Literary Businesses:

The British Publishing Industry and its

Business Practices 1843–1900

Marrisa Dominique Joseph

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Statement of Originality

I, Marrisa Dominique Joseph, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work or that where it has been carried out in collaboration with, or supported by others, that this is duly acknowledged below and my contribution indicated. Previously published material is also acknowledged below.

I attest that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge break any UK law, infringe any third party's copyright or other Intellectual Property Right, or contain any confidential material.

I accept that the College has the right to use plagiarism detection software to check the electronic version of the thesis.

I confirm that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author and no quotation from it or information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author.

Signature: *M Joseph*

Date: 10th March 2016

Abstract

The Victorian publishing industry has been frequently analysed, debated and discussed within the fields of book history, publishing history, media studies and literary studies, yet there is a gap within academic business research on the publishing industry from the approach of organisational studies, in particular from the perspective of new institutionalism. This research examines how the business practices of organisations in the British publishing industry – which I refer to as literary businesses – developed in the Victorian era, by exploring the formation of these practices in relation to wider societal influences. My research analyses how authors, publishers and literary agents instigated and reproduced business practices in the industry, examining why these practices became accepted and legitimised. This historically oriented research is constructed around primary and archival sources, in particular trade periodicals, personal letters and business documents.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Queen Mary, University of London for their financial assistance which has given me the opportunity to undertake a doctorate. I have been fortunate to receive a scholarship from the university, alongside a grant from the Queen Mary Postgraduate Fund to do this research. I would also like to thank the staff in the Business School at Queen Mary, in particular my supervisors Professor Michael Rowlinson and Professor Sean McCartney, who have been instrumental in guiding, shaping and supporting me in writing this thesis. Doing this research has been a rewarding, challenging, sometimes frustrating yet illuminating experience. I have been blessed in having the love and support of my friends and family every step of the way and I am very grateful for their care and dedication. In particular I thank my parents who have always supported me in my education and have helped me to realise my aspirations. I especially thank my mum for being an ear for my ideas, proofreader, editor and shoulder to cry on; all your help has been much appreciated! And to David, thank you for your patience, kindness and love, which has always kept, and will continue to keep, me going; I love you all very much.

Introduction

This thesis explores the business practices of the British publishing industry, examining the period 1843–1900, the year the Macmillan publishing house was founded to the establishment (and now defunct) Net Book Agreement (NBA). My research focuses on how some business practices became accepted, and why they were legitimised during this period, from a new institutionalist perspective to organisational studies. The publishing industry at this time went through dynamic changes, which have been discussed in studies on the history of the publishing industry. However, this thesis argues that a deeper exploration of how business practices formed in this industry is needed, as there is little dialogue that explores why certain practices were accepted as an important aspect of the history of this industry, as some of these practices can be seen in the industry today.

Recently, researchers in this field have commented that there is an over reliance to use the approach of new institutionalism to focus on large scale inter-organisational and societal transformations, somewhat disregarding the experience of social actors and the connection between their lived experiences and how this structures institutional behaviour.[1] There is an increasing dialogue regarding the influence of institutionalism in organisation studies, most noticeably by Paul DiMaggio, Walter Powell, Roy Suddaby and Thomas Lawrence. There has been a

---

[1] W. Richard Scott, "Approaching Adulthood: the Maturing of Institutional Theory," *Theory and Society* 37, no. 5 (2008), 428; Thomas Lawrence, Roy Suddaby, and Bernard Leca, "Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization," *Journal of Management Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (2011), 52; Thomas B. Lawrence, Bernard Leca, and Tammar B. Zilber, "Institutional Work: Current Research, New Directions and Overlooked Issues," *Organization Studies* 34, no. 8 (2013), 1024

call from these researchers to explore how cultural and societal norms are reflected in organisational fields and what conditions gave rise to rationalised formal structure in organisations.[2] New institutionalism is now a dominant perspective in organisation studies and studies are increasingly exploring this area within historical research.[3] My research, as a historical study on the British publishing industry, adds to this research area by analysing how individuals and organisations formed specific business practices and why they became legitimised.

Victorian Publishing

Book historians Finklestein and McCleery describe the nineteenth century as a time that saw a 'revolution' in publishing, because the industrial age brought down the cost of production and caused a rise in output.[4] The mechanisation of book production and a shift in culture towards literacy and reading created a market for new material, and, with new distribution networks enabled by the railways, commercialism in books could be realised with more vigour.[5] In particular, the rise of literacy in adults and children allowed the market for books to grow rapidly due

---

[2] See Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, eds., *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Walter W. Powell and Jeanette Anastasia Colyvas, "The New Institutionalism," in *The International Encyclopedia of Organization Studies*, ed. Stewart Clegg and James R. Bailey (Sage Publication Inc. , 2008); Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca, "Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization"; Roy Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory," *Journal of Management Inquiry* 19, no. 1 (2010); Thomas B. Lawrence and Roy Suddaby, "Institutions and institutional work," in *Handbook of Organization Studies*, ed. S. R. Clegg, et al. (London: Sage, 2006).

[3] See Roy Suddaby, William M. Foster, and Albert J. Mills, "Historical Institutionalism " in *Organizations in Time: History, Theory, Methods* ed. Marcelo Bucheli and R. Daniel Wadhwani (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Roy Suddaby, William M. Foster, and Chris Quinn Trank, "Rhetorical History as a Source of Competitive Advantage," in *The Globalization of Strategy Research* ed. Joel A. C. Baum and Joseph Lampel, *Advances in Strategic Management* (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing 2010).

[4] David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, Second ed. (London, New York: Routledge, 2013), 61

[5] Ibid., 62

to the increasing demand for literature and educational titles. This factor makes the nineteenth century a particularly dynamic period for the study of this industry and its multiple forms of reading material, including newspapers, magazines and books, a trend that had been gradually emerging since the mid-eighteenth century.[6] The surge in the market can be seen through the publication data of the time. The sale of newspapers quadrupled in less than half a century, rising from 16 million a year in 1801 to over 78 million by 1849. Furthermore, the number of books published in the early 1800s rose from around 14,450 to around 60,850 by the 1890s.[7] With the sudden growth of the reading market in the early nineteenth century, the way literature was published also needed to develop as there was more opportunity for it to become a profitable commodity.

The nineteenth century publishing industry saw many advances beyond the commercialisation of literature. This era was the age of the three-volume novel or the three-decker, which was the form that dominated the bookshops and circulating libraries. Copyright law developed significantly during this time, which had an impact on how authors were able to negotiate contracts with publishers, and by the mid-nineteenth century the phrase 'author by profession' had become part of the industry dialogue.[8] Furthermore, the culture of the industry saw women become bolder in their contribution to both fiction and non-fiction through the sale of novels, as well as periodicals and newspaper articles. In addition, by the late 1800s the different businesses in the industry each had their interests represented by formal

---

[6] John Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, Second ed. (London: Routledge, 2006), 58-61

[7] Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800-1919* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1994), 294

[8] Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 10

associations, and their collective action helped reinforce specific practices in the industry. These businesses practices have been noted by book and publishing historians, yet an in-depth analysis of how these practices were formed has been neglected by the arguments, and there are not many studies that have explored this argument from the new institutionalist approach to organisation studies.

By the late nineteenth century a distinct process could be identified of how literature is taken from the author's desk to the reader, which can be represented by the Shannon-Weave communication chain of source to transmitter to recipient.[9] Applied to the publishing industry, the process was from the author to the literary agent, who then licences the copyright to a buyer, normally the publisher, for the right to publish the work, or the copyright could be sold outright. The publisher then organises the production and marketing of the book and supplies the marketplace either directly or through a bookseller/retailer. The practices used by authors, literary agents and publishers govern how they interact with the other businesses in the communication chain, and this also has an impact on how literature is disseminated and sold to the reader. These practices were influenced by the structure and culture of the industry and also by the socio-cultural factors of the wider society. Therefore, in conjunction with understanding how and why certain practices were accepted and legitimised, there needs to be an appreciation of the factors that constrained and enabled their practices.

---

[9] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 1

Institutional Routines and the Publishing Industry

The cultures and behaviours within the contemporary publishing industry are not often challenged by practitioners or within academic research. Instead, these cultural norms and business practices are accepted by those in the field. Text books on the industry outline specific ways of doing business or categorise the functions within publishing as homogenous, sometimes implying that they are the same in different organisations.[10] Although I do not dispute that there are elements of similarities between the operations of publishing businesses, there is scope to examine why the processes were legitimised by those in the field, as it has become accepted as 'this is the way things are done.' This raises the question as to how and why these practices were legitimised to the point that normative behaviours are constantly reproduced, not only between organisations but by newcomers in the field. There are a lack of studies that address this question, as previous research is preoccupied with identifying and tracing major occurrences in the history of the publishing industry as opposed to questioning why certain practices were accepted and further legitimised.

