

Modes of Publication of Women's Sensation Fiction: Commodities and Communities

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Introduction

This article concerns the publishing history of those melodramatic novels describing improper and illicit events within respectable domestic settings, which began to appear in London in the second half of the nineteenth century, and which were quickly dubbed with the fashionable label of "Sensation Fiction." Despite the early participation in the sensation boom of male authors like Wilkie Collins and Charles Reade, the press was quick to note that these novels centered on the activities of female characters, attracted female readers in particular, and were written predominantly by female authors,¹ with Mrs. Henry (Ellen) Wood (1814-87) and M.E. Braddon (1835-1915) leading the way, though closely followed by Florence Marryat (1838-99) and Rhoda Broughton (1840-1920). Between the death of Broughton shortly after the First World War, and the appearance of Winifred Hughes's 1980 study *The Maniac in the Cellar*,² signaling a revival of interest in sensation fiction which continues apace today, these women writers were largely forgotten. Perhaps the only book to give sustained attention to the phenomenon in the interim was Felix Walbank's 1950 anthology of writings from the pens of popular Victorian women writers.³ Walbank's title was *Queens of the Circulating Library*, referring to the private lending libraries, of which by far the most successful was Charles E. Mudie's Select Library with its headquarters in New Oxford Street, which met the needs, and indeed served to define the taste, of the Victorian middle-class reading public.⁴ This fit between the writings of Wood, Braddon or their sisters, and the luxury editions produced for the

circulating libraries, however, is not a casual or simple one.

The links can be traced at the end of the sensation boom in the later 1880s just as at its beginnings in the early 1860s. In the more staid reaches of the 1860s periodical press, there were many voices raised against sensationalism's blatant transgression of social and sexual boundaries. They expressed especial outrage at the thought of the likes of Lucy Audley, Mary Braddon's golden-haired heroine with a weakness for bigamy and homicide, parading themselves in Mudie's new Great Hall.⁵ An article in the weekly *Saturday Review*, for example, believed that the "authoresses of the day are going in for crimes of every description from murder downwards, in a manner that is most startling, and Mr. Mudie's lending library will soon become a sort of Newgate Calendar."⁶ The monthly *Christian Remembrancer* warned that the "whole idea of life and love" of the sensation novelist is "necessarily mischievous and . . . immoral," and that, therefore, fathers and husbands should now "begin to look about them and scrutinize the parcel that arrives from Mudie."⁷ Finally, in his regular column in the quarterly *Westminster Review*, J.R. Wise famously figured sensationalism as a fever spreading like typhus "from the penny journal to the shilling magazine, and from the shilling magazine to the thirty shilling volume."⁸ (We should recall, of course, that other less conservative periodical venues offered more measured and encouraging responses, notably the review columns of the daily *Times*, which reached a far wider audience.)⁹

Yet when the next wave of literary outrage broke, at the threat in the 1880s of the importation

of a deluge of Parisian filth into London, where Zola's popular reputation was unambiguously that of a pornographer, this time it was the literary *avant garde* who led the attack on the libraries. George Moore and Thomas Hardy, notably, were convinced that Mudie's censorship of the new literary mode of Naturalism, with its overt concern with adult passion, was the corollary of his continued sponsorship of sensation narrative, which was thus derided as an outdated yet still immature compound of sexual prudery and naughtiness. In his bitterly satirical pamphlet *Literature at Nurse*, Moore thus claimed that:

The struggle for existence, therefore, no longer exists; the librarian rules the roost; he crows, and every chanticleer pitches his note in the same key. . . . The novel of observation, of analysis, exists no longer among us. Why? Because the librarian does not feel as safe in circulating a study of life and manners as a tale concerning a lost will.¹⁰

In a similar spirit a few years later, in "Candour in English Fiction", Hardy ironically complained that:

In a ramification of the profounder passions . . . something "unsuitable" is sure to arise But, though pointing to a fine moral, it is just one of those issues which are not to be mentioned in respectable magazines and select libraries.¹¹

Thus, though the circulating libraries remain an important outlet for the dissemination of sensation fiction for a period of over a quarter of a century, the socio-cultural function changes from sponsorship to censorship of fictional experiment.

