

## THE SEDUCTION OF SEEING IN M. E. BRADDON'S *ELEANOR'S VICTORY*: VISUAL TECHNOLOGY, SEXUALITY, AND THE EVOCATIVE PUBLISHING CONTEXT OF *ONCE A WEEK*

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The faculty of being able to produce a story that can hold the reader from the beginning to the end by the force of the curiosity inspired to know what is coming next, and what will be the end of all, – holding the reader as fast as the Ancient Mariner held the man destined ‘to listen till his tale was told,’ is a great power . . . It is a power like that by which the few bits of worthless glass in a kaleidoscope seem like wreaths and stars of precious gems: it is quite distinct from any intellectual value in the fascination. Miss Braddon possesses this power to write tales which force the reader who has once begun them to continue through every page to the end, in spite of the protests of commonsense and possibility.

—Athenaeum, Review of *Eleanor's Victory*

THE VICTORIAN FASCINATION WITH THE influence of technology on human vision led to a proliferation of replications of its effects in all manner of media, including novel writing. Like the kaleidoscope that holds the viewer in thrall, M. E. Braddon's sensation novel *Eleanor's Victory*, as this reviewer describes, holds a certain “power” over the reader that forces her to listen to, if not accept, the arguments Braddon posits in her work. “Power” is at issue in other ways in Braddon's work as her heroines continually seek ways of developing agency by shaping sexual identities that press the limits of the norm of the bourgeois family unit. What is also significant here is the appropriateness of the kaleidoscope as a metaphor for Braddon's writing, a metaphor she used personally in describing her work in an unpublished letter: “I will give the kaleidoscope another turn, and will do my best with the old bits of glass and pins and rubbish” (letter to Edmund Yates, qtd. in Maxwell 150). The kaleidoscope fractures the vision of a single object or scene into a multitude of different but interrelated forms of the same. One of the prominent issues Braddon repeatedly addresses in her work is the construction of multiple forms of sexuality. The fracturing or

multiplying effect of the kaleidoscope resembles the isolation and reduction of different forms of sexuality as described by Foucault in *The History of Sexuality*. But Braddon's writing does not necessarily lie within the realm of a *scientia sexualis* whose unmediated and exacting cataloging of sexuality is subservient to the development of power. Rather, as part of a marginal, fictional genre, Braddon's work lies at the precarious position of the fringe of propriety, hovering just at the edge of the encroaching reach of power. This article will explore the dynamic of power and the sexuality that eludes it when an unlikely candidate – a young, inexperienced girl represented in the fictional text *Eleanor's Victory* – seeks to seize power and examine the sexuality of others. The immediate context of the publication of *Eleanor's Victory*, the contents of the periodical, *Once a Week*, directly influenced the shaping of the dynamic of power in this text as a negotiation of discourses of vision and sexuality took place among the authors, illustrators and editor, Samuel Lucas.

For Foucault, modern industrial society has “not only witnessed a visible explosion of unorthodox sexualities” but the growing institutional study of these forms of sexuality “has ensured, through a network of interconnecting mechanisms, the proliferation of specific pleasures and the multiplication of disparate sexualities” (49). Discourses of “unorthodox sexualities” ensure that “unorthodox sexualities” continue to exist and continue to multiply. As Foucault acknowledges, the modern obsessive and exacting categorizing of sex, or “*scientia sexualis*” as he terms it, moves from a drive determined by the Christian tradition of confession into a secular and scientific form of categorizing that was well under way by the serialization of *Eleanor's Victory* in 1863. One of the characteristics of the discourses to be constructed under such a system is the production of “perpetual spirals of power and pleasure” (45). Foucault argues: “The power which thus took charge of sexuality set about contacting bodies, caressing them with its eyes, intensifying areas, electrifying surfaces, dramatizing troubled moments. It wrapped the sexual body in its embrace” (44). The study of sexuality, deviant or not, in effect became a vicarious form of sexual practice, stimulating both the subject and the observer. Although such pleasurable practices may expand the domain of power, for the subject, pleasure is isolated: “so many pressing questions singularized the pleasures felt by the one who had to reply. They were fixed by a gaze, isolated and animated by the attention they received . . . Pleasure spread to the power that harried it; power anchored the pleasure it uncovered” (45). Under the system of *scientia sexualis*, pleasures are isolated and reduced, but this very process ensures that they continue to divide and evolve in efforts to elude power or to cater to power's desire for perpetual study and discovery. If we were to assume that some forms of pleasure develop apart from – or rather before the fact – of scientific surveillance or that some forms of pleasure develop under lesser degrees of surveillance, the possibilities for escaping power or at least eluding it are multiple. The system of *scientia sexualis* is primarily a discursive structure, first asking for confession in religious settings and then asking for confession in the name of scientific study and medical or psychological treatment. Transforming pleasure from a bodily sensation into a verbal expression surrenders it to the machinations of power, but non-verbal expressions, those that communicate through visual representations or various other stimulations of the senses can hover in a transitional realm that can elude power at least temporarily. Such non-verbal expressions exist in the representation of seeing and sex in *Eleanor's Victory* and *Once a Week*, most directly in the George du Maurier illustrations that accompany the novel.

In *Techniques of the Observer*, Jonathan Crary traces the way in which human vision in the nineteenth century has become nearly impossible to theorize without engaging

with the scientific and technological influences that helped shape the nineteenth-century understanding of the nature of vision.<sup>1</sup> The nineteenth-century science of vision gave rise to an explosion of optical instruments, toys and manuals for their use that became widely available by mid-century. Crary argues that an epistemic shift at the beginning of the nineteenth century institutes an understanding of the visual experience that simultaneously conflates the object, mediating instrument and observer, and dislocates the senses into distinct receptors to be codified and normalized by science for industrial exploitation. For Crary, the “separation of the senses . . . enabled the new objects of vision (whether commodities, photographs, or the act of perception itself) to assume a mystified and abstract identity, sundered from any relation to the observer’s position within a cognitively unified field” (19). The result for the viewer is what Crary terms “visual nihilism,” where the rise of “the features of equivalence and indifference” that characterize nineteenth century “networks of commodities and signs” hide the unsettling re-organizations of knowledge implied in the visual experience (14). As in *The History of Sexuality*, Crary argues for a reduction and isolation of the senses, relying on the erasure of mediation as the structure that allows vision to be isolated and persistently experienced through the ideological mechanisms created by the sciences and technologies of vision. Such an argument, however, perhaps somewhat overstates the case since the nature of technology’s influence on vision was continually at issue in Victorian writing, not a presumed fact.<sup>2</sup> Rather I will argue that communication through visual representations, or through other stimulations of the senses, holds a position that exists on the fringe or even outside discursive structures and can more readily elude the searching eye of power.<sup>3</sup>

Under the system of spirals of power and pleasure, power continually encroaches and pleasure continually hovers just out of power’s reach. The sensation novels, notorious for their racy content and explicit representation of sexuality, were, nearly without exception, first published in periodicals. Serialization allowed small quantities of a single text to be introduced into public discourse, regularly – but also by increments – exposing the text to the scrutiny of surveillance. Such a format allowed the author or editor to take the forms of surveillance imposed onto the text into account in the process of producing and releasing each installment. M. E. Braddon’s *Eleanor’s Victory* was serialized in 1863 from March to October in *Once a Week*, a journal that was widely concerned with representing visual experiences and different forms of sexuality. *Eleanor’s Victory* presents multiple forms of sexuality that are achieved through the representation of visual stimulation among characters in the novel. The forms of sexuality represented from installment to installment, and the ways in which they are represented evolve over the course of the novel’s serialization. The ongoing publication of serial sensation novels allowed these forms of pleasure to be continually modified, potentially endlessly evading absorption into the system of power. Like the kaleidoscope that fractures and multiplies vision, Braddon’s novels employ a variety of techniques to represent a variety of sexualities.

