and, above all, magazine short stories were dismissed for their popularity. Many critics believed that a wide readership was achieved only by a lowering of literary standards’ (Whitehead, 2011: 80). Nevertheless, an examination of the potential benefits of publishing short fiction in her own journals has revealed that although it was convenient because she could fill the magazines she edited when needed, they were also of increasing literary quality, meaning she could publish her fiction in weekly penny dreadfuls to begin with, moving onto monthly periodicals and the provincial newspaper circuit, ultimately contradicting Whitehead’s argument. Whitehead’s postulation is further discredited by the high price paid for the genre by Braddon’s publishers, demonstrating its economic value, and Braddon’s experimental techniques, exhibiting its high artistic merit. The traditional binary opposition between financial profit and literary merit is ultimately far

too clear cut because this assumption reduces the complexities and importance of the nineteenth-century short story. Short stories are small but useful voices in the publishing, serialisation market.

In relation to Braddon's short fiction specifically, she used the genre to explore several well-established subgenres (supernatural, crime, domestic and children's literature), as well as creating her own subgenre (theatrical fiction). Each of these subgenres exhibits Braddon as a 'literary stage-manager' (Hurley, 2011: 33), whose multiple selves gave rise to the multiple genres, themes and subjects she explores. By considering the interplay of Braddon's multiple identities that formed her public and private selves with her intertwining of literary subgenres, this thesis has taken a semi-biographical approach, but the emphasis has been directed more towards a socio-historical close reading of her tales. This approach derives from my collective identity theoretical framework which deconstructs how Braddon created her multiple identities and then applies this theory to her fiction. For instance, Braddon's experimentation with multiple voices in 'Prince Ramji Rowdedow' and her examination of a character's reconstructed identities in 'One Fatal Moment', reveal Braddon's continuing interest in fractured selves across her entire life.

Braddon's main contribution to short fiction is her blurring of generic conventions that demonstrate her taking 'pleasure in the confusion of boundaries' (Haraway, 1991: 150). Overtly, Braddon's short fiction merges subgenres by containing cross-genre tales (supernatural-theatrical, crime-theatrical), although unlike her cross-genre novels, her short fiction results not in a distillation into a pure form, but a recognition that all genre conventions are fluid and impact on each other, much like her multiple identities that she tried to keep separate at the start of her career, but which were amalgamated by the end of her life. Furthermore, her oeuvre also contains cross-form tales resulting from inconsistent

definitions of length ('Ralph, The Bailiff', *The Christmas Hirelings*), which destabilises the definition of 'short fiction' and indicates another means by which Braddon challenged the male-dominated literary publishing market and its conventions.

This generic blurring is also enhanced in several covert ways throughout her oeuvre. Her theatrical fiction is the most subversive of all the subgenres because it reveals her deconstruction of reality and façade, class relations, gender ideology and of a person's multiple identities, which directly challenges the nineteenth-century notion of the public and private spheres. Her supernatural fiction shows concerns over human psychological development or degeneration, and the tension between science and faith. Her crime fiction illustrates the collapsing of boundaries between reader/author/character relations, and the positive and negative impacts of technological advance. Her domestic fiction examines the anxieties between maternalism and professionalism, masculinity and femininity, and borders the literary space of anti-feminist and feminist writing, while her children's fiction exposes the contrast between nostalgia and a desire for the future, and how the subgenre primes the next generation to perpetuate hegemonic ideology. It is in Braddon's manipulation of generic, thematic and stylistic categories that her short fiction achieves its power, and only a writer confident of her abilities and status in the marketplace would dare to exploit these opportunities. Moreover, for modern academics Braddon's short fiction offers a wealth of material for critical analysis, revealing Braddon and the short story's continuing interest for English Literature as a discipline: Braddon's theatrical and children's literature signals the benefits of biographical/contextual analysis ('Across the Footlights' and *The Good Hermione*); her supernatural fiction can be viewed through a Marxist or post-colonial lens ('The Good Lady Ducayne'); her crime fiction has an affinity

for psychoanalytic readings ('The Mystery of Fernwood' and 'The Dulminster Dynamiter'); and her domestic fiction aligns with a gendered analysis ('Sweet Simplicity').

Alongside each subgenre focusing on a certain topic or theoretical approach, when examining her short fiction as a whole, there are many threads that pull her fiction together. Over each of her literary subgenres Braddon breaks away from her sensation fiction roots into other subgenres to widen sales, her readership and her influence, and this has been illustrated by my thesis' structure: the chapters on her fiction begin with Braddon's more daring and well-known 'sensational' contributions (theatrical, supernatural and crime fiction) and end with her less well-known and more subtly-worked conservative fiction (domestic and children's literature). Ultimately, it is in her children's stories (notably, her stories written for children, not her writings as a child), that Braddon most successfully finds release from her 'sensation fiction' label. This is because children's literature requires different generic conventions – there is an emphasis on morality and educational lessons – and she had firmly established herself as a respectable woman writer by the 1880s.