If we wish to understand these contradictions we need to search beyond the circular shelves of the circulating library. As the quotations from Wise and Hardy reveal, triple-deckers were by no means the only fiction formats then available. But there the focus is still on a bourgeois readership, as served not only by Mudie but also by the new generation of family miscellanies, whether *Cornhill* (1860-1975) or *Temple Bar* (1860-1906), *All the Year Round* (1859-95) or *Once a Week* (1859-80). These Deborah Wynne has recently discussed in some detail as a venue of sensation fiction during the 1860s.¹² What I want to attempt here, however, is the drawing of a more detailed sociological chart of the complex interactions between sensation

narrative and print culture in the mid-Victorian decades, one which takes more account of narrative media signaling the rise of a mass market for fiction.¹³

Markets

The marketing and consumption of sensation fiction should thus be seen not as dominated by a single format like the library edition, but rather as involving a series of consecutive or overlapping stages, each employing a different medium and engaging a distinct social audience. The four stages can be designated as follows: Serials; Originals; Reprints; and Adaptations.¹⁴

1) Serials

After the mid-century virtually all Victorian novels appeared initially in installments of some kind, though by then independent fascicles had largely given way to serial publication in a wide range of periodicals. Few women writers had succeeded in the shilling monthly number aimed at bourgeois readers, and by the 1860s this only remained available to the most prestigious male authors, notably Dickens and Trollope; meanwhile women like Emma Robinson and Mary Bennett, who had made a living from the later 1830s in the proletarian market for melodramatic fiction in penny numbers, struggled to find alternative outlets. The abolition over the 1850s of the duties on news, advertisements, and paper itself (the "taxes on knowledge", as they were known to their many enemies) gave rise to an immediate explosion of new journals. These served a variety of new audiences identified not only by social class but also by gender, region, party, denomination, and trade or profession. In addition to the middle-class family magazine, important periodical venues for women's sensation fiction were: literary monthlies edited by women novelists and aimed mainly at a broad social range of female readers, like Wood's *Argosy* (1865-1901) or Marryat's *London Society* (1862-98); evangelical magazines like *Good Words* (1860-1906) or the *Quiver* (1861-1926), which contained a leavening of worthy popular fiction; the more sedate penny-fiction-journals like the *Family Herald* (1843-1940) and *People's Friend* (1869-), which targeted lower-middle-class and working-class women; and cheap

weekly provincial news miscellanies, like the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* (1864-1940) or the *Manchester Weekly Times* (1855-1922), which regularly carried serial fiction submitted by local authors or obtained from northern syndication agencies. It is remarkable how little sustained research has as yet been carried out concerning any of these journals.¹⁵

2) Originals

Here uniformity of scale, format, and marketing is the rule – the infamous “Procrustean bed” of the novel in three volumes post octavo dictated by the lending patterns of the circulating libraries. Popular success leading to calls for multiple editions, as with the eight editions of *Lady Audley’s Secret* issued by Tinsley within three months, reflects extraordinary demand at the libraries rather than a surge of individual purchases. But long before the capsize of the triple-decker in the 1890s, it was a rule that was often broken. This was not only through shorter original novels in two post-octavo volumes like Broughton’s *Cometh Up as a Flower* (1867), but also by novels issued from the beginning in single-volume formats indistinguishable from those of the cheap reprints. Amelia Edwards and Annie Thomas were among the young women sensationalists of the 1860s whose novels made their debuts in railway editions from Routledge or Ward & Lock, alongside aging melodramatists like Emma Robinson or Mary Bennett. Braddon’s *Captain of the Vulture* (1862) made its first volume appearance in the Ward & Lock Shilling Library, and *Lady Audley’s Secret* was only a whisker away from getting the same treatment.¹⁶

3) Reprints

Reprinted fiction itself could, of course, appear as some kind of serial, but more characteristically took the form of uniform single-volume editions, whether of works by a single author or in a literary series configured by the publisher. These typically appeared in a variety of formats at descending prices targeting different classes of readership: solid cloth-bound editions aimed at a personal library at anything from 6/- to 3/6; glossy yellowbacks at around two shillings aimed particularly at the railway market; and eventually gaudy sixpenny paperbacks printed in double columns and intended for even more transient use.¹⁷ Since,

unlike the triple-decker, they encouraged repeat purchases and customer loyalty in a similar way to periodical publication, such uniform reprint editions tended increasingly to feature internal publisher’s announcements and/or external advertisements for brand-name products.