Publishing as a creative and cultural industry has been frequently analysed, debated and discussed within the fields of book and publishing history, bibliography, media studies and literary studies. These are limited studies on the publishing industry which use the theories and methods from academic business

---

[10] For example see Chapter 2 in Gill Davies, *Book Commissioning and Acquisition*, Second ed. (London: Routledge, 2004); Chapter 4 in Giles N. Clark and Angus Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, Fifth ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014); Chapter 3 in Thomas Woll, *Publishing for Profit : Successful Bottom-line Management for Book Publishers* (London: Kogan Page, 1999); Chapters 5 and 6 in Lynette Owen, *Selling Rights*, 7th ed. (London: Routledge, 2014).

research. In particular, studies have been confined to library and information sciences, although it has been recognised that scholarly research on publishing can be subjected to business research methods and can further knowledge regarding one of Britain's strongest creative industries.[11] My research adds to other research on the publishing industry from the perspective of business and management, and in particular will approach the research questions using theory from organisation studies, rather than predominately drawing on theories from book history or literary studies.

There has been an increased level of research surrounding how social actors within organisations make decisions and how these are constrained and enabled by external factors. However, researchers have commented that there is reliance on research in new institutionalist studies of organisations to focus on the outcomes of processes.[12] Instead there has been a call for research to explore the processes themselves in greater detail, a position which my research takes as it analyses the motivation behind the formation of business practices within a creative industry. Recently there has been a growing dialogue in research assessing whether studies about the creative industries can inform existing theories about management.[13] This thesis brings to the foreground that research on the creative industries can be

---

[11] Simone Murray, "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2006), 6

[12] Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca, "Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization", 52; W. Richard Scott, "Lords of the Dance: Professional ls as Institutional Agents," *Organization Studies* 29, no. 2 (2008), 223; — — —, "The Adolescence of Institutional Theory," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1987), 494; Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory", 15

[13] Joseph Lampel, Jamal Shamsie, and Theresa K. Lant, "Toward a Deeper Understanding of Cultural Industries," in *The Business of Culture: Strategic Perspectives on Entertainment and Media*, ed. Joseph Lampel, Jamal Shamsie, and Theresa K. Lant (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum ; London, 2006), 5; Murray, "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline", 6

subjected to the approaches and methods from management studies, and can inform existing theories about management as it is an interdisciplinary blending of book and literary history and organisational history.

In light of this, I discuss that a more in-depth critical examination of the business practices during this period is needed, in order to ascertain a fuller understanding of how individuals did business in the Victorian publishing industry during a period that saw rapid change. In order to explore this argument, the research question for this thesis asks: how were business practices formed in the Victorian publishing industry, and why were they accepted and consequently legitimised? In relation to this, my research also analyses the relationship between socio-cultural factors and to what extent these influences had on the formation of business practices. I argue that the business practices of the Victorian publishing industry were pushed forward by influential individuals and through a process of legitimation these practices were accepted in the industry. Having a more in-depth understanding of the publishing industry during this time provides valuable insight into the history of an industry, which according to the latest figures, was worth over £3.0bn in 2014.[14]

Alongside contributing to studies on the history of the publishing industry, this thesis also adds to research in the area of organisation studies from a new institutionalist perspective by utilising historical sources. I aim to make a contribution as a piece of historical research, drawing extensively on documents from predominately business archives and published sources. Historically orienting

---

[14] The Publishers Association, "Market Research and Statistics," (London: The Publishers Association 2014).

the analysis allows my research to move away from the classical economic stance to organisation studies and take an empirical approach, which permits further understanding of the relationship between social actors, organisations and to a certain extent the wider organisational field. Methodologically, my research takes an interpretive approach in order to allow for meaning to be drawn from qualitative historical documents such as letters, essays and periodical articles. These sources have documented and in some cases highlighted the thought processes behind particular decisions, which subsequently led to the formation of business practices. This thesis aims to demonstrate the reasons behind the well documented outcomes of processes. Therefore, an exploration of the choices made by individuals helps to bring the 'institutional story' of this industry to the foreground.

Definitions

I draw on terminology from the areas of organisation studies, book history and literary studies. Pierre Bourdieu devised the phrase the 'literary field' in order to categorise the producers of literature (publishers, editors, authors and literary agents) in relation to the products of literature (books, newspapers and magazines).[15] The producers each have a 'role to play' in the creation and dissemination of literature in the marketplace and this constitutes the literary field.[16] This thesis examines the professional author, literary agents and publishers in depth, and I refer to these producers as literary businesses. This is an inclusive term which embodies both individuals and organisations who commercially work with literature, either

---

[15] Pierre Bourdieu and Tony Bennett, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* [La Distinction, Critique sociale du judgment] (New York, London: Routledge, 2010), 319
[16] Ibid., 226

through the creation, production or dissemination of literature in the field. I further categorise the different types of literary businesses and refer to them as organisational groups. For instance, authors are a separate organisational group to literary agents, yet I consider both in the context of this research as literary businesses.

Literary businesses are examined in the context of the publishing industry as a conglomeration of businesses that are involved with publishing, and are defined and generally understood as "the commercial activity of putting books into the public domain."[17] The publishing industry is a part of the wider commercial industry of the book trade, consisting of retailers, distributors, booksellers, bookbinders and printers. I do not analyse these functions in detail as my research concentrates on publishing, although I examine the relationship between these businesses and also the effects that the book trade had on the publishing industry in nineteenth century Britain.[18]

The term authorship has different meanings according to context such as the post-structuralist perspective, which examines literary works in conjunction with the author's symbolic relationship to their writing. This approach suggests that literary works can only be appreciated in relation to what an author intended the reader to understand, and the dynamic in this context is what is referred to as authorship. In his influential critical essay *What is an Author?* Michel Foucault assesses the role of

---

[17] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 1

[18] — — —, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain* (London: Mansell, 1994), 3; — — —, "The Commerce of Letters: The Study of the Eighteenth-Century Book Trade," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17, no. 4 (1984), 407-409

the author from this perspective and he refers to it as the "author function."[19] My research does not take this perspective, instead it moves towards what literary historian Bradley Deane refers to as "the professional model of authorship."[20] He addresses authorship as the "relationship of writers to the conditions of production and circulation in which they worked", which also includes the relationship to publishers, circulating libraries and literary agents.[21] I use the term authorship in this context as the occupation of writing, a definition that has been frequently used by book and publishing historians and will be used in this context throughout.[22] In relation to this, I define the professional author or writer – which I refer to as the author for short – as an individual who earns a fee for their writing and they do not write solely as a hobby.

Initially in the sixteenth century the function of the bookseller and publisher were intertwined, an aspect I discuss in Chapter 5. I apply the modern definition of publisher, which is understood as the person or organisation responsible for producing and distributing books, newspapers, etc. for sale.[23] As a business function in the context of my research, the publisher also assists in the development of advertising, creating demand and the exploitation of distribution networks for the

---

[19] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 290

[20] Bradley Deane, *The Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market*, ed. William E. Cain, Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory Outstanding Dissertations (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), VII

[21] Ibid., X

[22] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 80; Simon Eliot, "The Business of Victorian Publishing," in *The Cambridge Companion to The Victorian Novel*, ed. Deidre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 48; Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters : Victorian Myths of Authorship, Facts of the Market* (Princeton, N.J. ;Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2009), 33

[23] "Publisher," in *The Oxford Compact English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 812

sale of literature.[24] Furthermore, my research concentrates on the business practices of publishing literature and I focus on fiction, whether that is published in books, newspapers, periodicals or magazines; I use the term literature to encompass these different types of printed materials.

Structure of Thesis

My thesis begins with the literature review, which discusses the different perspectives on the new institutionalist perspective on organisation studies, book history and also professionalisation in organisations, and the effect this can have on institutionalising behaviour. Following this chapter is an exploration of the methodological considerations for my research. As it is a historical thesis, the chapter will outline the challenges of doing research in archives and also with compiling and analysing historical sources. The subsequent chapters then explore the literary businesses in detail starting with the initial producer of a literary piece of work; the author. In particular, the chapter discusses the factors that helped develop the professionalisation of authorship, the effect that copyright legislation had on their business practices and consequently what this meant in the context of the publishing field. The thesis then moves to the literary agent, tracing the origins of the profession and how the most notable Victorian agent A. P. Watt constructed the world's longest surviving agency, analysing how he was able to push business practices forward and why these were accepted by the industry.

---

[24] James Raven, "The Industrial Revolution of the Book," in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 144

Literary Businesses

The next chapter addresses what can be perceived as the central role in the field – the publisher – and examines the business practices of Longman, Mudie and Routledge, who adopted, challenged and instigated different ways of doing business. I then move to an in-depth analysis of the Macmillan publishing house, who have been referred to as one of the most innovative publishers of the nineteenth century, and how this Leviathan house founded in 1843 became a dominant force in the period.[25] I examine which practices they chose to adopt and why, and how this affected their business and also the others in the field. The final empirical chapter analyses the development of the NBA and the establishment of professional associations within the publishing industry. This chapter demonstrates ways in which influential persons were able to push their practices forward into the industry and also into the wider society.