Furthermore, the periodical format offers the reader a multitude of different ways of reading a serial novel or the periodical text as a whole.<sup>4</sup> The lack of definite boundaries between texts in the periodical opens questions as to how one text, or perhaps an image, might influence or mediate the reading of another, perhaps a novel. For Crary, the key characteristic of nineteenth-century discourses of vision is an erasure of mediation in the use of optical instruments; seeing and seeing through technology become one and the same. If awareness of the artificiality of a technologically aided observation vanishes, then all of the socially conditioning properties of the network of signs and commodities attached

to the instrument might freely implant the necessary responses for self-policing. However, the question of the erasure of mediation is at issue in nineteenth-century writing, and the fact that mediation can be erased or called to the attention at will allows the novelist or the editor to shift some of the work carried on in the novel to other writers, namely periodical contributors. The multiple narratives and multiple readings that might be followed within or across the articles in the periodical provides a textual field that might easily be manipulated by an author seeking to reveal or conceal subversive statements within her work. Thus a sensation novel published in a periodical can take a position as a mediating device that can determine readings of other texts or vanish completely according to the pattern of each individual reading, just as interrogations of mediation appear or disappear according to the particular interest of the observer. These possibilities were manipulated by editors as well as authors and were often self-reflexively addressed within the content of the periodical.

*Once a Week* was specifically created to rival Charles Dickens's *All the Year Round* when a disagreement between Dickens and the publishers, Bradbury and Evans, resulted in the cessation of the publication of *Household Words*. Dickens announced the commencement of his new periodical, *All the Year Round*, which would likely take the former readers of *Household Words* out of the reach of the Bradbury and Evans weekly market, given the periodical's heavy reliance on the Dickens persona as its editorial identity. Bradbury and Evans, however, would not relinquish this portion of the market without a fight. The result was the creation of *Once a Week*, announced in a prospectus of 1859 to commence on 2 July. In order to compete with the popularity of the Dickens editorial persona, Bradbury and Evans created a magazine whose appeal was geared toward an entirely different spectrum of the pleasures of the periodical. While *All the Year Round* offered readers Dickensian comical writing tempered with the serious purpose of social reform, a double-columned appearance and no illustrations, *Once a Week* was intended to concentrate on the publication of scientific findings and directly appeal to the reader's desire for visual pleasure. *Once a Week*'s pages were lushly illustrated, employed larger type, a less economical use of space than the pages of *All the Year Round* and it was sold at a slightly higher price. Typographical innovations included the reproduction of diagrams, a scrap of a letter complete with handwriting and signature as well as a reproduction of a page of the journal of mesmerism, *The Zoist*. The publishers were also dedicated to spending a large portion of their budget on illustrations (Buckler 926), and the prospectus announces that "stress may be laid generally on obvious resources in the modern department of Pictorial Illustration" (Bradbury and Evans 1). This strategy was bolstered by the employment of artists such as John Everett Millais and George du Maurier. In terms of content, the editor of *Once a Week* would not be expected to adhere to a program of social reform as Dickens did. The 1859 prospectus also announces that *Once a Week* will be particularly interested in articles about science and technology: "information on the popular aspects of Science and of new Inventions will be especially sought for, and it is confidently hoped, contributed by our most eminent discoverers and scientific authorities" (Bradbury and Evans 1). Early contributors included G. H. Lewes and the editor who eventually took over after Lucas's period of editorship, E. S. Dallas. While *All the Year Round*'s coverage of science tended to be reviews of works such as *The Origin of Species*, *Once a Week* published narratives of scientific discovery and exploration, suggesting that the act of discovering and disseminating scientific knowledge immediately occurred within its pages.

Although very little criticism about *Eleanor's Victory* exists, the publication of *Eleanor's Victory* in *Once a Week* has often been read as either Braddon's self-conscious effort to legitimize her work by publishing in a respectable periodical (Robinson 109), or as the editor's surrender to the vulgar demands of the popular literary market (Buckler 928, 936; Wynne 115). One early critic claims that Samuel Lucas "deplored" sensation novels, and only published them "in an attempt to cater to popular taste" (Buckler 928, 936). Deborah Wynne claims that Lucas was not a sympathetic editor toward Braddon, foregrounding Harriet Martineau's *The Hampdens* as the leading story during the early stages of the serialization of *Eleanor's Victory* (115). Although Wynne takes this circumstance to represent Lucas's negative attitude toward sensation novels, *Eleanor's Victory's* embedded position in the middle of the journal might also be interpreted as a consciousness that the novel would subtly speak to the various subtexts of sexuality within *Once a Week*. Of the few critics who have examined the publication of *Eleanor's Victory* in *Once a Week*, none seems to be aware of the subversive potential of George du Maurier's illustrations for *Eleanor's Victory*. In a recent article, Simon Cooke focuses an interpretation of the illustrations on du Maurier's "fidelity" to representing the text as Braddon wrote it (90). Cooke claims that Braddon's influence over du Maurier's illustration was limited to "advice and friendly persuasion" and that Samuel Lucas held a much stronger influence over their construction as the young and aspiring du Maurier "could not afford to do anything other than observe the editor's instructions" (90-91). The extent of Lucas's control might explain the subtlety of du Maurier's racy images, but the fact that Braddon declared that she was "very much delighted" with them (Braddon, qtd. in Cooke 104) and that they include similarly playful representations of sexuality suggest that not all aspects of the illustrations were acknowledged or approved of by the editor. However, Lucas's editorial strategy entailed exciting a frisson in his readers through the use of the latest visual technologies as well as relatively explicit representations of sexuality, indicating that on a surface level, *Eleanor's Victory* and its accompanying illustrations accord with Lucas's project. The use of puns and metaphors with erotic undertones is widely evident in the contents of the magazine published alongside *Eleanor's Victory*. In "My First Run," fox hunting serves as the setting for a chase that ends with a fallen woman and subsequent marriage.<sup>5</sup> In "Plucky Dick Pluckless" a man's manliness is tested.<sup>6</sup> "The Quality I Covet" is an ode to the desirable quality of "cheek."<sup>7</sup> "My Golden Hole" explores the entirely male space of underground adventures in gold prospecting.<sup>8</sup>

One of the most striking pieces of evidence for why Lucas would have seen M. E. Braddon's novels as an appropriate fit with the editorial aims of *Once a Week* appears in the poem, "A Celibate Consoled,"<sup>9</sup> published after about one third of *Eleanor's Victory* is serialized. "A Celibate Consoled" straightforwardly presents the experience of reading, particularly reading sensation novels, as a sexual experience. The opening lines celebrate the pleasure of the freedom to take multiple fictional partners: "Paint me no joys of wedlock born/Sing me no songs of Hymen" (R. A. B. lines 1, 2), and the speaker writes the poem "to teach some friends of mine," or to initiate others into the freely promiscuous world of sensation novels (line 105). The celibate may choose from "A bowl of choice Virginian" including "faithless cousin Amy," Maud, Evangeline, Geraldine, some "more prosaic Circes," Madelines, Lucies, "Melville's wild Kate Coventry" and "Braddon's quaint Aurora," (lines 14, 36, 50, 66, 67). The "visions so delicious" provided by "Each new sensationist I skim" also take on a more subversive tone as the "blossoms of reality/Burst from the buds of fiction" (lines 74, 61, 79-80), ironically evoking conservative reviewers' fears of flooding

the literary market with sensation novels and illicit sexualities.<sup>10</sup> What is significant in this poem in relation to Braddon's writing is the speaker's attitude toward his assumed control and domination of these fictional heroines. The celibate claims that "Ethel, Laura, Charlotte touch/My cup with honeied breathings,/Tis mine to quaff my fill from such," suggesting that these heroines freely offer themselves to him (lines 53–54). Furthermore, the celibate firmly believes in his right to such pleasures, even though many sensation novels posited feminist arguments against such assumptions: "The fastest heroines daren't deny/My right to lord it o'er her" (lines 65–66). This poem is representative of many of the attitudes toward women and female sexuality in *Once a Week*. Although Braddon's sexually explicit writing would seem an appropriate inclusion alongside such a poem, her text, rather, appears to confront and argue against the attitudes toward women in *Once a Week*.