4) Adaptations

By no mean every work of fiction appeared in all four media, and only the most successful sensation novel was adapted for theatrical or musical performance, or gave its name to fashion accessories or toilet requisites, like the “Woman in White” bonnets and perfumes named for Wilkie Collins’s hit of 1860. The dramatic versions of Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret* and Wood’s *East Lynne*, of course, represent the most memorable and long-running of such adaptations, which in extreme cases could exceed the influence of the original narrative version. Three sociological observations are worth making here. First, the characteristic Victorian theatre audience was drawn from lower social ranks than Mudie’s customers. Second, that the cycle was occasionally reversed and sensation theatre pieces were turned into prose narrative. Thirdly, women writers were far less likely to adapt their own works.¹⁸ As Carnell has shown, Mary Braddon was an experienced actress who wrote regularly for the stage, but never attempted dramatic versions of her own successful novels, unlike Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins who tried to control the adaptation of their narratives in all available media.¹⁹

This four-stage process may seem merely a foreshadowing of contemporary marketing of new popular narrative: “You’ve read the book, been to the movie, bought the video game – now enjoy the vomit-flavor jelly beans,” to take the case of the Harry Potter stories. Yet a key distinction remains, concerning whether all of the stages are targeted at the same audience. There are two concepts that we can employ here to explore the functions of these different stages during the Victorian period: the elaboration of commodity forms, and the diversification of reading communities.

Commodities

I do not, of course, wish to be understood to suggest that railway editions, penny journals, women's magazines, newspaper syndication, theatrical adaptations, and the rest, are all direct causes or consequences of the sensation boom. Clearly the Victorian four-phase cycle was by no means restricted to the genre of sensation fiction, and can be traced rather earlier in the case of the work of popular names such as Dickens, Ainsworth or Bulwer Lytton. But I do want to argue that the moment of the sensation novel – especially if that is understood not merely as a brief fashion of the early 1860s – coincides (and not arbitrarily) with a significant reconfiguration in the publishing industry, which represents one in a series of breakthroughs in the marketing of fiction as a commodity form. As Patrick Brantlinger argues, “sensation novelists were . . . acutely aware that novels are commodities, which to succeed – that is, to sell – must compete with other novels and forms of popular entertainment in an abstract, impersonal marketplace.”²⁰ Yet, as Matthew Arnold recognized in his 1880 essay on “Copyright,” the workings of the British book-trade then still represented a “highly eccentric, artificial, and unsatisfactory system,” whose socially regressive implications stood out most starkly against the easy access to cheap books found in the French and American republics.²¹ The transition from the crafting of luxuries for a bourgeois market to the fully capitalist manufacture of commodities for mass consumption occurs much more slowly and uncertainly in the British publishing industry than in many other economic sectors. The creation of a mass market for fiction obviously entailed the economic reconstruction of millions of women, as indeed of men in the lower social classes, as regular purchasers of books and periodicals. This while they were still subject to substantive legal disabilities, of which the exclusion from the franchise was only the most obvious marker. This helps to explain the peculiarities of the critical outcry against sensation fiction in the 1860s. Firstly, that, with their alleged commitment to the mechanics of plot at the expense of depth of characterization, sensation novels were not works of art but manufactured goods.²² Secondly, that, the women sensationalists

were guilty of gross breaches of class propriety; in the words of W. Fraser Rae, they had “temporarily succeeded in making the literature of the Kitchen the favourite reading of the Drawing-Room.”²³ As Rae’s “temporarily” signals, the sensation boom was to be only one of series of tentative steps in the progress towards a mass market for fiction.