My research will discuss the business dealings of some of the most prominent literary individuals operating in the nineteenth century, including Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Besant and Sir Frederick Macmillan. These, alongside their peers and competitors, helped to shape and define business practices and the culture of the organisational field, some of which can still be seen in the industry today. Through an exploration of their letters, memoirs and diaries, this historically oriented research will bring to the foreground aspects of the publishing industry rarely discussed in business research and the theories that inform this thesis are discussed in the next chapter.

---

[25] Iain Stevenson, *Book Makers: British Publishing in the Twentieth Century* (London: The British Library 2010), 4

Chapter 1
Literature Review

The Victorian publishing industry has been widely analysed in studies by book historians and literary historians.[1] These studies are predominately from an arts perspective, with little utilisation of theories from outside the field such as new institutionalism, which examines the reasons for why organisations become similar or, as termed by sociologists John Meyer and Brian Rowan, isomorphic.[2] This approach is at the core of this research as my thesis analyses the factors that influenced how and why individuals working in the publishing industry accepted certain business practices over others, and why these practices were legitimised by others in the field.

The research undertaken by book and literary historians discuss the activities of authors, publishers and literary agents, identifying when business practices became prevalent, sometimes attributing the credit of how the field developed to one or two key persons. Organisation theorist Suddaby discusses how research should go beyond focusing on the outcome of the processes of social behaviour and should look towards what he calls the "institutional story", which calls for a consideration of the "symbols, myths and processes by which organisations interpret their

---

[1] For instance see Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); J. B. Bullen, ed. *Writing and Victorianism* (London, New York: Longman 1997); Catherine Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Nicola Diane Thompson, *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Mary Ann Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920* (Toronto ; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

[2] John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," *The American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (1977), 348

institutional environments."[3] Suddaby's perspective informs my research, drawing on historical sources to trace the development of business practices, and I embrace this perspective in order to examine how practices were accepted and legitimised in and between Victorian literary businesses. The literature review begins with an exploration of Victorian culture and its effect on the publishing industry, then moves on to a discussion of book history and the new institutionalist approach to organisation studies, and ends with an analysis of the professionalisation of roles in the Victorian publishing industry. This chapter reviews the arguments and debates in these areas, discussing the gaps in research and how this thesis contributes to other studies in the field.

Literary Culture

My research focuses on literary businesses that were operating in the mid to late nineteenth century, which falls under what is generally referred to as the Victorian period, considered as 1830–1901 in British history in reference to the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to her death in 1901.[4] Although this term is generally accepted, some scholars from fields including literary history, cultural history and social history have argued that it is oversimplifying to define the period purely by chronology.[5] Literary historian J.B. Bullen comments that the term 'Victorian' is different to 'nineteenth century', as the former is shorthand that refers to a set of

---

[3] Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory", 16

[4] Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis, "Introduction: Defining Victorian," in *The Victorian Literature Handbook*, ed. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (London, New York: Continuum 2008), 1;

[5] Bullen, *Writing and Victorianism*, 2; Alice Jenkins and Juliet John, "Introduction," in *Rereading Victorian Fiction*, ed. Alice Jenkins and Juliet John (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000), 2; Joanne Shattock, "Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1830-1914*, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4; David Morse, *High Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 1

"attitudes, manners and ideologies."[6] Victorian is used to attach individuals and organisations to a time period, both in terms of chronology and to demonstrate the socio-cultural and economic contexts of the time. Yet despite this periodisation, literary historians Warwick and Willis argue that in regard to literary culture, the beginning and ending of this period should be more flexible in order to account for writers who were writing and publishing across this boundary. This includes authors such as "William Wordsworth (1770–1850) whose career continued as Victoria came to the throne," and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930) who, although popular with Victorians, wrote deep into the twentieth century.[7] Most of the authors I examine are "principally acknowledged as the great names of Victorian fiction" and the other literary businesses, including publishers and literary agents, are also commonly referred to as Victorian, and I shall refer to them as such throughout my research.[8]

My thesis analyses the period 1843–1900, a time that saw the popularity of the circulating library, the three-volume novel and the rise of the literary agent.[9] Some of the business practices of the publishing industry changed in this time, moving away from the 'safe and familiar' approaches in the preceding century.[10] Leading up to the nineteenth century, as noted by historian John Feather, London had been the centre

---

[6] Bullen, *Writing and Victorianism*, 1

[7] Warwick and Willis, "Introduction: Defining Victorian", 1-2

[8] Francis O'Gorman, ed. *The Victorian Novel*, Blackwell Guides to Criticism (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers LTD, 2002), 2

[9] See Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, 12 on authorship; Claire Squires, *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 34-35 on the commodification of fiction; Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 123 on circulating libraries and the three volume novel.

[10] ———, *A History of British Publishing*, 72

of book production.[11] As it began to spread beyond the capital, as pointed out by book historians Finklestein and McCleery, the industry started going through a phrase of 'decentralisation'.[12] Book publishing began to reach the provinces, as booksellers and printers in London used the commercial contacts in the Midlands and the North to get their publications into the hands of the readers beyond the city.[13] This 'decentralisation' triggered dynamic changes in the industry both at the individual level and the field level, which had a significant impact on how individuals chose to do business, as the industry started to progress towards being a recognisably modern publishing industry.[14] Alongside the geographical changes, the roles in producing literature, including publishing, printing and bookselling, also started to fragment. In line with Finklestein and McCleery, Feather highlights that some who worked in the book trade made "a withdrawal from bookselling" and went into publishing, a feat that had begun in the seventeenth century and was completed in the nineteenth.[15]

Feather proposes that it was a change in legislation that saw the collapse of perpetual copyright as the key factor, which spurred booksellers who later became publishers into changing their business practices. He comments that the profitable literature on which the London trade had been reliant for nearly a century had been thrown into the public domain, as booksellers could no longer rely on reprinting "old favourites under the protection of law".[16] In comparison, literary historian

---

[11] Ibid., 4
[12] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 57
[13] Ibid., 56
[14] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 82
[15] Ibid., 75-77
[16] Ibid., 73-74

James Raven puts forward an alternative perspective for what prompted the changes in business practices in the eighteenth century. He illustrates that by modern standards the productivity of book production at this time was low, as capital was tied up in "an item of production (an edition)", and through this the publishing industry essentially became "handicapped".[17] Raven emphasises that moving away from tradition was needed in order to ignite a "transformation of the book trade".[18] He highlights this can be found with the breaking of the economic regime that only allowed low productivity rates, referring to the replacement of manual printing presses which broke the 'shackles' of printed publication.[19]

A common thread between Raven and Feather's arguments is their identification of how the separation of printing, bookselling and publishing played a significant part in forming the modern publishing industry, linking with Finklestein and McCleery's application of the term 'decentralisation.' Raven comments that greater productivity was a result of organisational innovation being linked to different trading structures, including cheap reprints and new forms of salesmanship.[20] In comparison, addressing this argument from a sociological standpoint, Feather emphasises that it was changes in societal attitudes in which "competition and entrepreneurship" were more openly accepted, therefore allowing new roles to enter the field, one of which was the literary agent which I discuss in more in detail in Chapter 4.[21] As emphasised by Feather and Raven, the separation of the book trade and the emergence of the modern publishing industry gave

---

[17] Raven, "The Industrial Revolution of the Book", 145
[18] Ibid., 145
[19] Ibid., 147
[20] Ibid., 148
[21] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 83

opportunities for new innovations and, as the landscape changed, business practices adapted, and this prompts an investigation into how and why particular practices were instigated and later accepted.