Throughout the serialization of *Eleanor's Victory*, a dialogue between Braddon and the editorial voice of *Once a Week* is apparent. The text of *Eleanor's Victory* offers an alternative space to those constructed in surrounding texts like "A Celibate Consoled"; Eleanor develops visual skill and an accompanying sexual dominance over the course of the novel. Early in the serialization, Eleanor displays a natural propensity for reading the visual that is in need of refinement, but powerful nonetheless. When young Eleanor arrives to join her father in Paris, she "could not suppress a cry of rapture as she looked once more at the broad thoroughfare, the dazzling lamps, the crowd, the theatres, the cafes, the beauty and splendor" (299; ch. 2).<sup>11</sup> Disoriented, but intensely pleased with what she sees, Eleanor does not lend a critical eye to the "dazzling" beauty of the streets of Paris: "Eleanor wanted to look at everything, the trinkets, and opera-glasses, and portmanteaus, and china, – everything was new and beautiful" (354; ch. 4). Eleanor's visual world early in the novel is one saturated with the pleasures of the commodity market, affording her not with opportunities for developing her intellect but rather mindless indulgences and seedy pleasures. Her visual skill is not yet turned to more sustained and scientific studies of what she sees. Paris is continually "bewildering" for Eleanor (355; ch. 4); at this point she is blind to what her father's shabby apartments indicate about his financial troubles. In his home, Eleanor "saw no discomfort in the tawdry grandeur, the shabby splendour, the pitiful attempt to substitute scraps of gilding and patches of velvet for the common necessaries and decencies of life" (299; ch. 2). The reason for Eleanor's comfort with the sharp differences between affluent Paris and her shabby home is explained by the narrator:

She had never seen anything in her life but chaotic wrecks of departed splendor, confusion, debt, and difficulty. She had not been called upon to face poverty in the fair hand-to-hand struggle which ennobles and elevates the sturdy wrestler in the battle of life. No, she had rather been compelled to play at hide-and-seek with the grim enemy. She had never gone out in the open, and looked her foe full in the eyes, hardy, resolute, patient, and steadfast. (300; ch. 2)

As a young child, Eleanor has been taught by her gambling, spend-thrift father to "play at hide and seek" rather than to look at life, and her surroundings, with a "resolute," "steadfast" gaze. Looking the "foe," poverty, "full in the eyes" would require a critical awareness of the meaning of her shabby surroundings – that her father maintains their uncertain financial state as a result of his irresponsibility. Life with her father has also made Eleanor "familiar with all those debasing tricks and pitiful subterfuges whereby the weak and faint-hearted seek to circumvent the enemy" (300; ch. 2). The playful nature of this game of hide and seek

as well as Eleanor's developing knowledge of her powerful ability to see will be put to use during her quest to uncover the secrets of her father's death, which lead her to study male sexuality. Furthermore, the space in which Eleanor lives with her father, who comes to be represented as the cause of his own poverty through his effeminate ineffectualness, is a space of disempowerment. It does not offer the technical training Eleanor will acquire elsewhere later in the novel. Eleanor must seek out and seize opportunities to develop her visual skill and her sexual knowledge in order to claim this knowledge for femininity.

Early in the serialization, Eleanor's imperfect visual skill is contrasted in *Once a Week* with a more professional, deliberate and masculine form of seeing in articles such as the one titled, "An Ice Storm." One of the many natural history articles in *Once a Week*, "An Ice Storm" traces the author's experience of observing the effects of an ice storm "with the aid of a pocket lens" (C. A. H. C. 350). The author marvels at the transformation of the environment, at the sudden cessation of the vision when the ice melts, and examines frozen specimens: "gaz[ing] in a transport of delight at the delicate efflorescence of needled crystals, emanating from their center with mathematical regularity" (350). The subject and structure of the article follow the pattern of a legitimate scientific narrative, but the author's style quickly becomes indulgent and overwritten when he marvels at the overwhelming beauty of the vision of the frozen forest and the "electric fog":

[E]ach tuft of grass and every dead thistle becomes 'a thing of beauty,' each center radiating acicular crystals of ice; the trees are gemmed with prismatic colors; each weed has a starry crown, and countless diamonds sparkle where fall the level rays of the winter's sun; the gossamer web becomes a glittering network of silk, and the dark holly leaves are covered with a tissue of frosted silver. A beautiful veil of rare texture is flung over the face of nature, and this beautiful veil is curiously fashioned by that same electricity which binds substances together, disengages their gases, determines form, resides in every atom of created matter, influences the nervous system, is mysteriously connected with life, silently sheathes the blade of grass with silica, flashes forth in the brilliant coruscations of the Aurora, speaks aloud in the thundercloud, and, like another Ariel, does our 'spiriting gently,' carrying messages of weal and woe regardless of time and space. (350)

The passage begins with the coating of the environment, which seems to indicate an impediment of our vision with the "prismatic colors," "starry crowns," and "countless diamonds," but the transforming influence of the ice becomes an aid to a penetrating vision that investigates the "electricity which binds substances," "determines form," "influences the nervous system," revealing an insight into the mysteries of life. The form of the specimens encased in ice are brought closer to our view through magnification, but the closer we get to the reproduced specimen, the larger and more unsettling the revelations become. These investigations are eroticized through the reference to the "beautiful veil," traditionally referring to female modesty, and through several references to the "electricity" associated with sexual contact elsewhere in the periodical. In "My First Run," the author refers to an "electrical sensation" at his lover's touch (329) and the poem "No Change" also refers to an "electric touch" in the same context (A. B. line 41). What is significant here is that while the author experiences this "transport of delight," where recognizable forms are reproduced into a multitude of new images within the ice, it seems that he or she cannot help but begin to slip into a discussion of human reproduction. As the "beautiful veil" promiscuously "sheathes the blade of grass," giving birth to a new vision or a new self-consciousness, we come to

see that what is at issue here is not only visual reproduction, but also sexual reproduction. Significantly, the genderless Ariel carries “messages of weal and woe” in defiance of normalized notions of “time and space.” The more isolated and miniscule these discussions of visions become, the more powerful and disorienting the revelations. The purpose of this article, however, is not to explore the erotic implications of observing the ice storm. Rather this article reveals scientific findings and presents its pleasure as serendipitous.<sup>12</sup> Unlike the naïve Eleanor, this author is aware of the implications of such disorienting observations and remains in control of what he will allow to be revealed as the significant elements of the scene. However, over the course of the narrative, Eleanor begins to conquer the traditionally male spaces of scientific detection and aggressive sexuality.