Given these economic and legal disabilities, it is not surprising that, compared to their male counterparts, women sensationalists were able to exercise less control over the publication and dissemination of their writings, and were more frequently subject to economic exploitation by publishers. The passage of the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, with its blatant discrimination between men and women regarding the marital offences necessary for divorce in the new civil court, should be seen as a major stimulus to the celebration of female bigamy by writers like Braddon and Maryat; in a similar way, the legal irresponsibility of wives before the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882 must be seen as a major source of economic discrimination.²⁴ Let us take the case of theatrical adaptation. When *The Woman in White* and *It is Never too Late to Mend* were subject to unauthorized theatrical adaptation in the early 1860s, Wilkie Collins threatened and Charles Reade successfully took legal action, while both later gained economic benefit from their own stage versions. At around the same time, Ellen Wood and Mary Braddon had little choice but to act as spectators when *East Lynne* and *Lady Audley’s Secret* became major hits on the stage, without a penny of the profits passing to the authors of the original narrative. To take any legal action Mrs. Wood would have had to persuade her feckless husband Henry to lend his name to the suit; as a *feme sole* in the eyes of the courts,²⁵ Braddon could have instigated litigation in her own name, but to do so would have been to publicly advertise that her relationship with the publisher John Maxwell was “improper”, that her title “Mrs. Maxwell” was merely one of courtesy, and that her children were “illegitimate”. To enter the courts, neither Collins nor Reade, of course, needed to acknowledge their own unconventional relations, respectively with the housekeeper Caroline Graves or the actress Laura Seymour.

As examples of more general economic disadvantage we can take the case of two minor

sensationalists coming to prominence in the 1870s, Mary Cecil Hay and the Dora Russell, both of whom remained unmarried and only began to write after loss of economic support on the death of their parents.²⁶ Hay sold her first tales cheaply to the *Family Herald*, while Russell's early efforts appeared in the columns of the local paper, the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. For the sake of a fragile economic security both were persuaded early to sell outright the copyrights to their extensive literary output – Hay to the mercurial John Maxwell, and Russell to the Bolton syndicator W.F. Tillotson, the latter eventually becoming a staff writer contracted to produce 200,000 words a year for a fixed salary. Many of their novels remained popular for several decades, continuing to appear as newspaper serials and/or as railway yellowbacks long after their own writing careers had been terminated by death or serious illness – but, of course, without any economic advantage to the authors themselves.

All the same, I should not like to present the women sensationalists merely as passive victims of these legal and economic inequalities. During her period as a contract writer Russell earned at least £500 a year from Tillotson, and if she fell on hard times later, it was perhaps in part because she had not invested enough in the funds, but expended too much of her hard-earned income on “the latest extravagance in Medici collars, large feather boas or lace ruffles,” as the gossip column in *Winter's Magazine* put it in 1891.²⁷ At the same time, Charles Reade's frequent recourse to litigation often gained him only technical redress, but generally served to confirm that “representing the incidents of a published novel in a dramatic form upon the stage, although done publicly and for profit, is no infringement of copyright.”²⁸ Given the uncertain state of author's rights, Braddon and Wood thus perhaps took the wiser part in welcoming unauthorized, successful theatrical adaptations on the grounds that they provided extensive free publicity for their forthcoming literary projects and growing backlists of novels available in reprint. These wide loopholes in the protection during the Victorian period of what today we call “intellectual property” are, of course, a further sign that the commodification of entertainment has made considerable advances since the 1860s. A more

active construction of the roles of woman writers and readers encouraged by the sensation boom can also be seen through the employment of the concept of the reading community.

Communities

Long-running periodical publications, in particular, provide a rich source of information about those who subscribe to them, groups that we can characterize as “communities of readers.” Given that all but the most restricted local publications serve a geographically amorphous region, if we broadly accept Benedict Anderson's analysis of modern socio-cultural identity, the term might be refined further to “imagined communities of readers.” Towards the beginning of *Imagined Communities*, it may be recalled, Anderson finds a primary factor contributing to the origin and spread of nationalism in the development of “print-capitalism, which made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways.”²⁹ He draws particular attention to the novel and the newspaper as the “two forms of imagining which . . . provided the technical means for ‘re-presenting’ the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation.”³⁰ Though it is not a point which Anderson stresses greatly, this last formulation implies that nationality is by no means the only affiliation capable of generating stories, that the imagined national community emerges by taking over discursive space from competing allegiances. This opens up the possibility that the process is always provisional, never complete. I would argue that this insight applies to those more local affiliations encouraged by Victorian journals, whether of social class, gender, region, party, denomination, and even trade or profession.³¹ I would also suggest that this can be true, though perhaps with less force, even in the case of other publishing media such as book themselves. This observation might seem most pertinent in the case of the middle-class circulating libraries, with their clearly defined social bases, but it can also be applied to the different classes of uniform edition. The development of imagined reading communities can thus be seen less as a mechanism of consumer manipulation than of authors and readers actively

resisting the impersonality and abstraction of the commodity form.