Publishing went through a dynamic change in the Victorian period and some of the socio-cultural factors that helped to shape its direction were industrialisation and increased literacy rates. New printing technologies provided opportunities for printed materials to be supplied in large quantities. From around 1807 steam power was introduced to papermaking and the first steam driven printing press was introduced commercially in 1814 when it was installed at *The Times*.[22] As book production progressed on an industrial scale, publishers were able to benefit from cheaper print runs and so were more able to supply the growing reading market. The records of the Stationers Company, which was the guild responsible for issuing licences to print between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, highlight that 3,096 books were published between 1800 and 1809, yet by 1839 the number of books registered had more than tripled to 11,905, a predictable trend as mentioned by publishing historian Simon Eliot that continued through to the 1850s.[23]

With technological advances in printing processes coupled with increasing literacy rates, from the 1830s onwards the publishing industry needed to "satisfy [the] craving" for print and Strachan comments that this period became the first era of what would now be understood as "mass-market publishing in Great Britain."[24]

---

[22] Ibid., 89-91; James Raven, "The Book as a Commodity," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain 1695-1830*, ed. Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 87

[23] Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800-1919*, 106, figures referenced from p. 119

[24] John Strachan, "Satirical Print Culture," in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*, ed. Francis O'Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 156

Various education acts played an important part in growing literacy in the general population and fuelling the mass market. 1833 saw the involvement of the government in education and the desire to learn to read consequently surged a demand for reading material.[25] Literary historian Leslie Howsam describes that in 1801 around 50% of people were literate and by 1914 it had risen to almost 100%.[26] Historians generally measure literacy by the ability for a person to sign their name in parish registers, which implied minimal reading skills.[27] However, Roger Chartier discusses that measuring literacy at this time can only be a "rough composite index" as "not everyone who knew how to read could sign his name".[28] In 1830 the population of Britain was around 24 million, and Eliot confirms that in 1841 in England and Wales at least 67% of bridegrooms and 51% of brides were literate. This demonstrates that there was a large market for books, as by 1914 the population was 46 million and 97% of both sexes were literate, highlighting that there would have been a growing demand for books; how I use and define the term book will be explained in more detail in the next section.[29]

My discussion concentrates on the literary culture of fiction in the Victorian era, which was a vast and diverse field, so much so that literary historian John Sutherland claims that Victorian fiction could be seen as an industry in its own

---

[25] Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*, 33

[26] Leslie Howsam, "20b The History of the Book in Britain, 1801-1914," ed. Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen, *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), http://www.oxfordreference.com.idpproxy.reading.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-0021.

[27] Ibid.; Lorri Neilsen, "Literacy," ed. Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen, *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), http://www.oxfordreference.com.idpproxy.reading.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-2874.

[28] Roger Chartier, "The Practical Impact of Writing," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 157-158

[29] Literacy during this period is usually measured by the use of signatures in parish registers

right.[30] Although I shall be analysing the publication of fiction, this does not necessarily mean books or novels as a large proportion of literature was published in newspapers and also periodicals, which could be in weekly, monthly or quarterly instalments, referred to interchangeably as journals and also magazines.[31] Echoing Raven's comments, Brake and Demoor discuss that capital could be tied up in books for a long period of time, and they identify that profit could be realised more quickly within periodicals as they required "immediate and regular sales".[32] Literary historian Kelly J. Mays discusses that the periodical reinforced the format of the novel, as literature published in the press was often the precursor of "the three volume 'library' edition".[33] Periodicals and serialisation, which was the practice of publishing successive parts of a story, invited high turnover of content.[34] These formats reinforced book publishing, utilising these ways of reaching the public through multiple media was another factor that was a profitable way of publishing and had an effect on the practices of literary businesses.[35]

Researchers in literary history have commented that there has been an increased amount of attention dedicated to the periodical press and the role it played

---

[30] John Sutherland, "The Victorian Novelists: Who Were They?," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finklestein and Alistair McCleery (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 345

[31] Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas* (New York; London: W. W. Norton 1973), 66-67; John Hinks, "Introduction," in *Periodicals and Publishers*, ed. John Hinks (Newcastle; London: The Oak Knoll Press & The British Library 2009), viii; Graham Law, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 24

[32] Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (Gent: Academia Press ; London : British Library, 2009), 396

[33] Kelly J. Mays, "The Publishing World," in *A Companion to The Victorian Novel* ed. Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2005), 18

[34] James Wald, "Periodicals and Periodicity," in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 422

[35] Elizabeth Morrison, "Serial Fiction in Australian Colonial Newspapers," in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing & Reading Practices*, ed. John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 306

on the literary field.[36] The development in the publishing industry with the expansion of newspaper production and growing literacy, especially in children, increased the demand for literature in what Matthew Rubery illustrates became the first "mass reading public".[37] He comments that, "there was little separation between journalism and literature" as during the period "the most celebrated Victorian prose authors wrote for the periodical press", and indeed some of "the most memorable prose literature from the Victorian period first appeared in the pages of magazines".[38] This discussion highlights how intertwined book and periodical publishing were despite being different forms, both in terms of production and consumption, as "each format [reached] a distinct group of readers", therefore this research examines fiction in periodicals and newspapers as well as books.[39] The decentralisation of the book trade was a catalyst which sparked the formation of the modern publishing industry. How it then progressed was influenced by socio-economic factors and this can be analysed from the perspective of literary history, and also from the perspective of book history, an academic discipline that analyses the commercial as well as cultural aspects of the production of literature, which shall be explained in more detail in the next section.

---

[36] For instance see Matthew Rubery, "Journalism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*, ed. Francis O'Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 177; Rebecca Edwards Newman, "Genre, Criticism, and the Early Victorian Novel," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel*, ed. Lisa Rodensky (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Hilary Fraser, "Periodicals and Reviewing," in *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature*, ed. Kate Flint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 56-57

[37] Rubery, "Journalism", 177

[38] Ibid., 178-179

[39] Mays, "The Publishing World", 18

Book History: A Discipline from a Different Perspective

This thesis is framed by book history and the history of the publishing industry, research that is usually approached from literary, cultural studies or arts perspectives; however, I am examining these subjects from the perspective of organisational history. Book historian Robert Darnton was one of the first to define the parameters of the discipline. He argues that book history by nature is interdisciplinary, as the study of the book attempts to answer questions from a range of scholarly fields and therefore can be approached by historians, literary scholars and sociologists.[40] Book history stems from the field of bibliography, which is generally defined and accepted as the history or systematic description of books, their authorship, printing, publication and editions.[41]

It has been argued that studies in book history should go beyond just looking at the book. Darnton proposed that in comparison to bibliography, book history could also be seen as the social and cultural history of communication in print from the time of Gutenberg in the fifteenth century to the present day.[42] Agreeing with Darnton, historian in print culture Joan Shelley Rubin outlines that the discipline is not just confined to the book, as she argues that the term 'book' is shorthand for written communication, a position also taken by book historians Suarez and Woudhuysen.[43] Rubin proposes that the field of book history should also evaluate the creation and dissemination of all written communication including newspapers,

---

[40] Robert Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?," *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982), 66-67

[41] Ibid., 65-67; Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 7-8; Murray, "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline", 9; O'Gorman, *The Victorian Novel*, 261; Jenkins and John, "Introduction", 222

[42] Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?", 65

[43] Joan Shelley Rubin, "What Is the History of the History of Books?," *Journal of American History* 90, no. 2 (2003), 555; Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen, "Introduction," in *The Book: A Global History*, ed. Michael Felix Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), xii

periodicals, manuscripts and ephemera and how these artefacts gained significance.[44] McKenzie and Suarez also argue that although the field of study is labelled as book history or history of the book, it goes beyond 'the book' as a physical entity and addresses 'the book' as a material embodiment of broader socio-economic, legal, technological and cultural trends, and I agree that it can be studied with an appreciation of these influences.[45]

Within this academic field, which intertwines methodological and theoretical strands from literary studies, bibliography, sociology and economic history, Rubin argues that 'the book' is a concept, as written communication originates through a rigorous process.[46] Davidson also takes this perspective. She comments that authors do not write books, they write words and through the process of publishing, books then become physical commodities and this concept should be explored further in the field of book history.[47] Darnton refers to this concept as a 'communications circuit' and highlights that book history addresses the complete process from author to reader in relation to wider economic, social, political and cultural systems; he reiterates that 'the book' is a product of the communication circuit.[48] These studies highlight that there is a consensus among historians, which demonstrates that despite the term 'book,' studies in this area should also address the socio-cultural contexts that 'books' were produced in. I concentrate on the production of fiction in

---

[44] Rubin, "What Is the History of the History of Books?", 555-556

[45] D.F McKenzie, "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, literacy and print in early New Zealand," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1984), 206; Michael Felix Suarez, "Historiographical Problems and Possibilities in Book History and National Histories of the Book," *Studies in Bibliography* 56(2003), 142

[46] Rubin, "What Is the History of the History of Books?", 558

[47] Cathy N. Davidson, "Towards a History of Books and Readers," *American Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (1988), 7

[48] Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?", 67

nineteenth century Britain, however fiction was also published in newspapers, magazines and periodicals and therefore, in line with Davidson, my research addresses the 'book' as a concept as opposed to just the physical entity of the 'book'. This research examines the production of fiction within the broader socio-cultural factors that influenced the business practices involved with the creation, publication and dissemination of fiction within books and periodicals.

Darnton, Sutherland and Feather in their respective works discuss that the history of the book has been neglected within academia, and in particular Feather comments that studies in the discipline should not be pursued outside of the context of the world of commerce, demonstrating a shift in the approach to the study of the publishing industry.[49] Feather discusses how studies have attempted to assess the changing technological and social-economic developments that had an effect on publishing, such as Elizabeth Eisenstein's seminal studies on the development of the printing press, but the influence of commerce has been neglected from the arguments.[50] Prior to Feather, Darnton also proposed that the concept of the book can be assessed as a commodity. He provides a range of possible avenues for inclusion of studies in the area such as whether the operations of publishers and booksellers had an effect on literary culture and its readers, or for an analysis of the economic and social conditions that faced full time authors, a line of enquiry that is analysed in detail in Chapter 3.[51] This highlights that there is a gap within studies on

---

[49] Feather, "The Commerce of Letters: The Study of the Eighteenth-Century Book Trade", 406; — — —, *A History of British Publishing*, 3

[50] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[51] Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?", 67

the publishing industry that address its context within commerce with more vigour, an area that this research contributes to.