Eleanor also comes to learn that her physical appearance affords her with a power to manipulate others. When Eleanor’s spendthrift, gambling father commits suicide with an overdose of opium, the truth about his death is kept from her to preserve her health. Eleanor, however, seems to psychically know what has happened to her father and confronts her two companions, Richard “Dick” Thornton and Signora Peadillo: “I am not a child any longer . . . I am a woman, and will know the worst. My father killed himself!” (414; ch. 8). Eleanor seizes maturity, asserting herself by stating, “I am a woman.” Her uncanny knowledge about her father’s death provides her with a new power and agency. Eleanor frightens her companions into revealing the truth with a mere look and vows to avenge her father’s death:

There was almost a supernatural light, now, in the dilated grey eyes. Eleanor Vane had risen from her knees, and stood with her slender figure drawn to its fullest height, her long auburn hair streaming over her shoulders, with the low light of the setting sun shining upon the waving tresses until they looked like molten gold. She looked, in her desperate resolution and virginal beauty, like some young martyr of the middle ages waiting to be led to the rack. (415; ch. 8)

Eleanor’s “dilated” eyes take in and take over everything and everyone around her; the sense that she is consuming everything and everyone around her with her gaping pupils lends her a frightening power. Eleanor’s power lies not only in taking in her surroundings through her eyes, but also in the transformation of her physical appearance. Eleanor’s beauty becomes electrified with “her slender figure drawn to its fullest height” and with the “low light of the setting sun” transforming her hair into “molten gold.” Like an infuriated classical goddess, Eleanor’s “virginal beauty” and resemblance to a “martyr of the middle ages” radiates a power that is reliant on her sexuality, her desirability, which dominates and forces Richard and the Signora into submission. From this point in the novel, Eleanor’s physical appearance is described in terms of her “power of fascination” that she has inherited from her father: “it was by some wondrous magnetic attraction inherent in herself, that she obtained so much love and devotion” (440; ch. 10). Not only does Eleanor have the potential to develop agency through seeing, she also holds the seductive property of power, the “mechanism of attraction” that urges the subject to yield up its pleasures to the psychologist, physician or scientific professional as described by Foucault (45). Those whom Eleanor studies desire exposure to her power. At this point in the narrative, the scientific and technical practices of seeing are still beyond the knowledge of Eleanor, but these skills will be fused with Eleanor’s more feminine talent for seducing others through her desirable appearance, creating an additional, slightly modified source of pleasure for the reader.



While the main plot of *Eleanor's Victory* follows the development of Eleanor's visual skill as well as her project of revenge, a sub-plot of homoerotic desire is interwoven throughout the novel.<sup>13</sup> George Vane's "romantic alliance" with his Oxford companion, Maurice de Crespigny, is smothered by de Crespigny's family and serves as a cause for resentment of the two men by the villain, Launcelot Darrell (325; ch. 3). Braddon's portrayal of this homoerotic sub-plot is not entirely sympathetic; she uses it to undermine the appreciation of such male alliances surrounding her novel in *Once a Week*. George Vane's character in fact is written in response to a set of two articles published some weeks earlier in *Once a Week*. In "The Wilful Murder Case" and its follow up article, "A New Kind of Wilful Murder," an anonymous author lists the means of accidental deaths by crinoline as those by machinery and those by fire, unsympathetically blaming the victims for their adherence to a frivolous fashion.<sup>14</sup> The second of the two articles, "A New Kind of Wilful Murder," published a few weeks before *Eleanor's Victory* begins serialization, contains a passage that appears to have been directly rewritten by Braddon. The "Wilful Murder" author blames the frivolity of women of the rich and powerful classes for these deaths by crinoline:

I wonder whether . . . the high-spirited young ladies of the aristocracy, who conceal their slavery to the mode under an air of willfulness, ever cast a thought towards the humbler orders of their own sex, whose lives they put in peril by their caprices. I can fancy these ladies laughing at the cautions, and resenting or despising the remonstrances of their friends of the other sex on this particular matter, and claiming to be the sole judges of what they shall wear. I have seen some of them enjoying the opportunity of defying opinion, and of proving that they dress to please their own notions, and not men's taste. (38)

Braddon's first description of George Vane's character introduces him as a man of the generation of "that frivolous era," the Regency, when men "seem to have abandoned themselves to unmanly weakness" (Braddon 323; ch. 3). The feminine George Vane, like other men of his generation, "followed the fashions set them by the fat and pale-faced Royal Adonis" (323; ch. 3). Not only do these men follow the fashions of the wealthy, but they do so "as blindly as the women of today emulate the Imperial caprices of the Tuilleries, sacrificing themselves as burnt offerings to the Moloch of fashion, in obedience to the laws made by a lady who lives in a palace" (323; ch.3). A reference to a "silken robe three yards in length and six in circumference," in addition to the description of these women as "burnt offerings" (323; ch. 3), reveals that Braddon is directly responding to the "Wilful Murder" articles and argues that men are guilty of the same frivolity.

For men, however, to behave this irresponsibly carries potentially more wide-ranging consequences: "If Pericles, or Charles, or George, affects splendour and ruin, the princes' devoted subjects must ruin themselves also, never letting their master see anything but smiling faces amid the general wreck, and utterly heedless of such minor considerations as wives and children, creditors and friends" (Braddon 323; ch. 3). Rather than suffer an accidental death, the men who follow the fashions of the Regency leave their families penniless, as Eleanor's father leaves her, all in the name of adherence to fashion. George Vane's femininity and homoerotic tendencies are the subject of critique by Braddon. Like Eleanor, he possesses the "gift of fascination to a dangerous degree" indicating that, also like Eleanor, he is a figure capable of reading the unsettling revelations about sexuality in the visual, or of evoking such unsettling revelations with his own physical appearance (324; ch. 3). This quality might also

be associated with his downfall, as the ability to fascinate also indicates the propensity to become fascinated, or addicted in the 1860s sense of the term, in the characters of both George Vane and Eleanor. George Vane is fascinated with the possession of wealth and any means of attaining it, including gambling. Eleanor does not share the same fate, however, and it is no accident that a woman with the same dangerous qualities as a man succeeds where he fails. Braddon implicitly argues that the space of fascination is a female one and that women, rather than effeminate men, will be successful within it. George Vane never takes up the more sustained, scientific methods of study that lend Eleanor so much power in the text. A hierarchy of the fascinating woman's rightful place in power over the fascinating man exists in *Eleanor's Victory* and opposes the traditionally patriarchal form of the dominant bourgeois family structure. Through her revision of the surrounding periodical text, Braddon presents a veiled argument that depends on the reader's level of attention to the various influences of different periodical texts on one another. The significance of this strategy becomes more obvious later in the text as Lucas's editorial decisions begin to more clearly influence Braddon's writing, as I will discuss below.

One of the most important plot events in *Eleanor's Victory* is Eleanor's visual recognition of the man she believes is responsible for her father's death, Launcelot Darrell, the presumed heir of Maurice de Crespigny's fortune. Eleanor is reunited with him when she is hired to be a companion to Launcelot Darrell's mother's ward, Laura Mason. The episode suggests that because Eleanor's visual skill is not fully developed, specific conditions come to be necessary for her to recognize him as the object of her revenge, although her examination of his features suggests her growing ability to read the secrets of male sexuality. As Eleanor reads Launcelot's physiognomy, she compares him to his mother and finds that Launcelot is the more feminine: "The features which in her face were stern and hard, had in his an almost feminine softness. The dark eyes had a lazy light in them, and were half-hidden by the listless droop of the black lashes that fringed their full white lids" (521; ch. 15). The very features of his face represent the lazy, indulgent life he has led, although his look is not unappealing: "He had all the attributes of grace and beauty, but not one of the outward signs of greatness. Eleanor Vane felt this want of power in the young man as she looked at him. Her rapid perception seized upon the one defect which marred so much perfection" (521; ch. 15). As in Braddon's critique of George Vane's feminine irresponsibility and inability to maintain any semblance of financial security, Launcelot too is unmanned by his lack of "the outward signs of greatness." The feminine qualities Launcelot displays are linked with his ambiguous sexuality. Unlike the obvious comfort George Vane finds in his relationship with Maurice de Crespigny, still fondly remembering him after decades of separation, Launcelot Darrell does not succeed in building a strong emotional attachment with any other character. Launcelot, in fact, scoffs at the relationship between the young George and Maurice, calling it a "romantic, boyish business, worthy of the Minerva press" (129; ch. 39). The dynamics of representing male sexuality have slightly shifted here from the comfort George Vane displays in his homoerotic relationship with Maurice de Crespigny, which is criticized by the narrator, to a male character who seems to detest homoerotic relationships and his own tendencies toward such. Such changing representations of sexuality ever elude the encroaching gaze of power as later representations become less subversive.