Nevertheless, in all of her subgenres the emergence of her social criticism and exposé of individual relationships (adults/children, rich/poor, men/women) is apparent. As *The Era* notes:

[a]ll [of Braddon's] tales and sketches, whether dramatic or humorous, have a thread of human interest interwoven which compels us to read them, and keeps the attention alive, whether we sympathise with the characters or not.
(*'Literature'*, 1873: 14)

This focus on the individual and how social pressures (financial, class, gender) influence relationships and the opinions people form is what distinguishes Braddon from other writers, made her popular with her contemporary readership and makes her still relevant to

today's readers. Her short fiction, like her novels, encourages the careful discrimination of character based on behaviour rather than social position, which is especially poignant for Braddon's middle-class readers because she 'entertained the very audience she critiqued' (Braun, 2009: 236).

Braddon keeps moving all of these subgenres forward by updating the themes she depicts (technology, science, trends, fashions) and what constitutes 'acceptable' topics (divorce, suicide, love triangles) because she is always attuned to popular ideas: her dilemma being how to balance tradition with innovation, and stability with change. Braddon usually opts for innovation and change over tradition and stability and this is easiest in the short story because it can rapidly align itself with shifting publishing house trends, readership desires and social issues. Moreover, her cross-genre tales specifically illustrate this juxtaposition of tradition with innovation, a balance that Braddon negotiated throughout her career, because she plays on conventions to make the subgenres recognisable, while experimentally blurring the subgenres together to create new subgenres of fiction. Nevertheless, the one outstanding feature of Braddon's short fiction is that, despite discussing more extreme topics as the decades pass, she also remains conventional in that her 'evil' characters are always reprovved and her 'good' characters are always rewarded; '[s]in must be punished; the future must pay for the past' in Braddon's fiction (Bennett, 1901: 32). As Eve Lynch notes: 'numerous short stories ... turn their interest on the plight of characters caught in the alienation of social and economic, rather than criminal, desperation' (Lynch, 2004: 72), suggesting that Braddon viewed human nature as inherently good. There is always a moral message to her fiction, even when she is exposing the hypocrisy of middle-class morality. Braddon's short fiction questions the existing order without seriously threatening it, but this ultimately means she can probe far beneath the

conventional façade that she overtly upholds. Braddon's short fiction also challenges us as modern readers to think again about whether or not we fully understand her position on contemporary (and modern) issues, our own appreciation of generic categories and our definition of the short story as a genre.

Overall, even though periodicals like *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* published 'sensational short stories' that featured controversial themes and focused on plot (Worthington, 2005: 32), indicating that this genre was popular from an earlier time, this thesis asserts that Braddon's short fiction can be *even more* daring than the sensation novels that haunted her career in terms of literary experimental techniques and her critique of societal/individual relations. This is due to the fact that short fiction retains the immediate quality that authors infuse into their work, while the genre's condensed, quicker paced narrative and its under-appreciation by the Victorians meant that Braddon could experiment more freely with subgenres, themes and length. Thus, her short fiction signals how she could both distance herself from her sensation fiction roots in some subgenres (children's literature), while creating more forceful and socially outspoken stories in others (theatrical and domestic fiction), consolidating her high-impact sensational fame. Furthermore, the genre remains as fresh to the modern reader as it was to her original contemporary readership and this is confirmed by increasing examples of her short fiction being anthologised in modern collections.

In all, this thesis proposes that in order truly to appreciate Braddon's diverse talent, modern criticism should avoid confining itself to her longer fiction, and more fully acknowledge the cultural, economic and artistic importance of Braddon's short fiction. I have also revealed how an examination of Braddon's short fiction offers scholars a deeper understanding of, not only her oeuvre as a whole, but also her personal life, her multiple

careers and Victorian society in general. Each tale demanded all of Braddon's literary skill, so each one positively strengthens her reputation by opening up an alternative version of Braddon that readers miss if they do not engage with her shorter fiction. They are distinctive because her social, political, gender and familial criticism does not hide behind intricate plot twists or sensational climaxes; instead her short stories daringly bring these criticisms to the fore, making them challenging, educational and entertaining for her readership by being 'brief sensations'.

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- ‘Miss Braddon’s Revised Edition of Aladdin, Page One’, 1880. In *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*, in *Miss Braddon’s Revised Edition of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba*, (ed.) M. E. Braddon, London: John & Robert Maxwell.
- ‘Playbill for *Aurora Floyd*’, 1871. Assembly Rooms, Hull, own image taken 2012.
- ‘Playbill for *Lady Audley’s Secret*’, 1869. Assembly Rooms, Hull, own image taken 2012.
- ‘Punch’s Fancy Portraits. – No. 21: Miss M. E. Braddon. “Just As I Am”’, 5 March 1881. In *Punch, or the London Charivari*, p.106.
- ‘Quintilia the Quadrigamist’, 1864. In ‘Four Illustrated Sensation Novels’, in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual* (Fifth Season), pp.77-81.
- ‘Ralph, the Bailiff’, in French, 1869. *L’Intendant Ralph et Autres Histoires*, (trans.) Charles-Bernard Derosne, Paris: Unknown.
- Redgrave, Richard, 1843. *The Poor Teacher*.
Available:<http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/redgrave/paintings/2.html>
[Last Accessed: 14/07/10]
- ‘Title of “The Good Lady Ducayne” by Miss Braddon’, 1896. In, *The Strand Magazine*, (11), p.185.
- ‘Title page of “My First Happy Christmas”’, 1861. In *Welcome Guest*, (3: 65), p.312.