In a more recent assessment of the academic position of publishing and book studies, Murray has called for researchers to investigate the complexities of publishing and she argues that it is possible for humanities based research in this area to be used with business-focused methodologies.[52] In agreement with Darnton, Murray suggests that research should be undertaken using the theories from sociology and economic history to assess the broader implication of publishing in relation to wider society. These arguments demonstrate that there is scope for research to be undertaken on the publishing industry from the perspective of business and management, and my research sits at this intersection of understanding a commercial industry that has at its core the exploitation of creativity.

Alongside book history, the terms publishing history and the history of publishing have also been closely linked with this research area.[53] Although contributing to the history of publishing, I do not examine publishing history in depth. I draw a distinction between these terms here as some studies use them interchangeably, but as the discipline has become more diverse the boundaries of these terms have become more explicit.[54] Publishing history is an area of study that is concerned with analysing a single work and examining it from inception through to its 'legacy', including all of its formats and editions as well as those published

---

[52] Murray, "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline", 6
[53] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 2
[54] For example see John Sutherland's paper, he discusses that publishing history is the term used in Britain, whereas the history of the book is used in the US; John Sutherland, "Publishing History: A Hole at the Centre of Literary Sociology," *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 3 (1988), 576

after the author's death.[55] This perspective is closely aligned with the early study of bibliography. An example is Darnton's *The Business of Enlightenment*, which he refers to as a publishing history book and a "book about a book" that examines the materiality of literature and how this affected the production of ideas and the literary marketplace in Europe through analysis of Diderot's *Encyclopèdie*.[56] Similarly in her monograph on marketing literature in the contemporary period, Claire Squires uses case studies of high profile books that address aspects of their marketing in the contemporary marketplace alongside their commercial and critical success, which she refers to as their "publishing history".[57] I do not draw on publishing history in detail as my research examines how literary businesses behave and their decisions for producing literature, as opposed to focusing on the outcomes of particular publications.

According to Sutherland, enquiries into publishing history, literary sociology, the history of the book and the sociology of texts lack "binding theoretical coherence".[58] In an attempt to address this gap in published research, literary historian David Simpson has called for a "return to history".[59] Simpson proposes that studies on book history need an analysis of "small and intransigent details [which] needs to be undertaken in archives".[60] He argues that the forms of information that have been traditionally confined to the studies of bibliography and

---

[55] Lorraine Janzen Kooistra, *Christina Rossetti and Illustration: A Publishing History* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 2

[56] Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopèdie 1775-1800* (Cambridge; London The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), 1

[57] Squires, *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain,* 104-105

[58] Sutherland, "Publishing History: A Hole at the Centre of Literary Sociology", 576

[59] Ibid. P.576; David Simpson, "Literary Criticism and the Return to "History"," *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 4 (1988), 722

[60] — — —, "Literary Criticism and the Return to "History"", 742

textual editing, such as the cost and format of books and the size of imprints, can often highlight modes of production and recover the 'silences' not only of the commercial but of the cultural aspects of publishing.[61] Prior to Simpson, Feather argued that archival sources are invaluable in order to fully explore the success and failures of individual authors, books and, to a further extent, publishing houses and their impact on society.[62] Furthermore, publishing historian Alexis Weedon comments, "much empirical groundwork still needs to be done", discussing that "empirical studies of nineteenth-century publishing can show us the value of the publishing industry to the economy of Britain".[63]

In an attempt to address this gap in research, the use of archives of publishing houses and associated enterprises have been given further attention in scholarly research, and have provided the groundwork for leading monographs such as *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain* by Mary Ann Gillies. These studies extensively use the business archives of publishers, literary agents, booksellers and printers, and demonstrate that historically oriented studies on the publishing industry can examine the practices of what I refer to as literary businesses.[64] My research draws on a range of business archives in order to explore some of the 'silences' of the Victorian publishing industry from an organisational history perspective. The archives used are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

This thesis examines 'the book' and goes beyond analysing it as a physical concept. My research draws on Darnton's arguments, examining the 'book' as part

---

[61] Ibid., 743

[62] Feather, "The Commerce of Letters: The Study of the Eighteenth-Century Book Trade", 415-416

[63] Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*, 2

[64] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*; Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*.

of the communications circuit, therefore evaluating its place within the publishing industry in the wider context of the socio-economic and cultural environments of Victorian Britain. My research contributes to book history, although I will not be analysing the history of literary works in detail, and consequently not taking a publishing history approach. Within the area of book history I examine the business practices of authors, publishers and literary agents by analysing how they instigated, engaged with and legitimised certain behaviours through an analysis of historical sources. Therefore the research questions can be approached through new intuitionalism. This perspective provides a framework for analysing how social actors institutionalise behaviours which leads to them becoming habitual, routine and taken for granted both in thought and in action, which I discuss in the next section.

The New Institutionalist Perspective on Organisation Studies

My central aim is to analyse why the business practices in the Victorian publishing industry were accepted and legitimised by individuals working in the field. These processes can be examined using the theories of new institutionalism, which requires an in-depth analysis of how rules, norms and beliefs within the organisations that constitute the industry were constructed. Subsequently, examining these concepts allows for an understanding of how practices were assimilated into organisational behaviour, what sociologists Meyer and Rowan refer to as institutional myths, a concept that stems from the theories of institutionalism.[65] This perspective on organisation studies allows for a critical approach to determine how the publishing

---

[65] Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 341

industry developed as a field during this time, and what influences society and culture had on the business practices. This has not been widely questioned from the perspective of new institutionalism. The studies situated in book history detail the contexts in which practices developed and identify who they believe to be responsible for such developments, yet there is a gap in the literature that critically questions the formation of practices.

Studies in book and literary history often accept and reproduce the narratives about individuals in the Victorian publishing industry who were considered to be instrumental in shaping the field at the time. Gillies was one of the first to make extensive use of the business archive of the A. P. Watt literary agency, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Her monograph critically examines the products of his practices, yet does not provide a deeper exploration of the motivation for these practices.[66] It has been noted by Claire Squires that Gillies' work invites further research and "a more comprehensive history of these [literary] agents", and she discusses that additional research could "unearth a historical narrative" as her research is comprised of extended case studies.[67] Weedon discusses that further research is needed, as Gillies' book does not discuss in detail the "broader questions" about the "agenting business." Weedon argues that the literary agency grew of out of existing practices, learning their business in related firms, whereas Gillies'

---

[66] See Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920.*
[67] Claire Squires, "Mary Ann Gillies, The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain (review)," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2009), 303-304

narrative, as discussed by Squires, puts forward that Watt was responsible for establishing business practices, a line of argument that my research explores.[68]

Reproducing these narratives demonstrates that histories just like business practices can be taken for granted if reproduced by the next generation without question. The organisations within the publishing industry can be subjected to analysis through the theories of new institutionalism, as they are social structures that can "constrain or enable action".[69] The studies cited here are valuable contributions to this area of research and my thesis does not seek to undermine these arguments. Instead it builds on their research, demonstrating deeper insights into the practices of these literary businesses that are considered by some book and literary historians as influential figures of the British publishing industry during the nineteenth century.

My argument comes from the perspective of analysing how and why certain business practices were championed over others, and the affect this had on the industry as individuals reproduce behaviour and patterns of action without necessarily having an understanding of that pattern. Early studies in this area, most noticeably by sociologists Meyer and Rowan and organisation theorists DiMaggio and Powell, put forward an approach for understanding how "social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rule-like status in social thought and

---

[68] Alexis Weedon, "The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920 (review)," *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 4 (2008), 721; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 46; Squires, "Mary Ann Gillies, The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain (review)", 304

[69] Thomas B. Lawrence and Masoud Shadnam, "Institutional Theory," in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 2289

action".[70] Meyer and Rowan build on the work of sociologists Berger and Luckmann who illustrate that the construction of practices, norms and cultures of organisational fields should not be taken for granted and can be explained as they are constructs of human action.[71] They conclude that habitual action is built through the course of a shared history between social actors, and theorists in strategic management Lawrence and Shadnam refer to this as the 'institutional context'.[72] Therefore, having an understanding of the historical process in which actions were produced is needed in order to examine the "emergence, maintenance and transmission of social order…that eventuates in a theory of institutionalisation".[73]

The debates and discussions surrounding institutionalisation and 'taken-for-grantedness' have been noted by sociologist Ronald Jepperson as ambiguous and under-analysed arguments, and he argues that this behaviour is less recognised when discussed in relation to "conscious awareness".[74] The 'pattern' becomes taken for granted because a person does not perceive it as an "external objective constraint" and this can have an effect on how individuals do business.[75] Similarly, organisation theorists Battiliana and D'Aunno highlight that early new institutionalist studies imply that individuals and organisations appear to "comply [with] institutional pressures", signalling that there is scope within research to

---

[70] Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 341; see Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983).