After Eleanor examines Launcelot's physiognomy in several passages, her recognition of him as the villain comes in a sudden flash under conditions that resemble a technological intervention into her natural vision.<sup>15</sup> On her day of departure from Launcelot's mother's

home, in a fleeting moment as her carriage coincidentally passes him in the nearby village, Eleanor realizes what a dreadful mistake she has made:

In that one moment, – in the moment in which the pony-carriage, going at full speed, passed the young man, – the thought which had flashed, so vague and indistinct, so transient and intangible, through the mind of Eleanor Vane that morning, took a new shape, and arose palpable and vivid in her brain.

This man, Launcelot Darrell, was the sulky stranger, who had stood on the Parisian Boulevard, kicking the straws upon the curbstone, and waiting to entrap her father to his ruin. (581; ch. 19)

Eleanor's incomplete ability to read the visual renders it necessary for the excitement of the speed, noise and rush of movement of the carriage to transform her suspicions about Launcelot into a tangible thought. The unexpected flash of Launcelot's face and figure and a resulting transportation in time function like a photograph: "At the very moment when the memory of her father, and her father's death, had been furthest from her thoughts, this sudden conviction, rapid and forcible as inspiration, had flashed upon her . . . suddenly endowed with a new and subtle power, took her back to that August night in the year '53" (603; ch. 21). Although the result of a sudden and overwhelming shock of noise, mechanism, and memory, Eleanor brings Launcelot under her own searching eye of power, seizing the position of power where Launcelot, her subject, will be forced to offer up his own illicit pleasure. Such a pattern comes to occur in the novel as Eleanor discovers evidence for the suggestions of Launcelot's effeminate physiognomy. It is at this point in the narrative when Eleanor's natural visual skill and technical training will be united to transform Eleanor into an observer with the power of the scientific gaze.

Eleanor's response to her discovery about Launcelot's identity is immediately to enlist her adoptive brother Richard's help in the first steps of her amateur detective work when she arrives at his London home. The fusion of Eleanor's natural penchant for reading the visual and Richard's technical expertise allows her to develop the aggressive power that isolates sexual practice and forces it to yield up its pleasure to the observer. We are informed that Eleanor, "had the will and the courage which would have prompted her to denounce Launcelot Darrell as a traitor and a cheat; but not the slow and patient attributes which are necessary for the watcher who hopes to trace a shameful secret through all the dark intricacies of the hidden pathway that leads to it" (633; ch. 24). Although the task of tracing "a shameful secret" is within Eleanor's reach, the necessary addition to her natural propensity for reading physical appearances is the set of technical skills that belong to Richard. Armed with expertise in reading the visual due to his training as a scene-painter as well as his knowledge of amateur detective work, Richard becomes a guide for Eleanor in the final steps of her attainment of maturity and sexual knowledge. Heidi H. Johnson has read Eleanor's amateur detective work as an effort to seek "the secret of the father's power, as her act of detection demystifies his primacy and allows her to inaugurate through her own agency a process of psychosexual growth arrested by her protracted attachment to the father" (256). Such a reading is insightful, but Johnson does not elaborate sufficiently on the "process of psychosexual growth" that is so closely intertwined with Eleanor's detective work, concentrating rather on the suitability (in terms of their resemblance to George Vane in mannerisms and character) of different male characters that seek to marry Eleanor. I would argue that the detective work itself, particularly in terms of its training in visual skill, is largely responsible for Eleanor's eventual attainment

of agency over a number of men and male spaces rather than her achievement of independence from her father.

In the ensuing investigations of Launcelot, the training Richard offers Eleanor takes on a scientific tone. Richard instructs her: “The future is not a blank sheet of paper, Nelly, for us to write any story we please upon; but a wonderful chart mapped out by a divine and unerring hand” (Braddon 632; ch. 23). According to Richard’s amateur science, the order and logic of the universe can be uncovered and understood through the proper methods. Richard then guides Eleanor through the investigation of Launcelot’s personal belongings: “The science of detection,” Richard informs Eleanor, “lies in the observation of insignificant things. It is a species of mental geology. A geologist looks into a gravel pit, and tells you the history of the creation; a clever detective looks over a man’s carpet-bag, and convicts that man of a murder or a forgery” (17; ch. 31). Braddon’s employment of Richard – who is hopelessly in love with Eleanor – as an instructor in pseudo-scientific detection heightens the sensual possibilities of the work. The interaction between Richard and Eleanor is a first form of erotic pleasure in a scene where such pleasures will be fractured and multiplied. Richard becomes hyper-masculine and authoritative – a foil to Launcelot’s feminine tendencies and questionable sexual identity. They peruse Launcelot’s sketchbook, which reveals that “Mr. Darrell had very little knowledge of anatomy” and “a tremendous passion” for republicanism, signified in his many sketches of republican figureheads (19; ch. 32). As the artist matures, the sketchbook is seen also to chronicle Launcelot’s female loves, with multiple drawings of the same women in pastoral settings, bridal attire, and later drawings that reveal the artist’s despair and threats of suicide. Richard, “Dick,” instructs Eleanor in Launcelot’s sexuality, in experimentation with same- and then opposite-sex desires. If the discoveries that Richard and Eleanor uncover in the sketchbook are meant to conform to the order and logic suggested in Richard’s amateur scientific theory, then Launcelot’s experimentation can be read as a representation of experimental phases of male sexuality in general, a conclusion that normalizes oscillations between desires for same- and then opposite-sex partners. The reader is therefore encouraged to wonder if Launcelot believes or hopes himself to have transformed into a solely heterosexual man and that his motivation for swindling Eleanor’s father stems from more than poverty. George Vane was a potential inheritor of Maurice de Crespigny’s estate, “the Damon of [his] youth” and an obvious target for any homophobic panic Launcelot might retain (523; ch. 15). Launcelot’s inability to feel genuine affection for women, and the utter lack of male companions except his shady co-conspirator Victor Bourdon, suggest a possible resentment of the longstanding love the two men share.

The fracturing or multiplication of desires in this scene is also highly visible in a more graphic representation of sexualities than the previous suggestions about Eleanor’s desirableness or George Vane’s or Launcelot’s dubious sexuality. In addition to the erotic interaction between Richard and Eleanor, the pleasures experienced by both in the examination of Launcelot’s sketches are also released into the public discourse and exposed to power’s scrutiny. The multiplicity of desires produced in this scene are emphasized by an accompanying illustration by George du Maurier (Figure 3). The illustration is fractured into two scenes: one where Richard and Eleanor peruse the sketchbook and a second that places Launcelot and Laura in a compromising position. The key finding in the sketchbook for Richard and Eleanor is the sketch of Eleanor’s father losing the last of his money to Launcelot on the evening of Eleanor’s father’s suicide years earlier in Paris. The sketch appears quite some time after Launcelot’s period of – at least artistic – sexual exploration.