The distinct social audiences targeted by Ellen Wood and Mary Braddon, for example, during their lengthy literary careers are most clearly identified in the choices they made regarding periodical and book publication. In the later 1860s the two became the best known women authors to conduct monthly magazines, which thus provided the main serial outlet for their fiction over a lengthy period. But Wood's *Argosy* and Braddon's *Belgravia* addressed rather different constituencies. Founded in 1865 by the Scottish evangelical publisher Alexander Strahan, the *Argosy* nevertheless got off to a very fast start. The editorship was initially offered to Wilkie Collins,³² while Charles Reade supplied the opening serial, *Griffith Gaunt*. The furore aroused by the novel's sexual frankness caused Strahan to jump ship, leaving the enterprise to Ellen Wood who promptly steered the vessel into rather safer waters.³³ A plainer sixpenny magazine with less lavish illustrations, Wood's *Argosy* was happy to attract readers from the lower middle-classes and the provinces, as reflected in the author's realistic *Johnny Ludlow* stories. Most of the signed contributions were by fellow women authors such as Dinah Craik or Rosa Carey, and, as these names might suggest, there was often an earnest, evangelical feel to the magazine, reminiscent of those of the publications of the Religious Tract Society. In contrast, *Belgravia* was created from its beginning in 1866 with Braddon's more racy image in mind. As the title suggests, and as the editor's obsequious letter to Bulwer Lytton of 1866 confirms, this stylish magazine was intended to provide "the best bait for the shillings of Brixton & Bow"³⁴ – that is, to offer a fashionable West End appeal to those condemned to dwell in the villas of deepest suburbia. The atmosphere was distinctly Bohemian: other signed contributions tended to come from rakish male authors like George Sala and Percy Fitzgerald, and, as Solveig Robinson has shown, the editor regularly used the magazine to cock a snook at the moral outrage emanating from the conservative critics of sensation.³⁵

A similar story is told by the authors' engagements with the book market. From *East Lynne* on, Wood stuck faithfully by the venerable house of Bentley, which obligingly took over the publication

of the *Argosy* in 1871. Bentley had long specialized in novels in three volumes and in substantial cloth-bound reprints, and these were indeed the formats in which Ellen Wood's novels flourished. In the latter format, *East Lynne* had already sold over 400,000 copies by the time the house of Bentley was sold up in 1898. Braddon, on the other hand, was at her best in the cheap railway editions that Bentley had always frowned on. Her flouting of social convention, not least by repeatedly dressing up in respectable triple-decker format narratives which started out humbly in life as "penny dreadfuls," tended too often to antagonize librarians like Mudie. Her volumes issues were throughout arranged by her buccaneering publisher companion Maxwell (who also owned *Belgravia* for its first ten years), and thus appeared in a series of dubious imprints, notably Ward Lock, J. & R Maxwell, and Simpkin, Marshall and Kent. A flashy series of Braddon yellowbacks thus appeared until the turn of the century, clearly produced with the same worn and weary stereotype plates. The insubstantial nature of these volumes perhaps helps to explain why Braddon's literary reputation evaporated so much more rapidly than Wood's in the early twentieth century.

Yet perhaps the most compelling example of an "imagined reading community" for women's sensation fiction can be found in the local newspapers. Even before *Belgravia* was sold in 1876, Braddon had begun to lease her more melodramatic efforts to Tillotson's new Fiction Bureau, and remained the syndicate's star author for almost two decades. Tillotsons provided an eclectic range of fiction for their various client journals, but there was a noticeable predominance of women authors, and, throughout the 1870s at least, a distinct preference for sensation fiction. In 1876, for example, the Bureau's main offerings were stories by Florence Marryat, Mary Cecil Hay, Mary Braddon, and Dora Russell.³⁶ Thereafter more of Russell's serials were syndicated in the provincial papers than even from Braddon herself, and, in the words of a contemporary witness, "[t]here were not wanting readers who preferred Dora Russell to Miss Braddon, Mrs. Henry Wood, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and other lady providers of that special class of literature."³⁷