[71] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 14

[72] Lawrence and Shadnam, "Institutional Theory", 2289

[73] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 70; Lawrence and Shadnam, "Institutional Theory", 2289

[74] Ronald L. Jepperson, "Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalism " in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, ed. Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 147

[75] Ibid., 147

address how individuals and organisations change despite being conditioned by the institutional context in which they operate, which opens a dialogue into how and why behaviour becomes legitimised in these institutional contexts.[76]

Knowledge is born through experience and subsequently becomes organised as a systematic body of knowledge, which is then constructed into "wisdom, values and beliefs and myths", a process that Berger and Luckmann refer to as legitimation.[77] This produces new meanings that serve to further integrate the original meanings already attached to institutional processes. Legitimation is at its most imperative when the process is passed on to a new generation, which as described by organisation theorists Powell and Colyvas can be referred to as the "patterns" that achieve "normative and cognitive fixity".[78] Understanding the development of these patterns, which in the context of this research are business practices, and the factors that constrained some practices and enabled others, puts forward a discussion into the institutional story of the Victorian publishing industry.

Isomorphism is concerned with describing the processes and structures in which organisations become similar in structure, a term developed by sociologists DiMaggio and Powell.[79] As do Meyer and Rowan, DiMaggio and Powell move away from the classical economic analyses of organisations and highlight the importance

---

[76] Julie Battilana, "Agency and Institutions: The Enabling Role of Individuals' Social Position," *Organization* 13, no. 5 (2006), 654; Julie Battilana and Thomas D'Aunno, "Institutional work and the paradox of embedded agency," in *Institutional Work: Actors and Agency in Institutional Studies of Organizations*, ed. Thomas B. Lawrence, Roy Suddaby, and Bernard Leca (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31

[77] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 83

[78] Ibid., 85; Powell and Colyvas, "The New Institutionalism", 976

[79] DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", 149

social contexts have on organisations and the institutional environment.[80] Their

paper addresses homogeneity or isomorphism in the organisational field, meaning

how the organisations in the aggregate constitute a way of institutional life, for

example through suppliers, resources and other organisations that produce similar

products.[81] They illustrate that institutional isomorphism is a useful method for

understanding the politics and ceremony that are inherent to organisational life.[82]

They identify three mechanisms through which isomorphism occurs: coercive,

which stems from political influence and the problem of legitimacy; mimetic, which

is organisational modelling (imitation); and lastly normative, which is concerned

with the professionalisation of a field. The concept of legitimacy within an

organisational field is particularly apt in relation to my research. The following

chapters examine literary businesses by identifying and examining how individuals

instigated and formed businesses practices, in particular addressing the reasons why

they became accepted and legitimised in the field. As new organisations emerged in

the Victorian publishing industry, in some cases they conformed to how their

predecessors operated as opposed to finding an alternative or better practice for

their business.

Powerful organisations "force their immediate relational networks to adapt to

their structures and relations, [powerful organisations then] attempt to build their

goals and procedures directly into society as institutional rules."[83] This is so rivals

have to compete both within the sphere of the social network and/or market as well

---

[80] — — —, *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, 9
[81] — — —, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", 148
[82] Ibid., 150
[83] Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 348

as the institutional environment. This highlights a binary relationship between organisations and wider socio-economic institutions, creating a 'push and pull' mechanism. From this standpoint, Meyer and Rowan emphasise the problems that arise from the adoption of structures and routines, what they refer to as "isomorphism with environmental institutions".[84]

The NBA, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 7, examines this in detail, exploring how the actions of some booksellers and publishers created an industry practice that lasted for over a century. Theorists in new institutionalism pose the argument that although organisations may develop new practices, as new organisations enter the field, organisational actors will inevitably make rational decisions and construct an environment that "constrains their ability to further change in later years".[85] This action is identified by Meyer and Rowan as another form of legitimacy, because as innovation spreads throughout the field a threshold is reached, and normative behaviour is adopted because it is accepted in the field that 'this is the way things are done', not because it is the most efficient way to improve performance.[86]

Despite his papers being influential, there have been misinterpretations of DiMaggio's argument, as the paper was taken to stand for the principle that with isomorphism eventually all organisations within a field would become identical.[87] DiMaggio addresses this by arguing that organisations are not 'prisoners' of their institutional environment bound to conform, but instead they reflect the cultures

---

[84] Ibid., 348

[85] DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", 148

[86] Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 342

[87] Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory", 15

and routines of their institutional environment.[88] DiMaggio's argument provides an approach to analyse the effects of the environment on organisations and, furthermore, it allows for an exploration of how social actors both conform and sometimes challenge institutional patterns of behaviour. My research embraces DiMaggio and Powell's and Jepperson's standpoints, by exploring the 'taken-for-grantedness' of social actors and how the institutional environment characterised the business practices of the field.

More recently, increasing amounts of studies are addressing the ability of institutional entrepreneurs to use their "strategic resources or other type of power", which has a significant influence on the evolution of organisational fields.[89] This shift in research on institutional studies emphasises the understanding of the role of actors in effecting, transforming and maintaining institutions, and further cementing taken-for-granted knowledge into the institutional context.[90] This approach is examined primarily under the rubric of institutional entrepreneurship. At its core, this perspective embraces the examination of institutional entrepreneurs and how they are crucial to explaining institutional processes.[91] Powell adds that there have been 'evangelizing efforts' by academic researchers to assess how institutional

---

[88] Paul J. DiMaggio, "Interest and agency in institutional theory," in *Institutional Patterns and Organizations : Culture and Environment : Conference on Institutional Theory : Papers*, ed. Lynne G. Zucker (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1988), 7

[89] Lawrence and Suddaby, "Institutions and institutional work", 215; see Battilana, "Agency and Institutions: The Enabling Role of Individuals' Social Position"; Devereaux Jennings *et. al* conduct a content analysis of studies on institutional entrepreneurship in leading organization, management and sociology journals, and they conclude that the topic is still "relatively warm," P. Devereaux Jennings, Michael Lounsbury, and Manely Sharifian, "Entrepreneurial Agency and institutions," in *The Routledge Companion to Entrepreneurship*, ed. Ted Baker and Friederike Welter (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 360

[90] Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca, "Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization", 52; Lawrence and Suddaby, "Institutions and institutional work", 215

[91] Jens Beckert, "Agency, Entrepreneurs, and Institutional Change. The Role of Strategic Choice and Institutionalized Practices in Organizations," *Organization Studies* 20, no. 5 (1999), 781; Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca, "Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization", 522

entrepreneurs champion or influence specific practices, as their influence has a significant impact on an organisational field.[92] He states that there are two sets of mechanisms that require examination in order to deem whether those in an organisation comply with institutional practice out of compliance and moral obligation, or simply because social actors could not perceive an alternative set of organisational practices.

This notion is in accordance with Meyer and Rowan's argument of whether organisational practice is legitimated through adoption rather than rational choice.[93] Institutional entrepreneurs can have an effect on the dynamics of an organisational field as they are sources of new practices.[94] As Battilana points out, the approach of institutional entrepreneurship allows for an exploration of how and why practices changed at the individual level as opposed to the organisational and societal levels, which permits study of how individual actions shape organisations.[95] The individuals examined in my research had effects on business practices, and consequently had an impact on the publishing industry at the time, demonstrating that, to some extent, some individuals show evidence of enterprising behaviour.

Taking a new institutionalist approach to the above theories, Suddaby argues that contemporary studies on institutionalism overlook the 'institutional story', meaning that research should not simply trace the outcome from processes, but

---

[92] Powell and Colyvas, "The New Institutionalism", 976

[93] Ibid., 976; Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 345

[94] C. R. (Bob) Hinings et al., "Dynamics of Change in Organizational Fields," in *Handbook of Organizational Change and Innovation*, ed. Marshall Scott Poole and Andrew H. Van de Ven (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 304

[95] Battilana, "Agency and Institutions: The Enabling Role of Individuals' Social Position", 655

should examine the details within the process from the beginning.[96] He highlights that institutional theory relies too heavily on a positivist approach, and instead argues that a methodological, interpretivist approach will allow for further understanding of the meanings, systems and myths of organisations within their institutional environment.[97] In referencing the work of Ventresca and Mohr, Powell makes a case for using historical research and archival methods to explore the changes in meaning to organisational identities and practices. In addition, it can be noted that the historical approach can also bring to the foreground the origins of these institutional contexts, an aspect that will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.[98] Examining the industry from this point of view is particularly apt for using historical research methods, as sources can aid in tracing how individuals perceived social processes and the actions that they took to reproduce and legitimise habitual routine.