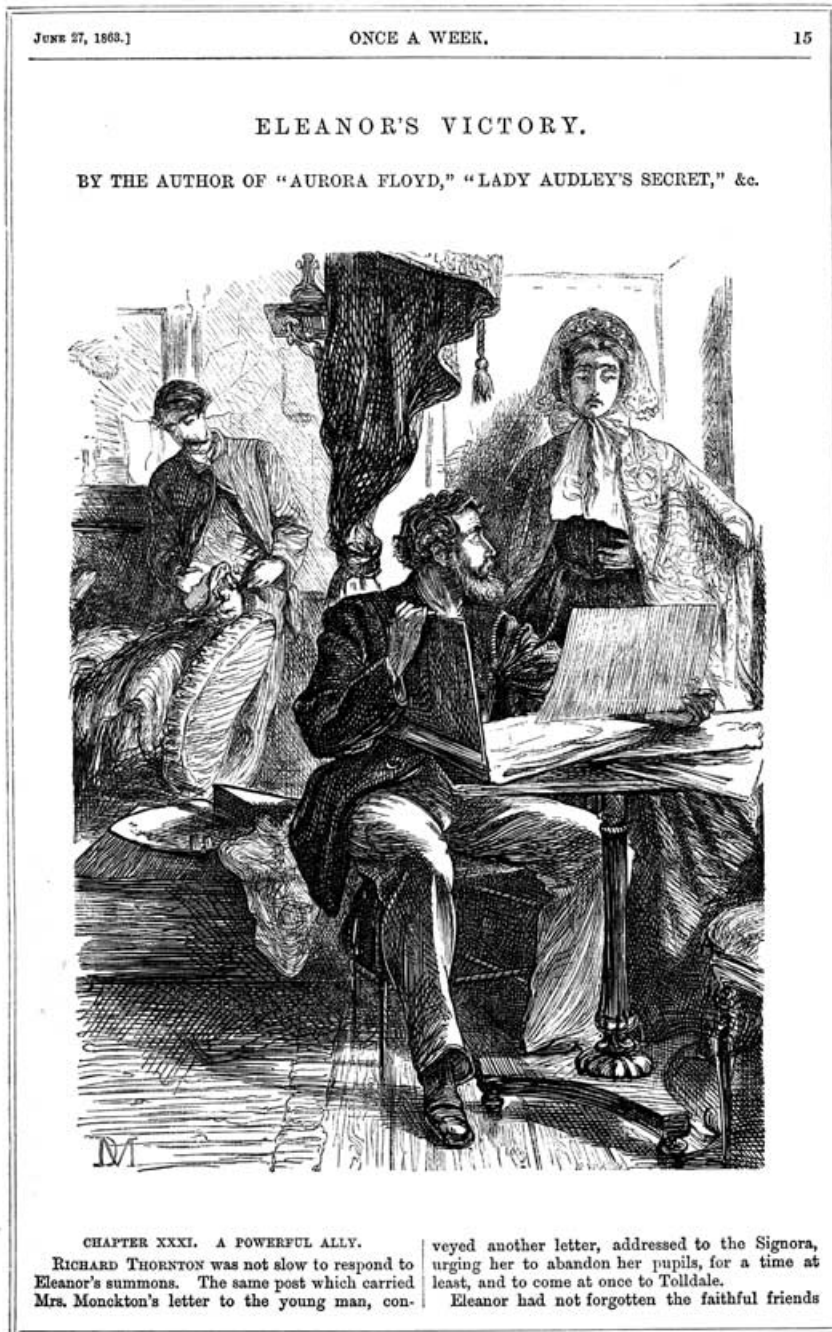


Figure 3. George du Maurier, illustration for the chapter "The Testimony of the Sketch-Book." Engraving from *Once a Week* 9 (27 June 1863): 15.

In the du Maurier illustration, Eleanor stares at the sketchbook with a look of shock or disgust and with a hand placed on her chest as if overwhelmed by what the sketch reveals: either that Launcelot has experimented with different sexualities or that he has caused her father's death. Richard in turn observes Eleanor's look and position, broadening the structure of seeing in this half of the illustration. Eleanor examines the sketch, Richard watches her examining it and the reader scrutinizes the reactions of the pair in the illustration. A curtain appears to divide the illustration in two, but it also appears to be hung in such a way that it conceals nothing. The two couples rather are occupied with their own erotic acts – separated and isolated in acts of scrutiny and pleasure. In the second half of the illustration, Launcelot leans against a table with what appears to be a book in his hands at just at the level of his genitals, but the left hand also appears to fumble with something in this area. Laura's head is conveniently positioned just at the level of his genitals as she reclines on a couch and her head is turned as if to gaze directly at what Launcelot holds. Again, a two-fold gaze is visible with Launcelot and Laura exchanging looks as the reader gazes on their exchange. Like the kaleidoscope that fractures and multiplies a single image into many that are slightly different, du Maurier's illustration provides a number of illicit pleasures expressed through a visual, rather than verbal, representation that offers a wider and more complex exchange of pleasure and power than exists in the written text. Although an addition on the part of du Maurier – the second scene in the illustration does not occur in the written novel – a more practical editorial form of power will appear to overcome the intentions of Braddon and du Maurier.

As the portrayal of sexuality in *Eleanor's Victory* becomes more explicit, Lucas's choice of other editorial material becomes more aggressively masculine in content. Although we can only speculate that a debate about gendered behavior took place between Braddon and Lucas during the serialization of *Eleanor's Victory*, Braddon's strikingly direct response to the "Wilful Murder" articles suggests that this was so. In the issue containing Eleanor and Richard's investigation of Launcelot's sketchbook, an article titled, "The Loves of an Eccentric Author," traces Thomas Day's cruel "experiments" with two orphan girls (24). He raises one of them to become his ideal wife and subjects the other to his sadistic fantasies:

She was to be formed on the model of Arria, or of Portia, or Cornelia; she was never to shrink from pain. On this principle her benefactor dropped scalding sealing-wax on her arms, and was scandalized to see her weep. He fired pistols at her petticoats, and she screamed. When he told her of invented danger to himself, and made her understand that his confidence was of the utmost moment, he found that she could not keep the secret, but let out these fictitious conspiracies to her playfellows. (24)

Not surprisingly, the girl marries another man to escape Day at the first possible chance and he in turn dismisses her "just as a chemist throws away the dross of any substance in which he has made a fruitless experiment" ("Loves of an Eccentric Author" 25). The appearance of this article, so closely intermingled with the scenes where Eleanor becomes most powerful, would suggest an effort on Lucas's part to temper Braddon's feminist arguments. Furthermore, the introduction of a discourse of chemical experiment again suggests a response to Braddon's reworkings of the scientific gaze. The article is not as critical of Day's abuse of the orphan girl as we might expect, as the narrator simply claims, "There is a want of social chivalry in his conduct" and notes that Day was "somewhat disapproved of" by his friends (24, 25). Day's sadistic treatment of his adoptive daughter, though scrutinized and concluded to be

“somewhat disapproved of,” maintains a gendered hierarchy of power where a masculine scientific gaze reigns. Further textual evidence that Samuel Lucas may have interfered with the writing of *Eleanor's Victory*, specifically in terms of its resistance to masculine domination, also appears later in the serialization, as I will discuss below.<sup>16</sup>