APPENDIX ONE
TABLE OF OMITTED STORIES

Title	Date	Where Published
Sidonie's Birthday Presents	1878	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Little Black Bag	1879	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Ceres: Miss Flossie Burgone	1879	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Catherine Carew	1880	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Face in the Glass*	1880	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Thrapstow Bank	1881	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Sergeant's Wife	1881	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Wooing an Heiress	1881	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Lorenzo	1881	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Cost of a Kiss	1881	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Longmney Conspiracy	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Only A Girl	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Painted Warning	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
How We Marry	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Mrs. Barter's Request	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
A Christmas Tragedy	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>

* These tales have been republished in *The Cold Embrace and Other Ghost Stories* (2000) edited by Richard Dalby, which suggests that he had further proof that these tales were originally written by Braddon, but because the only evidence available to me are Wolff's appendixes I have chosen to not consider these tales in this thesis.

For Love or Gold	1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Green Ledger	1885	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Divided	1885	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Last of His Name	1885	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Artist's Model	1885	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Lady Caroline's Love Story	1885	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Course of True Love	1885	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
A Night's Lodgings	1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Dolly Danver's Dilemma	1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Peradventure	1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Flight from Weldon Hall ¹	1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Secret of Sophia	1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Susan Eliza	1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Not in Debrett	1888	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Ninth Widow	1888	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
My Cousin Fay	1888	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
From a Doctor's Diary*	1888	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
A Revelation*	1888	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
A Terrible Experience	1889	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Poverty and the Peer	1889	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
The Black Boy's Room	1889	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
My First Living	1889	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>

¹ There is good evidence for this tale being written by Braddon. Wolff notes that Braddon's early stories were 'modeled [sic] chiefly on *Jane Eyre*' (SV: 44) and she also wrote the essay *The Shrine of Jane Eyre* (1906). This tale is a reworking of *Jane Eyre* where the governess helps the mad-woman in the attic to escape.

Miss Bristow's Benefit	1890	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
Her Fatal Beauty	1890	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>
From Another World	1890	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i>

APPENDIX 2

TABLE OF BRADDON'S SHORT FICTION

Title	Date	Where Published	Author Name	Genre
Untitled – Cinderella	c.1841 (aged 6)	Described in 'BKE', unpublished manuscript, <i>Sensation Fiction</i> (Reel 1)	Mary Braddon	Children
The Old Armchair	c.1845 (aged 10)	Unpublished manuscript, Maxwell Collection	Mary Braddon	Children
The Kingdom of Boredom	c.1849 (aged 14)	Unpublished manuscript, Maxwell Collection	Mary Braddon	Children
Captain Thomas	1 September 1860 1862 1867	<i>Welcome Guest</i> , vol. 2, no.50, pp.471-5. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.64-79. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.55-68.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
The Cold Embrace	29 September 1860 1862 1867 1931 1966 1976 (1977)	<i>Welcome Guest</i> , vol. 3, no.54, pp.25-8. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.80-91. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.69-78. <i>The Supernatural Omnibus</i> , (ed.) Montague Summers, London: Victor Gollancz, pp.145-153. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Alex Hamilton, London: Corgi, pp.11-18. <i>Classic Tales of Horror</i> , (ed.) Stephanie Dowrick, London: Book Club Association,	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Braddon M E Braddon Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural

	1988	pp.97-106. <i>The Virago Book of Victorian Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, London: Virago, pp.44-50.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.3-10.	M E Braddon	
	2002	<i>At Chrighton Abbey & Other Horror Stories</i> , (ed.) John Gregory Betancourt, Holicong: Wildside, pp.45-55.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.486-95.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
My Daughters	20 October 1860 1862 1867	<i>Welcome Guest</i> , vol. 3, no.56, pp.79-81. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.92-101. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.79-87.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Children
My First Happy Christmas	22 January 1861 29 December 1862 1862 1867	<i>Welcome Guest</i> , vol. 3, no.65, pp.312-5. <i>Halfpenny Journal</i> , vol. 2, no.79, pp.209-11. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.235-250. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.200-212.	M E Braddon Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon	Children
Samuel Lowgood's Revenge	23 February 1861 18 May 1861 1862	<i>Welcome Guest</i> , vol. 3, no.74, pp.583-88. <i>Littell's Living Age</i> , vol. 3, no.13, pp.413-20. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.140-160.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic

	1867 1995	<i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.121-138. <i>Mystery Stories of the Nineteenth Century</i> , (ed.) Robert Etty, Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, pp.87-104.	M E Braddon Mary E. Braddon	
The Lawyer's Secret	2, 9, 16 March 1861 4 May 1861 1862 1867	<i>Welcome Guest</i> , vol. 3, no.75, 76, 77, pp.603-9, 631-8, 677-83. <i>Littell's Living Age</i> , vol. 3, no.13, pp.259-87. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.161-234. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.139-199.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
Ralph, the Bailiff	April - June 1861 1862 1867	<i>St. James's Magazine</i> , vol.1, p.47-59, 209-222, 337-347. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.1-63. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.1-54.	Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
The Mystery of Fernwood	November 1861 – March 1862 1862 25 February, 4 March 1863 1867 1950	<i>Temple Bar</i> , vols.3-4, pp.552-63, 63-74. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.102-39. <i>Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser</i> , (5053, 5054), p.6. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.88-120. <i>Told In The Dark</i> , (ed.) H. Van Thal, London: Pan Books, pp.57-87.	M E Braddon M E Braddon Anon. M E Braddon Elizabeth Braddon	Crime

	1974	<i>Victorian Tales of Terror</i> , (ed.) Hugh Lamb, London: W. H. Allen, pp.37-69.	Elizabeth Braddon	
Lost and Found	12 September 1863 – 26 March 1864 1867 1 May – 20 November 1886	Taken from <i>The Outcasts</i> , <i>London Journal</i> , vol. 38-9, no. 970-998, pp.161-4 etc. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.213-382. Reprinted: <i>London Journal</i> , vol. 5-6, no. 122-51, pp.237-7 etc.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Crime / Theatrical
At Daggers Drawn	January 1867 1886	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 1, pp.335-45. <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell, pp.239-52.	Babington White M E Braddon	Theatrical
Eveline's Visitant: A Ghost Story	January 1867 1867 1931 1998 2000 2002 2004	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 1, pp.351-358. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.383-393. <i>The Supernatural Omnibus</i> , (ed.) Montague Summers, London: Victor Gollancz, pp.335-345. <i>Nineteenth Century Stories by Women: A Routledge Anthology</i> , (ed.) Harriet Devine Jump, London: Routledge, pp.117-25. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.11-9. <i>At Chrighton Abbey & Other Horror Stories</i> , (ed.) John Gregory Betancourt, Holicong: Wildside, pp.111-22. <i>The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Short Stories</i> , (ed.) Dennis Dennisoff,	By the Editor M E Braddon Mary Braddon Miss Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural

	2010	Orchard Park, NY: Broadview, pp.205-214. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.24-35.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
How I Heard My Own Will Read	February 1867 1867	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 1, pp.469-78. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.411-24.	Anon. M E Braddon	Domestic
Found in the Muniment Chest	December 1867 1867	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 4, pp.1-11. <i>Ralph the Bailiff & Other Tales</i> , London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.394-410.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
Dorothy's Rival	December 1867 1886 2010	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 4, pp.98-107. <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.224-238. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.102-18.	Babington White M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Domestic
A Great Ball and a Great Bear	January 1868 1886	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 4, pp.276-286. <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.253-266.	Babington White M E Braddon	Domestic
The Mudie Classics, No. 1, Sir Alk Meyonn, or the Seven Against the Elector	March-April 1868	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 5, pp.41-50, 164-175.	Babington White	Historical
Christmas in Possession	December 1868 1877	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol.6, pp.110-123. <i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London:	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic

	1877	John Maxwell, pp.262-307. <i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.92-120.	M E Braddon	
My Wife's Promise	December 1868	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 6, pp.1-11.	M E Braddon	Supernatural
	1886	<i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.317-331.	M E Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.20-31.	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.7-23.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
The True Story of Don Juan	December 1868 ²	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 6, pp.49-55.	Babington White	Crime
	2000	<i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.9-17.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.269-80.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
My Unlucky Friend	November 1869	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 10, pp.84-95.	Anon.	Domestic
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.290-319.	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.310-28.	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird</i>	Mary Elizabeth	

² Jennifer Carnell mistakenly notes the date is 1869.

		<i>Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.119-34.</i>	Braddon	
A Very Narrow Escape	December 1869 1877 1877 2010	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 10, pp.195-205. <i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.263-89. <i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.293-309. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.203-17.</i>	Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Domestic
Sir Philip's Wooing	December 1869 1886 2000 2010	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 10, pp.49-60. <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell, pp.207-223. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.41-54. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.451-70.</i>	Babington White M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural
The Scene Painter's Wife	December 1869 1877 1877 2000	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 10, pp.1-7. <i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.107-128. <i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.195-209. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.32-40.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Supernatural / Theatrical