The point I wish to emphasize is that the

core regional, religious, and indeed political allegiances of the Newcastle author's work remained much the same whether she sold her work to the local weekly paper or to the Bolton agency for syndication. The term "syndication" might seem to suggest a vast centrifugal, conglomerative operation, but in fact all that was necessary for an established newspaper publisher to set up in business as a fiction agency (apart from the crucial network of contacts) was a machine for making stereotype plates and a pile of headed stationery. Indeed Tillotson's employment of Russell as a regular staff writer is a signal that her core cultural loyalties coincided with theirs, that is, they were liberal, non-conformist, and "northern". Russell's earliest melodramatic tales, written for the radical *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, center on the hardships of the local mining and fishing communities, while her full-length novels for Tillotsons more typically concern the vulnerability of "the timid gentlewomen who are left to fight the world's hard battles" when they are forced into the employment market.³⁸ Yet a similar sympathy for the poor in heart, coupled with the evangelical impulse to offer grace to even the most sin-hardened villain, is apparent throughout; Russell's missionary appeals to the reader are thus a world away from Braddon's dry social ironies and her *penchant* for parody. The settings of Russell's novels gradually broaden to include Cumberland, the Tees valley, and the North Riding of Yorkshire, and the heroines are often drawn magnetically to the metropolis so that journeys on the Great Northern Railway thus come to punctuate many of the narratives; nevertheless, the northeast remains the emotional center of the author's world.

Thus, along with other northern writers like Eliza Lynn Linton (from the Lake District) and Isabella Banks (from Manchester) who both also worked occasionally for Tillotsons, Dora Russell can be seen, in both her narrative preoccupations and her publishing history, as a proponent of a distinctly provincial variety of sensationalism. In his diatribe on the sensation boom of the early 1860s, the Rev. H.L. Mansel used the term "Newspaper Novel" as a stick to beat authors for recycling the sordid affairs found in columns devoted to the divorce and criminal courts.³⁹ I would like to recuperate the term, but in a rather more positive and

materialist sense, as referring to the complex print context in which the novels of women sensationalists like Dora Russell first appeared. Publication in measured weekly installments tended to favor the mechanics of enigma and suspense, while the appearance in newspaper columns alongside the latest reports, editorial comments and subscribers' responses encouraged an especially intimate engagement with the events and issues of the day. If we want to investigate where women's sensation fiction goes after the 1860s, one of the best places to look is in the provincial papers.

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Notes

- ¹ Generally on sensationalism and the woman reader, see Ann Cvetkovich, *Mixed Feelings: Feminism, Mass Culture, and Victorian Sensationalism* (Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992) and Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).
- ² See Winifred Hughes, *The Maniac in the Cellar: Sensation Novels of the 1860s* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980).
- ³ See Felix Alan Walbank, *Queens of the Circulating Library: Selections from Victorian Lady Novelists, 1850-1900* (London: Evans Bros, 1950).
- ⁴ See Guinevere L. Griest, *Mudie's Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 1970), which remains the only monograph dedicated to the New Oxford Street library.
- ⁵ In 1852 Mudie had moved from Southampton Row to new premises in New Oxford Street, which were further enlarged in December 1860 by the addition of a new Great Hall, noted for its large proportions and architectural splendour. The opening celebrations took place on 17 December 1860, attended by "nearly all the best names in literature and the trade" (*Athenaeum*, 22 December 1860, 877). For a general account of the event and an illustration, see Griest, 21-2 and 36.
- ⁶ See the unsigned article "Homicidal Heroines," *Saturday Review* (7 April 1866) 403-5; 403.
- ⁷ See the unsigned article "Our Female Sensation Novelists," *Christian Remembrancer* 46 (July 1864) 209-36; 234.
- ⁸ See his unsigned article "Belles Lettres," *Westminster*