Soon after Eleanor and Richard discover the truth about Launcelot in the sketchbook, Richard is called away to work in Edinburgh, leaving Eleanor to rely on her own resources and the training Richard has provided. Now fully versed in the technical knowledge of detective observation and male sexuality, Eleanor carries out her own spying mission. On the evening of Maurice de Crespigny's death, Eleanor follows Launcelot and Victor as they steal and replace his legitimate will with a fake allocating nearly the entire estate to Launcelot. In the accompanying du Maurier illustration, Eleanor observes the pair attempting to burn the legitimate will from behind a tree. Launcelot directs a stare of deep concentration toward Victor's waist from which emanates a powerful glow (Figure 4). Again, the sexual act has shifted into a different form in this episode, providing a new and alternative form of pleasure for the viewer. Again, the illustration reveals a more racy interpretation of the act than the written text. In this case, the act is more daringly deviant as we now observe a homosexual rather than heterosexual act. From the spectator's vantage point, Victor's actions are not visible, we only know that his hands are occupied and the light – the sphere of attention and visibility that is denied to the reader – is concentrated around his waist. The du Maurier illustration adds a comic element to the scene, and makes the sexual tension between Launcelot and Victor obvious, but what is also significant here is that Eleanor takes on a virtually predatory role. In this scene, instead of two couples observing each other in acts of troubled pleasure, Eleanor seizes the masculine position of the scientific observer. The fracturing here isolates Launcelot and Victor's erotic act into one division of the illustration with Eleanor's observation of the act functioning as the second division. In a pyramidal structure, Eleanor and the reader experience the spiral of power and pleasure from the height of power of the scientific gaze. Eleanor moves on to employ such power in a rather practical way.

Absorbing the aggressiveness Richard has revealed to her, Eleanor turns the power of her gaze toward confronting Launcelot and finds that he is easily overpowered:

His white face was . . . turned towards Eleanor; his eyes were fixed in a stare of horror. At first, perhaps, he contemplated rushing out of the room, and getting away from this woman, who had recalled the sin of the past, at a moment when his brain was maddened by the crime of the present. But he stopped, fascinated by some irresistible power in the beautiful face before him. Eleanor stood between the coward and the door. He could not pass her. (187; ch. 44)

As in the earlier scene where Eleanor easily dominates Richard, Launcelot is frozen with fear, his own vision and autonomy surrendered to the “irresistible” fascination of Eleanor's gaze. Like the power that “harries” pleasure, Eleanor's seductive qualities draw others into her scrutinizing gaze (Foucault 45). The confrontation occurs in view of all those who attend the reading of de Crespigny's will, where the expectation of the revelation of more mundane desires is suggested to be replaced with the revelation of Launcelot's illicit sexual practice. There is no pleasure for Launcelot, the subject of the gaze in this particular revelation; rather his pleasure is isolated and cordoned off as deviant by Eleanor's focused stare as he is subjected to the perhaps more bitter humiliation of defeat by a woman. But the text

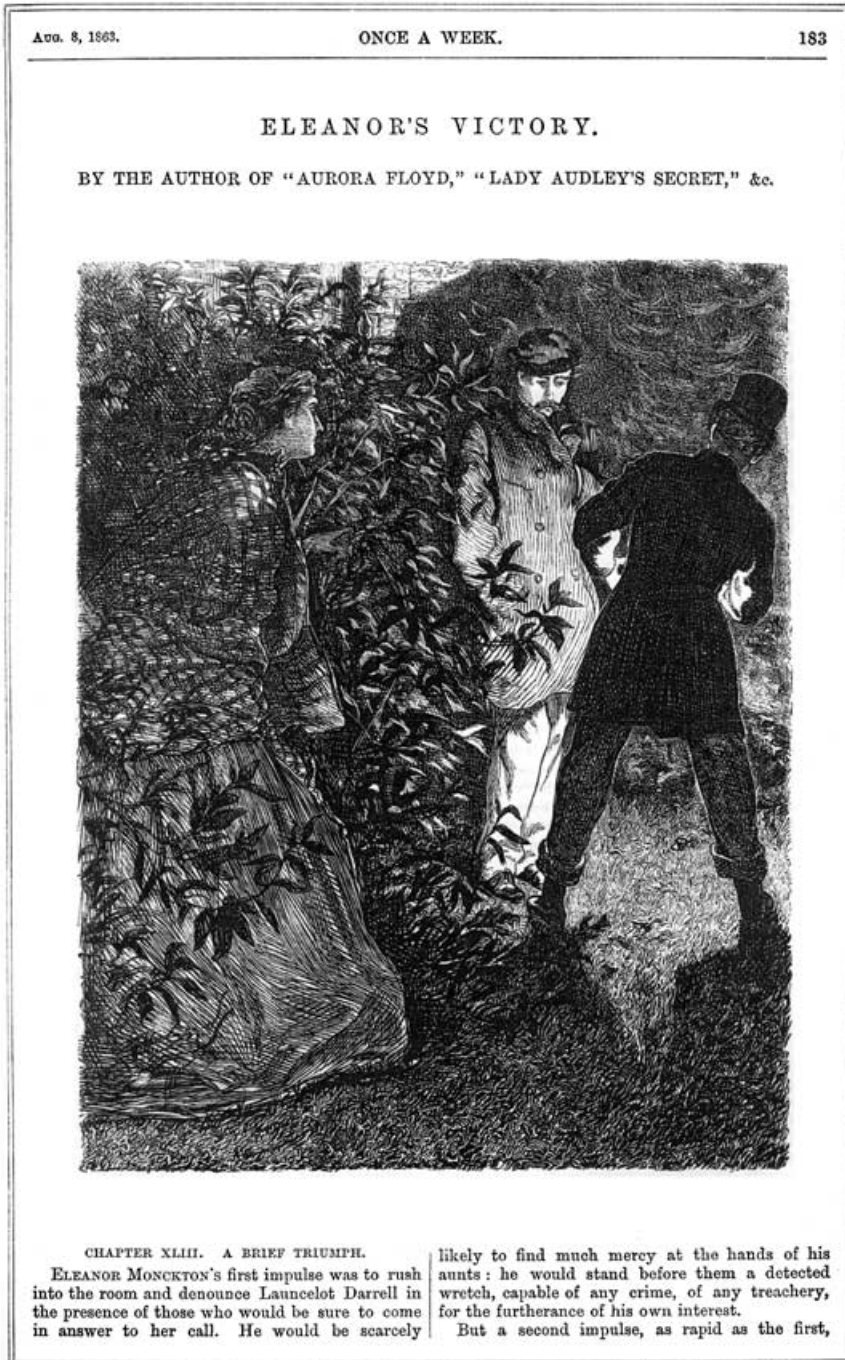


Figure 4. George du Maurier, illustration from the chapter "A Brief Triumph." Engraving from *Once a Week* 9 (8 August 1863): 183.



does not allow the seeming finality of this scene to be the last word. Those whom Eleanor needs to convince of Launcelot's guilt do not believe her accusation until more evidence is compiled. Launcelot's illicit sexual act is released from her gaze: momentarily subject to study and classification, but ultimately released to be slightly modified, carried out under slightly different conditions as power continues to pursue it. This particular structure of pleasure and power – itself a form of pleasure to be studied in its subversion of typically gendered roles – is short-lived as the editorial constraints of publishing in *Once a Week* come to return such sexual chaos to order by the end of the serialization.