	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.471-82.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
Levison's Victim	January 1870 1877 1877 1992	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 10, pp.329-41. <i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.228-61. <i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.70-91. <i>Victorian Tales of Mystery and Detection</i> , (ed.) Michael Cox, Oxford University Press, pp.69-83.	Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime
Mr. and Mrs. de Fontenoy	February 1870 30 March 1870 1873	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 10, pp.447-460. <i>Trewman's Exeter Flying Post or Plymouth and Cornish Advertiser</i> , (5415), p.6. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 2, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.103-36.	Anon. Anon. M E Braddon	Crime
The Splendid Stranger	March 1870 1873	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 11, pp.5-20. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol.1, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.235-73.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
On the Brink	September 1870 1873	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 12, pp.324-350. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 3, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.225-91.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
The Sins of the Fathers	October 1870 1873	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 12, pp.485-507. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol.2, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.45-101.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Crime / Domestic
Milly Darrell	November 1870 – January 1871 1873	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol.13, pp.5-26, 133-156, 261-288. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol.1, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.1-177.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Crime / Domestic

John Granger: A Ghost Story	December 1870	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 13, pp.1-14.	M E Braddon	Supernatural
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.308-318 & 1-35.	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.121-149.	M E Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.55-71.	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.483-500.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
Too Bright to Last	December 1870 ³	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 13, pp.97-110.	M E Braddon.	Theatrical
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.61-106.	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.166-194.	M E Braddon	
The Zoophyte's Revenge	August 1871	<i>The Summer Tourist</i> , (ed.) M E Braddon, London: Ward Lock and Tyler, pp.1-17.	M E Braddon	Domestic
	1873	<i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 3, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.63-116.	M E Braddon	
At Chrighton Abbey	May 1871	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 14, pp.355-377.	Anon.	Supernatural
	1873	<i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 3, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.117-177.	M E Braddon	
	1992 (2003)	<i>The Oxford Book of Victorian Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Michael Cox, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.163-189.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	

³ Robert Lee Wolff mistakenly notes the date is 1871.

	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.72-95.	M E Braddon	
	2002	<i>At Chrighton Abbey & Other Horror Stories</i> , (ed.) John Gregory Betancourt, Holicong: Wildside, pp.9-44.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.412-45.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
Hugh Damer's Last Ledger*	17 June – 1 July 1871	<i>The Illustrated Newspaper</i> , vol. 1, no.14-16, pp.228-30, 244-6, 260-2.*	Miss M E Braddon	Domestic
	1873	<i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 1 & 2, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.275-91 & 1-44.	M E Braddon	
In Great Waters	August 1871	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 15, pp.229-48.	Anon.	Domestic
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.127-80.	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.7-39.	M E Braddon	
Old Rutherford Hall	December 1871	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 16, pp.1-18.	M E Braddon	Domestic
	1873	<i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 1, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.179-234.	M E Braddon	
The Dreaded Guest	December 1871	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 16, pp.112-128.	M E Braddon	Crime
	1873	<i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 2, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.207-59.	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird</i>	Mary Elizabeth	

* Original publishing locations previously untraced or unrecorded by Robert Lee Wolff and Jennifer Carnell.

		<i>Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.240-68.</i>	Braddon	
Colonel Benyon's Entanglement*	July, August 1872 1873	<i>Belgravia</i> , vol. 18, pp.70-88, 214-227.* <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 2, 3, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.261-285, 1-61.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
Three Times	December 1872 1873	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol.19, pp.1-15. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 3, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.179-224.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Theatrical
A Good Hater	December 1872 1873	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol.19, pp.58-80. <i>Milly Darrell & Other Tales</i> , vol. 2, London: John Maxwell & Co, pp.137-206.	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Children
Prince Ramji Rowdedow	December 1873 1877 1877 2010	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol.22, pp.15-25. <i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.271-81. <i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.150-65. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon,</i> Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.135-48.	Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Theatrical
Sir Hanbury's Bequest	December 1874 1877 1877 2010	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 25, pp.1-13. <i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp. 338-55. <i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.166-292. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird</i>	M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth	Domestic

		<i>Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.149-71.</i>	Braddon	
Sir Luke's Return	December 1875	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual, vol.28, pp.1-17.</i>	M E Braddon	Domestic
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales, London: John Maxwell, pp. 301-24.</i>	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales, Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.209-45.</i>	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.172-202.</i>	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
Sebastian	29 May – 10 June 1876	Schedule		Crime
	July 1876	<i>Belgravia Holiday no., vol. 30, pp.40-60.</i>	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales, London: John Maxwell, pp.181-227.</i>	M E Braddon	
Weavers and Weft*	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales, Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.40-69.</i>	M E Braddon	Domestic
	February – 1 November 1876	Schedule		
	26 August – 9 December 1876	<i>The Bolton Weekly Journal and District News, vol. 6, no.252-267, p.3.</i>	M E Braddon	
	26 August – 9 December 1876	<i>Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Weekly Supplement, no.6618-6707, p.9.*</i>	Miss Braddon	
	1 September – 15 December 1876	<i>Nottinghamshire Guardian, Weekly Supplement, no.1623-38, p.4.*</i>	Miss Braddon	
	30 August – 13 December 1876	<i>People's Friend, Dundee.</i>	Unknown	
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales, London: John Maxwell, pp.1-126.</i>	M E Braddon	