The work of these researchers highlights a line of inquiry that moves away from the classical economic approach to organisations and institutions, and highlights that a more empirical approach is beneficial to understanding the relationship between organisations and institutions and the forces that link them such as rational myths, beliefs and processes. My research contributes to this and other studies in this area as my analysis of historical sources brings to the foreground the 'institutional story' surrounding the institutionalisation of business practices in the British publishing industry. Studies situated in new institutionalism, and in particular the institutional story, focus on the relationship between social

---

[96] Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory", 16
[97] Ibid., 16
[98] Powell and Colyvas, "The New Institutionalism", 977

actors and their wider environment, and how processes gain legitimacy. Professionalisation is a factor that can influence individuals' perceptions of each other, and consequently this had an impact on how some business practices became legitimised in the publishing industry, an argument discussed in the following section.

Professionalisation in Victorian Britain

The changing dynamic of the nineteenth century gave way to competition in the publishing industry and what other scholars have referred to as a more entrepreneurial approach towards the sale of literature.[99] Displacing 'hidebound' attitudes with innovation, and amongst the innovation that brought about new business practices, the newcomers to the field needed to establish their place in the industry. My research explores how they used professional behaviour in order to gain acceptance and legitimation from the field and wider society in general. The theories of professionalisation support research by providing a perspective to explore how individuals can use their expertise in order to control a market, and to push their practices into the wider organisational field. My discussion draws from the perspective: to what extent do publishers, literary agents and in particular authors exhibit signs of professionalisation, and how did being perceived as professional impact their business practices? Research from an organisational studies perspective has been growing in prominence, with debates departing from the

---

[99] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 83

traditional perspective of the sociology of the professions, which focuses on "occupational closure, social stratification and exclusion."[100]

Organisation theorists Muzio, *et al.* argue that the role of the professions is a key mechanism for tracing and evaluating institutional change, as evaluating the relationship between the professions, markets, organisational forms and business practices also helps to trace the processes within institutional change, an area they argue is "under-theorized and under-examined."[101] Taking this approach allows for an exploration of how social actors go beyond the technical and 'everyday' tasks within their jobs. As Muzio, *et al.* argue, this provides an understanding of how these actors collectively inject an element of predictability into their social lives, and consequently create a particular and natural 'taken-for-granted' character, which can become synonymous with the profession.[102]

In order to place the profession in context, I discuss here the various definitions of what some sociologists use as criteria on which to judge whether an occupation can be referred to as a profession. The framework devised by sociologist Geoffrey Millerson has been widely cited and is considered by some sociologists as the most comprehensive definition in order to ascertain whether occupations can be judged as professions.[103] Some social historians discuss that the only 'true'

---

[100] Daniel Muzio and Ian Kirkpatrick, "Introduction: Professions and organizations - a conceptual framework " *Current Sociology* 59, no. 4 (2011), 389; Kevin T. Leicht and Mary L. Fennell, "Institutionalism and the Professions," in *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, ed. Royston Greenwood, et al. (London: Sage, 2008), 432; Mike Saks, "Inequalities, marginality and the professions," *Current Sociology* (2015), 1

[101] Daniel Muzio, David M. Brock, and Roy Suddaby, "Professions and Institutional Change: Towards an Institutionalist Sociology of the Professions," *Journal of Management Studies* 50, no. 5 (2013), 700

[102] Ibid., 706

[103] Terence James Johnson, *Professions and Power* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 25; David Dunkerley, *Occupations and Society* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1975), 53; Daniel Muzio and John Flood, "Entrepreneurship, managerialism and Professional lism in action: the case of the legal profession in

professions are those of the Church, the army, medicine and law.[104] This is due to their historical roots in the *Ancien Regime* within the aristocracy before capitalist societies emerged.[105] Millerson outlines that professions can be judged if they satisfy the following criteria:

a) Must involve a skill based on theoretical knowledge

b) The skill requires training and education

c) Competence must be demonstrated by passing a test

d) Integrity is maintained by a code of conduct

e) The service is for the public good

f) The profession is organised[106]

Although this framework is widely cited in research on the professions, it has been challenged more recently by sociologists who believe that trait-based perspectives towards the professions are outdated.[107] Goldstein and Johnson contend that there is not a universal definition of a profession, as no two contributors agree on the same criteria.[108] Evetts, in agreement with Freidson, argues that research no longer needs a

---

England and Wales " in *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship in Professional l Services*, ed. Markus Reihlen and Andreas Werr (Cheltenham Edward Elgar, 2012), 371

[104] Richard L. Abel, "The Rise of Professional lism," *British Journal of Law and Society* 6, no. 1 (1979), 83; Jan Goldstein, "Foucault among the Sociologists: The "Disciplines" and the History of the Professions," *History and Theory* 23, no. 2 (1984), 174; Rosemary O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 3

[105] Maria Malatesta, *Professional l Men, Professional l Women: The European Professions from the 19th Century to Today* (London: SAGE, 2011), 1

[106] Geoffrey Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations. A Study in Professional lization* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), 4

[107] Ibid., 4

[108] Goldstein, "Foucault among the Sociologists: The "Disciplines" and the History of the Professions." P.174; Johnson, *Professions and Power*, 28; Scott, "Lords of the Dance: Professional ls as Institutional

'hard and fast' definition of the professions, a preoccupation that dominated research in the 1950s and 1960s.[109] She comments instead that research should focus on the professions and occupations as social forms. Freidson argues that the professions cannot simply be defined by a single approach; for instance, that the profession is some type of dedicated service as opposed to serving economic interest, or that the profession can only be distinguished by having a special type of knowledge. He disagrees with how Millerson has attempted to define the professions, stating instead that they can be simplified to one or two key ideas rather than a set of categories.[110]

More recently, Muzio, Brock and Suddaby have commented on how studies in this area have moved away from the limitation of "trait-based perspectives" such as Millerson's framework that predominately looks at "occupational dominance and monopoly", which had obscured the broader roles that professionals conduct in the organisation and construction of social life.[111] These debates highlight how research that explores the professions should not be overly focused on what constitutes a profession, but instead how the professions as products of social behaviour can influence institutional change. In relation to this, O'Day argues that the previous descriptive nature of the profession in research is static. Instead she calls for historians to explore the role professions played in society, which intensifies the meaning of its historical development by highlighting why professions developed in

---

Agents", 221; Muzio, Brock, and Suddaby, "Professions and Institutional Change: Towards an Institutionalist Sociology of the Professions", 702

[109] Eliot Freidson, "Theory and the Professions," *Indiana Law Journal* 64, no. 3 (1989), 424; Julia Evetts, "Professional lism: Value and ideology," *Current Sociology Review* 0, no. 0 (2013), 3

[110] Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations. A Study in Professional lization*, 2-4

[111] Muzio, Brock, and Suddaby, "Professions and Institutional Change: Towards an Institutionalist Sociology of the Professions", 701

certain ways.[112] My research emphasises this approach as I draw on the theories of the profession and professionalisation to explore how this construct facilitated taken-for-granted behaviour in the publishing industry and influenced some of the business practices in the field.

According to Millerson's framework, the organisational roles within the publishing industry could not be classed as professions as they do not fit his criteria; specialist qualifications or membership to a recognised professional body are not required to work in the industry.[113] Therefore, exploring how literary businesses became professionalised by imitating the behaviours of those in the true or traditional professions, by internalising 'taken-for-granted' and accepted social behaviour, and using this to their advantage, adds to the other studies on the institutionalist approach to the professions. Publishers, authors and literary agents do not satisfy the criteria that would allow them to be considered as a 'true' profession, instead they could be referred to as 'quasiprofessional occupational groups', as they aspire to be more professional, what Barber calls "emerging or marginal professions".[114] However, Malatesta argues that occupational or quasiprofessional groups still need to advance and strengthen their specialist knowledge in order to be considered as established professions.[115]

Formal qualifications were not and are still not required for entry to work in the publishing industry, yet some of those who worked in Victorian literary

---

[112] Rosemary O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800: Servants of the Commonwealth*, Second ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 7-9

[113] Clark and Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, 315

[114] Bernard Barber, "Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions," *Daedalus* 92, no. 4 (1963), 676

[115] Malatesta, *Professional l Men, Professional l Women: The European Professions from the 19th Century to Today*, 4

businesses, especially authors, classed themselves as professional.[116] As pointed out by historian Richard Salmon, in the mid-nineteenth century literary professions began to define their "collective autonomy", which began to resemble "modern sociological definitions of professional ideology" a view that is closely aligned with professionalisation.[117] The theories of professionalism and professionalisation are particularly apt in the case of the professional author, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

There are two key differences between professionalism and Professionalisation. Sociologists use the concept of professionalism to define the traditional ideal of the profession, as it is concerned with the transfer of knowledge, whereas in comparison, professionalisation explores the process that individuals use to constitute and control a market for their expertise.[118] (Larson, 1977) As discussed by Muzio, *et al.*, as social actors transform their occupations through professionalisation, they re-draw the boundaries and adapt the rules of existing fields, which consequently leads to actors creating spaces for themselves within the field by generating new occupations, subordinating others and institutionalising new practices.[119] Particularly in the case of A. P. Watt, a notable Victorian literary agent, professionalisation allowed him to utilise a niche in the marketplace for his

---

[116] In Britain, formal qualifications regarding the publishing industry were introduced in higher education around twenty years ago, but these are not compulsory requirements for entrance into a position at any level within the publishing industry; Murray, "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline", 3

[117] Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, 12-13

[118] Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis* (Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1977), 50; Talcott Parsons, "The Professions and Social Structure," *Social Forces* 17, no. 4 (1939), 460; Keith M. Macdonald, *The Sociology of the Professions* (London: Sage, 1995), 161

[119] Muzio, Brock, and Suddaby, "Professions and Institutional Change: Towards an Institutionalist Sociology of the Professions", 707

expertise, consequently enabling him to develop business practices which were later imitated by his competitors; this is my leading argument in Chapter 4.