After the several exciting moments of Eleanor's seizure of power, a sudden and neat wrapping up of the narrative occurs. We might speculate that this appears to be the result of an order by Lucas to either meet a length requirement or to cease representing subversive female sexual power. Entirely too many plot incidents – even for Braddon – appear in the final installment and the superficially tied threads of the plot result in an ending that is unlike Braddon's other novels. The last lines of the novel read almost like an apology: “after all, Eleanor's Victory was a proper womanly conquest, and not a stern, classical vengeance. The tender woman's heart triumphed over the girl's rash vow; and poor George Vane's enemy was left to the only Judge whose judgments are always righteous” (414; ch. 60). Such a complete reversal of the exciting agency brought to Eleanor as she seizes the power of the scientific gaze are difficult to accept as anything other than a playful and insincere compromise on Braddon's part. However, the text resorts to use of the visual as we are offered a description of a painting in the last installment that haunts the reader with its depiction of dominant female sexual behavior. Significantly, the painting by aspiring artist Launcelot Darrell is exhibited in the Royal Academy, available to a wide, public audience. “Mr. Darrell's first success” is

“The Earl's Death,” from the poem of Tennyson's with the motto, “Oh, the Earl was fair to see,” – a preternaturally ugly man lying at the feet of a preternaturally hideous woman, in a turret chamber lighted by lucifer matches – the blue and green light of the lucifers on the face of the ugly woman, and a pre-Raphaelite cypress seen through the window; and I am fain to say, that although the picture was ugly, there was a strange weird attraction in it, and people went to see it again and again, and liked it, and hankered after it, and talked of it perpetually all that season; one faction declaring that the lucifer-match effect was the most delicious moonlight, and the murderess of the Earl the most lovely of womankind, till the faction who thought the very reverse of this became afraid to declare their opinions, and thus everybody was satisfied. (413; ch. 60)

In this ekphrastic image, Braddon offers a representation of what is potentially the ultimate result of female sadistic behavior – the murder of the male partner. The “strange weird attraction” of the painting lies in the troubled pleasure incurred in viewing a scene of murder presumably committed in a fit of passion. Furthermore, the description of the painting represents the enforcement of discursive social control. The developing faction that believes “the murderess of the Earl” to be “the most lovely of womankind” comes to silence the faction that believes the opposite, shaping the multiple reactions to the sight of the painting into a single one. Although this points to the effectiveness of such censoring, the curiosity here is that the public is convinced of the beauty and desirability of a “preternaturally hideous woman,” presumably the opposite conclusion one would expect. The social control enacted through the scientific gaze and its quest for erotic confession can not only enforce norms but it can succeed in overturning them or even erasing the existence of seemingly contradictory

declarations. It is also important to note here that the erotic representation has again shifted into a different form: heterosexual, less explicit this time, but steeped in the excitement of female power. In this case this shift in erotic representation may have a practical purpose: to placate an editor that was opposed to representing female dominance. By relegating this last representation to a description of a painting rather than an event in the plot, Braddon employs an appeal to the sense of vision that is only partially subject to the discursive monitoring of Samuel Lucas and middle-class Victorian society.

Given the myriad forms of sexuality represented in *Eleanor's Victory*, it is no wonder that both Braddon and the *Athenaeum* reviewer saw the comparison of her novels with a kaleidoscope as an appropriate metaphor. A device produced by the nineteenth-century science of vision, the kaleidoscope not only suggests multiplicity, but also continual, often miniscule, evolution of the subject it scrutinizes. The scientific gaze, established by Foucault as having a profound effect on the formation of discourses of sexuality, is a crucial subject in the text of the novel as Eleanor seizes its empowerment, and it is also crucial in influencing the reactions of the reader and the editor to the forms of sexuality represented in *Eleanor's Victory*. The editor's searching gaze is continually averted as the forms of sexuality represented – heterosexual, homosexual, sadistic – continually evolve providing new pleasures as they hover just out of the reach of power and reduction. Significantly, the illustrations by George du Maurier offer more explicit representations of sexuality than the written text, taking advantage of the use of the visual sense rather than the more easily classifiable verbal expression. Another variation on this practice, Braddon's use of verbal expression to represent the visual image of a painting at the end of the novel, serves as a last effort to defy the isolation and simplification of desire, haunting the reader with a more subtle representation of dominant female sexual behavior.

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## NOTES

1. Much critical attention of late has focused on optical technologies. Marcus has suggested that the recent interest in Victorian visual culture is a result of a "visual turn" in late twentieth- and early twenty-first century modes of thought that seek out and examine a similar "visual turn" in Victorian modes of thought. The multidisciplinary nature of the subject has resulted in two often cited works, one monograph by Flint as well as a collection edited by Christ and Jordan (*Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination*), that share nearly the same name, reliant on the key term, "visual imagination," to cover the many components of Victorian culture these works address. Both Flint and Smith have also described a tension between scientific and mystical thought in nineteenth-century writings about the visual. Flint argues that there is a sense of transcendentalism associated with the visual imagination in a discussion of *Sartor Resartus*, where she describes a "Carlylean metaphysical" sense (22). Lindsay Smith describes this tension as one divided between empiricism associated with Western, geometrical perspective and transcendentalism (9).
2. For a much more complete discussion of Victorian debates about the influence of technology on human vision, see Armstrong.
3. Stewart has argued that the novels of Dickens, Reade and Braddon are "dedicated to reaching the sensorium of its audience through bodily channels beyond the optical, through what we might call visceral, neural, and erotic (as well as subvocal) recognitions" (346).

4. Turner notes the multiple possibilities for reading the periodical, though his suggestion is perhaps meant to be a more practical one: "one can start in the middle, at the end, wherever, and not ever finish the periodical" (234).
5. A. A. "My First Run." *Once a Week* 2 (14 Mar 1863): 327–32.
6. Temple, Charles. "Plucky Dick Pluckless." *Once a Week* 8 (2 May 1863): 527–32.
7. "The Quality I Covet." *Once a Week* 8 (14 Feb 1863): 207–10.
8. An Old Chum. "My Golden Hole." *Once a Week* 8 (2 May 1863): 505–08.
9. R. A. B. "A Celibate Consoled." *Once a Week* 8 (2 May 1863): 518.
10. See the reviews of the same title, "Sensation Novels," by Margaret Oliphant (*Blackwood's* 91 (1862): 564–84) and Henry Mansel (*Quarterly Review* 113 (1863): 481–514).
11. All page references to *Eleanor's Victory* correspond to the serial publication in *Once a Week*.
12. Other examples of articles concerned with the exposure of pleasure in scientific and technological investigations include J. L. "Blowing Bubbles." *Once a Week* 8 (28 Mar 1863): 372–74 and "Brown Seaweeds." *Once a Week* 8 (2 May 1863): 524–27.
13. Johnson has also briefly noted the effeminate attributes of both George Vane and Launcelot Darrell as well as the "homoerotic bond" between George Vane and Maurice de Crespigny, citing them as examples of the unsuitability of these men for their roles as father or lover to Eleanor (257–58).
14. Discussions of the crinoline often focus on the unmanageable and frivolous behavior of fashionable women. The *Medical Critic and Psychological Journal* review, "Sensation Novels," associates the reading of sensation novels with a contemporary "interest in sexual immorality . . . chiefly due to a cause no less than the crinoline" (516), suggesting that sensation novels are one of the fashions connected with such frivolous female behaviors.
15. Benjamin's "Short History of Photography" can be useful here in thinking about the "the optical unconscious," as he terms it, that is revealed in photography as the subject's unconscious actions and thoughts are brought forward for scrutiny in the isolation of a single moment in a photograph (7). However, it is the reverse that takes place in this scene of *Eleanor's Victory*, as the viewer, Eleanor, finds that her unconscious thoughts surge to the forefront rather than the subject, Launcelot's.
16. Johnson briefly notes that Braddon's need to please "a masculine authority" in the form of a publisher results in an oscillation between writing for the popular market and writing as artistic endeavor throughout her career (270).

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