Her Last Appearance	December 1876	<i>Belgravia Christmas Annual</i> , vol. 31, pp.61-74.	M E Braddon	Supernatural / Theatrical
	1877	<i>Weavers & Weft & Other Tales</i> , London: John Maxwell, pp.187-218.	M E Braddon	
	1877	<i>In Great Waters & Other Tales</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.146-65.	M E Braddon	
	1996	<i>Victorian Love Stories: An Oxford Anthology</i> , (ed.) Kate Flint, New York: Oxford University Press, pp.151-65.	Mary Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.96-107.	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.481-97.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
The Clown's Quest*	10 November 1877	Schedule – finished	M E Braddon	Crime / Theatrical
	29 December 1877 – 5 January 1878	<i>Harper's Bazaar</i> , vol.10, no. 52, vol. 11, no. 1, pp.826-7, 6-7.*		
	1884	<i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.166-94.		
Dr. Carrick	29 June 1878	<i>All the Year Round</i> , vol. 20, no. 500, pp.1-16.	M E Braddon	Crime
	1884	<i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.195-227.	M E Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.108-32.	M E Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.446-80.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	

George Caulfield's Journey	July 1879 1879 1884	Schedule – wrote in this month <i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.5-21. <i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.133-66.	Anon. M E Braddon	Crime
The Shadow in the Corner	28 May – 3 June 1879 22 November 1879 1884 1986 (2002) 2000 2002 2009 2010	Schedule – ‘Wildheath Grange’ <i>All the Year Round</i> , vol. 23, no. 573, pp.1-11. <i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.259-277. <i>The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.51-68. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.133-149. <i>At Chrighton Abbey & Other Horror Stories</i> , (ed.) John Gregory Betancourt, Holicong: Wildside, pp.56-79. <i>The Darker Sex: Tales of the Supernatural and Macabre by Victorian Women Writers</i> , (ed.) Mark Ashley, London: Peter Owen, pp.39-61. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.428-50.	M E Braddon M E Braddon M. E. Braddon M. E. Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon Mary E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural
Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp	1880	<i>Miss Braddon's Revised Edition of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba</i> , (ed.) M E Braddon, London: John & Robert Maxwell, pp.9-46.	(ed.) M E Braddon	Children

Sinbad the Sailor, or The Old Man of the Sea	1880	<i>Miss Braddon's Revised Edition of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba</i> , (ed.) M E Braddon, London: John & Robert Maxwell, pp.47-78.	(ed.) M E Braddon	Children
Ali Baba, or The Forty Thieves	1880	<i>Miss Braddon's Revised Edition of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba</i> , (ed.) M E Braddon, London: John & Robert Maxwell, pp.79-96.	(ed.) M E Braddon	Children
If She Be Not Fair to Me	1880 1884	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.114-128. <i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.228-58.	Anon. M E Braddon	Domestic
His Secret	9 May 1881 1881 1884 2010	Schedule – 'Boscobel' <i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.1-17. <i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.278-309. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.65-101.	Anon. M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime / Domestic
Flower and Weed*	30 March – 10 June 1882 18 November – 23 December 1882 1882 1884	Schedule <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> , vol.15, no. 46-51, pp.726-7, 737 & 746-9, 762-3, 778-80, 790-1, 818-21. <i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , entire volume. <i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.1-131.	Miss M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic
Under the Red Flag	10 March – 20 June 1883 5 November 1883 1886	Schedule <i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.1-104. <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> ,	M E Braddon M E Braddon	Domestic / Historical

		London: John and Robert Maxwell, pp.5-147.		
Thou Art the Man	10 November 1877 1884	Schedule – ‘finished’ <i>Flower & Weed & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.310-37.	M E Braddon	Crime / Theatrical
Across the Footlights	1884 1886	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell, pp.285-317.	Anon. M E Braddon	Theatrical / Domestic
The Little Woman in Black	22 – 30 June 1885 1885 1886 2010	Schedule <i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.1-10. <i>Under the Red Flag & Other Tales</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell pp.266-84. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.218-39.	Anon. M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Theatrical
The Good Hermione, A Story for the Jubilee Year	1886	<i>The Good Hermione</i> , London: John and Robert Maxwell.	Aunt Belinda	Children
Stapylton’s Plot	1887 1893 1895 2001	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.67-73. <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.166-189. <i>The Christmas Hirelings (and Other Stories)</i> Leipzig: Tauchwitz, pp.267-85. <i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.70-8.	Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime
It is Easier for a Camel	1888 1893	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.88-98. <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> ,	Anon. M E Braddon	Domestic

	2001	London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.62-99. <i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.30-44.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
One Fatal Moment	1889 1893 1895 2001	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.1-16. <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.1-61. <i>The Christmas Hirelings (and Other Stories)</i> Leipzig: Tauchwitz, pp.163-209. <i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.7-29.	By the Editor M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Theatrical
My Dream	1889 1893 2000 2001 2010	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.280-310. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.193-204. <i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.114-25. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.457-72.	Anon. M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural
“If There Be Any of You”	1889 1893	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.110-114. <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton,	Anon. M E Braddon	Domestic