- Review* NS 59 (July 1866) 268-80; 270.
- ⁹ The unsigned *Times* reviews of Wood's *East Lynne* (25 January 1862, by Samuel Lucas) and Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (18 September 1862, by E.S. Dallas) were especially sympathetic and influential.
- ¹⁰ See George Moore, *Literature at Nurse, or Circulating Morals* (London: Vizetelly, 1885) 20.
- ¹¹ See Hardy's contribution to the symposium on "Candour in English Fiction," *New Review* 2:1 (January 1890) 15-21; 18.
- ¹² See Deborah Wynne, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- ¹³ Generally on the rise of the mass fiction market in the nineteenth century, see Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1994), and Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916* (London: Ashgate, 2003).
- ¹⁴ Here limitations of space dictate that the discussion is limited to economic exploitation within Britain itself. Elsewhere I have discussed the distribution of Victorian fiction in the global marketplace; see, for example, Graham Law, "The Professional Writer and the Literary Market Place," in *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins*, ed. Jenny Bourne Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming [2005]).
- ¹⁵ For a more detailed rehearsal of this position, see Graham Law, "Periodicals and Syndication," in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. William Baker & Kenneth Womack (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press, 2002) 15-28.
- ¹⁶ See Jennifer Carnell, *The Literary Lives of Mary Elizabeth Braddon* (Hastings: Sensation Press, 2000) 146-7.
- ¹⁷ For a comprehensive bibliographical study of popular reprints, see Chester W. Topp, *Victorian Yellowbacks and Paperbacks, 1849-1905*, 6 vols. (Denver, Col: Hermitage Antiquarian Bookshop, 1993-2002).
- ¹⁸ Generally on the adaptation of fiction in the Victorian theatre, see John Russell Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright: British Theatre 1800-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- ¹⁹ See Carnell, *Literary Lives*, 193-200.
- ²⁰ See Patrick Brantlinger, *The Reading Lesson: The Threat of Mass Literacy in Nineteenth-century British Fiction* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1998), 163. More generally on the emergence of fiction as a commodity form in the Victorian period, see Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1990), and Andrew H. Miller, *Novels Behind Glass: Commodity, Culture, and Victorian Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- ²¹ See Matthew Arnold, "Copyright," *Fortnightly Review* 159 (March 1880) 319-34; 334.
- ²² See especially the unsigned series of six articles entitled "The Manufacture of Novels," *Athenaeum* (16 February-23 March 1867).
- ²³ See his unsigned article "Sensation Novelists: Miss Braddon," *North British Review* NS 4:43 (September 1865) 180-205; 204.
- ²⁴ See especially M.L. Shanley, *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989) 22-48 and 103-30.
- ²⁵ As opposed to a *feme covert*: technical terms in English law referring respectively to an unmarried and a married women, with particular regard to their property rights.
- ²⁶ Though neither novelist merits an entry in John Sutherland's *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1989), both are given a volume in the recent collection *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction: 1855-1890*, General Editor: Andrew Maunder, 6 vols. (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004); there Hay's *Old Myddleton's Money* is edited by Mark Knight (Vol. 5), while Russell's *Beneath the Wave* is edited by Graham Law (Vol. 6). On Russell, see also Graham Law, "Women's Sensation Narrative and Newspaper Fiction: On Dora Russell's *Beneath the Wave*," *Humanitas* (Waseda University Law Society) 42 (February 2004) 1-27.
- ²⁷ See the article (signed "Mrs. Gadabout") "Indoors and Out," *Winter's Magazine* (15 October 1892) 372-4; 373.
- ²⁸ From the judgement in the case of Reade v. Conquest, 1862, cited in Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright*, 98.
- ²⁹ See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso, 1991) 36.
- ³⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24-5.
- ³¹ For a more extended version of this argument, see Graham Law, "'Savouring of the Australian Soil'?: On the Sources and Affiliations of Colonial Newspaper Fiction," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 37:4 (Winter 2004) 282-307.
- ³² See the manuscript letter from Wilkie Collins to John Hollingshead, 15 January 1863, The Fales Collection, New York University.
- ³³ See Sutherland, *Stanford Companion*, 27.
- ³⁴ See Robert Lee Wolff, "Devoted Disciple: The Letters of Mary Elizabeth Braddon to Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1862-1873," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 12 (1974), 5-35 & 129-61; 138.
- ³⁵ See Solveig C. Robinson, "Editing *Belgravia*: M.E. Braddon's Defense of 'Light Literature,'" *Victorian Periodicals Review* 28:2 (Spring 1995) 109-22.
- ³⁶ See Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (New York: Palgrave, 2000) 222-7.
- ³⁷ See Richard Welford, "Dora Russell, Novelist: Personal Recollections," *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* (7 October 1916) 2.
- ³⁸ Dora Russell, *Beneath the Wave* (1878; London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004) 164.
- ³⁹ See his unsigned article "Sensation Novels," *Quarterly Review* 113: 226 (April 1863) 481-514; 501.