	2001	Kent, pp.241-255. <i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.98-103.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
His Oldest Friends	1890 1893 16, 23 June 1894 July 1905 2000 2001 2010	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.1-15. <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.190-240. <i>The Sheffield Weekly Telegraph</i> , no. 1679-80, pp.16-7, 16-8. <i>Grand Magazine</i> , vol.1, no.6, London: George Newnes, pp.881-98. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.205-223. <i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.79-97. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp. 339-364.	By the Editor M E Braddon Miss Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural
The Ghost's Name	1891 1893 1895 2000	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.115-132. <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.100-165. <i>The Christmas Hirelings (and other stories)</i> Leipzig: Tauchwitz, pp.213-263. <i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.224-248.	By the Editor M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Supernatural

	2001	<i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.45-69.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.365-98.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
The Island of Old Faces	1892 5 November 1892	<i>Mistletoe Bough</i> , pp.1-8. <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> , vol. 25, no. 45, pp.895-7.	By the Editor M E Braddon	Supernatural
	1893	<i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, pp.256-279.	M E Braddon	
	1903	<i>Printers' Pie: A festival souvenir of the Printer's Pension, Almshouse and Orphan Asylum Corporation</i> , pp.9-15.	M E Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.249-258.	M E Braddon	
	2001	<i>One Fatal Moment & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.104-113.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.473-85.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
All Along the River*	20 January – 2 June 1893	<i>Manchester Times</i> , pp.1-2.*	Miss M E Braddon	Domestic
	21 January – 3 June 1893	<i>Newcastle Weekly Chronicle Supplement</i> , no. 6705-24, pp.6.	Miss M E Braddon	
	21 January – 3 June 1893	<i>The Ipswich Journal</i> , no. 9376 - 9395, pp.6.*	Miss M E Braddon	

	21 January – 3 June 1893 21 January – 10 June 1893 8 June – 12 October 1893 1893 1893 4 January – 16 May 1896	<i>The Yorkshire Herald</i> , no. 12991 - 13104, pp.1.* <i>Birmingham Weekly Mercury</i> , vol. 9, no.430-50, p.2.* <i>Ripon Observer</i> , no.397-415, p.2-3.* <i>All Along the River & Other Tales</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, vol. 1&2, pp.1-316, 1-296. <i>All Along the River</i> , Leipzig: Tauchnitz, pp.7-272. <i>London Journal</i> , vol. 25, no. 629-48, pp.13-16 etc.	Miss M E Braddon Miss M E Braddon Miss M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon Miss Braddon	
Does Anything Matter	7 February 1893	Diary – untraced		
A Modern Confessor	June 1893	<i>Pall Mall Magazine</i> , vol. 1, no. 2, pp.140-46.	M E Braddon	Domestic
The Dulminster Dynamiter	August 1893	<i>Pall Mall Magazine</i> , vol. 1, no. 4, pp.469-82.	M E Braddon	Crime
Drifting	23 December 1893	<i>To-day A Weekly Magazine-Journal</i> , no. 7, pp.1-4.	Miss Braddon	Domestic
The Christmas Hirelings	25 January – August 1892 30 December 1893 1894 1895 2001	Schedule <i>Christmas No. of the Lady's Pictorial</i> , vol. 36, no. 670, p.1-26. <i>The Christmas Hirelings</i> , London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & co. pp.9-261. <i>The Christmas Hirelings (and other stories)</i> , Leipzig: Tauchwitz, pp.1-161. <i>The Christmas Hirelings</i> , (ed.) Katherine	Miss M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon M E Braddon	Children

		Mattacks, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.11-89.		
The Higher Life	1894 1907 2005	Untraced – proofs in Wolff collection. <i>Tales For The Homes</i> , (ed.) James Marchant, London: Chatto & Windus, pp.267-278. <i>The White Phantom</i> , (ed.) Jennifer Carnell, Hastings: The Sensation Press, pp.260-264.	Schedule M E Braddon M E Braddon	Supernatural
Sweet Simplicity	24 March 1894 2000	<i>To-day A Weekly Magazine Journal</i> , vol. 2, no. 20, pp.193-200. <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.66-82.	Miss Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime
His Good Fairy	28 May 1894 2000	<i>The Illustrated London News</i> , summer holiday number, pp.2-7. <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.108-118.	M. E. Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Domestic
Herself, was Venetian Glass	17 November 1894 2000 2010	<i>Sheffield Weekly Telegraph Christmas No.</i> , no. 1701, pp.3-10 (H). <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.83-107. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.306-38.	Miss Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Supernatural
Where Many Footsteps Pass*	22 August 1895 5 December 1896	Diary <i>Christmas No. of the Lady's Pictorial</i> , vol. 32, no. 823, pp.6-9.*	M E Braddon	Domestic / Crime

The Honourable Jack	1895	Diary – untraced		
The Good Lady Ducayne	February 1896 21, 28 March 1896	<i>The Strand Magazine</i> (11) pp.185-199. <i>Sheffield Weekly Telegraph</i> , no. 1771-2, pp.20-3, 20-2.	Miss Braddon Miss Braddon	Supernatural
	1987	<i>The Dracula Book of Great Vampire Stories</i> , (ed.) Leslie Shepard, Secaucus: Citadel Press, pp.125-152.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	1988	<i>The Penguin Book of Vampire Stories</i> , (ed.) Alan Ryan, London: Penguin, pp.138-162.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	1994	<i>Nineteenth-Century Stories by Women: An Anthology</i> , (ed.) Glennis Stephenson, London: Broadview, pp.71-104.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2000	<i>The Cold Embrace & Other Ghost Stories</i> , (ed.) Richard Dalby, Ashcroft: Ash-Tree, pp.259-279.	M E Braddon	
	2001	<i>The Mammoth Book of Vampire Stories by Women</i> , (ed.) Stephen Jones, London: Robinson, pp.380-406.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2002	<i>At Chrighton Abbey & Other Horror Stories</i> , (ed.) John Gregory Betancourt, Holicong: Wildside, pp.80-110.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2007	<i>Children of the Night: Classic Vampire Stories</i> , (ed.) David Stewart David, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited, pp.171-194.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.36-64.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
	2010	<i>Dracula's Guest: A Connoisseur's</i>	Mary Elizabeth	

		<i>Collection of Victorian Vampire Stories</i> , (ed.) Michael Sims, New York, NY: Walker and Company, pp.323-54.	Braddon	
Poor Uncle Jacob	25 April 1896 August 1897 2000	<i>Bolton Journal and Guardian</i> , vol. 25, no. 1279, pp.11. <i>The Englishwoman</i> , vol. 5, no. 30, pp.490-502. <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.119-32.	M E Braddon Miss Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime
Wild Justice, was The Fly from the George*	17, 21 January 1893 8 August 1896 2000 2010	Schedule – ‘The Fly from the George’ <i>Bolton Journal and Guardian</i> , vol. 25, no. 1294, pp.11.* <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.133-44. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.292-305.	M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime
The Doll’s Tragedy, was Theodora’s Temptation	October – November 1896 10 June 1898 2000	<i>The Englishwoman</i> , vol. 4, no. 20-1, pp.99-107, 205-14 (TT) <i>Leigh Journal and Times</i> , vol. 27, no. 1388, p.3 (DT). <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.154-69.	M E Braddon M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Domestic
The Winning Sequence*	27 December 1896 September 1897 2000	<i>Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper</i> , no. 2823, p.7.* <i>The Englishwoman</i> , vol. 6, no.31 pp.46-55. <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press,	Miss Braddon Miss Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Domestic

	2010	pp.145-53. <i>The Complete Supernatural & Weird Fiction Of Mary Elizabeth Braddon</i> , Oakpast: Leonaur, pp.281-91.	Mary Elizabeth Braddon	
In The Nick of Time*	25 February 1897 December 1898	Diary <i>The Christmas Tree</i> , Downey's Annual, pp.1-12.*	M E Braddon	Crime
As The Heart Knoweth, was Jane and Naomi put together	21 November 1895 24 July 1903 2000	Diary – Jane / Naomi <i>T.P's Weekly</i> , vol. 2, no.37, pp.206-10, 212-4, 217-8, 221-2, 225-7. <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.170-220.	Miss Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Crime / Domestic
For His Son's Sake	December 1905	<i>Cassell's Magazine</i> , pp.72-79.	M E Braddon	Children
The Cock of Bowkers	April – May 1906 2000	<i>London Magazine</i> , vol. 16, no. 9, pp.287- 295 <i>The Fatal Marriage & Other Stories</i> , (ed.) Chris Willis, Hastings: Sensation Press, pp.221-38.	M E Braddon Mary Elizabeth Braddon	Domestic
'Before the Knowledge of Evil'	Unpublished, 1914	Unpublished manuscript, <i>Sensation Fiction</i> (Reel 1)		Children / Domestic
Maria Jones, Her Book	Unpublished (c.1900)	Unpublished manuscript, <i>Sensation Fiction</i> (Reel 2)		Theatrical
The Ubiquitous Man	Unpublished	Unpublished manuscript, <i>Sensation Fiction</i> (Reel 3)		Domestic
The Grey Day	Unpublished	Unpublished manuscript, <i>Sensation Fiction</i> (Reel 3)		Domestic
Tom Pearson's Last Party	Unpublished (c.1870)	Unpublished manuscript, <i>Sensation Fiction</i> (Reel 3)		Domestic

Cirumambulatory; or, The Adventures of Three Gentlemen and a Lady in Search of a British Public.	Unpublished	Unpublished manuscript, Braddon Archive, Canterbury Christ Church University		Theatrical
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