Larson and Abel in their respective works argue that the professions, mainly through the application of specialist knowledge, are a display of power from one individual to another, and the success of professionalisation is an example of how the individual with the most expertise wields the power (within an organisational field).[120] In addition, Jackson discusses that the process of professionalisation is an attempt to act as a barrier to entry for newcomers wishing to enter "the sacred company".[121] He highlights that through professionalisation, professions develop their organisational structures in an attempt to maximise control and access over resources. In quoting Hughes, Jackson highlights that the significant question to ask is not whether occupations are professions, but to what extent they exhibit characteristics of professionalisation.[122] This furthers the discussion that studying the professions can move beyond strict definitions of what is or is not a profession. Hughes argues that a better way to understand the significance of the professions is to explore how occupations become professionalised, as opposed to concentrating on the definitions.[123] This research builds on Hughes argument by examining how literary businesses exhibited signs of professionalisation and the impact this had on their business practices.

---

[120] Abel, "The Rise of Professional lism", 87; Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*, 205-206; Macdonald, *The Sociology of the Professions*, 9-10

[121] J. A. Jackson, "Introduction," in *Professions and Professional lization*, ed. J. A. Jackson ([S.l.]: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 10

[122] Everett C. Hughes, "The Professions," *Daedalus* 92, no. 4 (1963) 659; Jackson, "Introduction", 5

[123] Hughes, "The Professions", 658

Conclusion

The Victorian period saw many changes that directly affected the publishing industry, in particular the industrialisation of book and newspaper production and increased literacy rates, which grew the demand for literature providing increased opportunities for literary businesses. Historians of the publishing industry have called for further exploration into the origins of some of the nineteenth century's most influential literary businesses, and this provides a foundation for further study in this area by examining the factors that influenced individuals and consequently how they developed business practices. The review of published studies in this chapter has highlighted that there is a gap in research that addresses the commercialisation of the British publishing industry from a business oriented approach, and I contribute to this research area from the perspective of new institutionalism, a standpoint that argues for debate on understanding how behaviour becomes taken for granted within organisational fields. In particular, this research draws on the theories of new institutionalism, as this concept addresses how knowledge is embedded into social thought and action by the 'passing on' of information and knowledge to subsequent generations, leading to social action being accepted as 'this is the way that things are done'.[124] Through an analysis of historical sources, it has been possible to analyse and examine how individuals made choices that pushed forward particular business practices, and the institutional story.[125] Therefore it has been possible to trace how behaviours and practices became

---

[124] Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, 85
[125] Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory", 16

legitimised. The sources and methods used in this research are discussed in detail in

the following chapter.

Chapter 2
Narrative Conversations in Print:
A Methodology

This chapter will address the methodology that underpins the thesis through a discussion of the approaches used in the research design. The arguments and discussions presented are based on sources accessed through archives in conjunction with published and unpublished essays and articles; the study takes a qualitative and interpretive stance. The chapter will begin with an exploration of how the social constructionist approach can be applied to organisation studies, it will then explore how historical analysis is relevant to organisation studies, and will be followed by a detailed explanation of the research design and how the methodological choices fit the research question.

Social Constructionist Approach to Organisation Studies

Sociologists Denzin and Lincoln comment that the modernist or golden age blurred the lines between epistemological genres, which coincided with the appearance of postpositvist arguments.[1] Throughout this period there was a variety of new interpretive and qualitative perspectives that entered into the academic domain, including hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, phenomenology, cultural studies and feminism. Denzin and Lincoln further comment that during this 'blurred genres' phase the researcher became a *bricoleur*; they use this term to illustrate how

---

[1] Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Fourth ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011), 3

researchers situated in qualitative research, especially those in the humanities, must learn to 'borrow' from many different disciplines. [2] This thesis builds on Denzin and Lincoln's arguments, as it draws on theories from the social sciences, cultural studies and literary studies; approaching the research in this way allows for an exploration of a creative industry from a business and management perspective.

My research focuses on the individuals who worked in the Victorian publishing industry, and assesses some of the social and cultural constraints that shaped and influenced their choices in business, and subsequently their business practices. Organisations are framed around sets of goals and strategies and these achievements of social interaction are in a constant state of flux.[3] Individuals are in a continuous process of constructing their worlds through an institutionalisation of culture and discourses, therefore they are constantly "socially constructing who they are, what they are doing and where they are going".[4] Individuals shape their world whilst their world also shapes them through social construction. This process reflects how individuals relate to their organisations and furthermore how organisational fields develop through the process of institutionalisation.

The research question 'how were business practices formed in the Victorian publishing industry, and why were they accepted and consequently legitimised?' explores how the products of the publishing industry are created within an organisational structure that is 'taken for granted', a concept that underpins the ontological approach of social constructionism. Social psychologist Vivien Burr

---

[2] Ibid., 3

[3] Tony J. Watson, "The Emergent Manager and Processes of Management Pre-Learning," *Management Learning* 32, no. 2 (2001), 223

[4] Ibid., 223

describes social constructionism as "a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge".[5] As a methodological approach, social constructionism is a way of understanding knowledge through social processes, therefore knowledge is obtained and understood through the social interaction of individuals and cannot be obtained through objective means. In order to understand how the business practices of the publishing industry became institutionalised, an exploration of the social processes of individuals must be undertaken to examine what influences both promoted and constrained their decisions within the industry.

In comparison to Burr, Hosking and Dachler approach organisation theory from the standpoint of relational constructionism. Their research is concerned with how organisational processes inform social relations and how taken-for-granted knowledge impacts the relatedness of human life.[6] They comment that the traditional orthodox approach to organisation studies limits the researcher to observing the structure of the organisation as a static entity; they argue that organisations are traditionally observed in a 'snapshot'. Although, as a social entity an organisation is continually evolving, as it is a narrative process that constantly changes, and this aspect should be observed when analysing organisations.[7] Burr also comments that social constructionism is a more dynamic approach to organisational studies, as it observes the processes involved in constructing the organisation rather than the static nature of what the entity is at a certain 'snapshot'

---

[5] Vivien Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 2
[6] Dian Marie Hosking and H. Peter Dachler, "The Primacy of Relations in Socially Constructing Organisational Realities " in *Management and Organization : Relational Alternatives to Individualism*, ed. Dian Marie Hosking, H. Peter Dachler, and Kenneth J. Gergen (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 29
[7] Ibid., 29

in time.[8] This approach therefore allows for an exploration of the choices and actions made by individuals within literary businesses, and also highlights how collective social action constructed the organisational field.

In relation to the social constructionist approach, interpretive scholars argue that the social world cannot be understood in the same way as the natural and physical worlds; reality can only be observed through the study of social action, as the world should be interpreted in accordance with the lived experience of an individual.[9] Language is the dominant form in which knowledge is made, experienced and interpreted. In accordance with this approach, my research will be informed by letters, personal memoirs, articles, essays, and to some extent fictional novels, as these are physical traces of social relations and the interpretations of the social world from the perspective of the individual studied. In particular, business letters and personal letters to friends, family and colleagues written by the individuals who initiated or developed business practices in the British publishing industry will be examined, as writing letters and memos was the principal method of communication in the nineteenth century. Therefore, analysing these historical sources using an interpretive approach is the most appropriate, as these sources are

---

[8] Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, 5

[9] Duane R. Monette, Thomas J. Sullivan, and Cornell R. DeJong, *Applied Social Research: A Tool for the Human Services*, Ninth ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 2014), 40-41; Norman W. H. Blaikie, *Designing Social Research* Second ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 93; Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, 23; Kenneth J. Gergen, "Knowledge as Socially Constructed," in *Social Construction: A Reader*, ed. Kenneth J. Gergen and Mary Gergen (London: Sage, 2003), 15-16; Mary Jo Hatch and Dvora Yanow, "Organization Theory as an Interpretive Science," in *The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory: Meta-Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Haridimos Tsoukas and Christian Knudsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 65-66

ways of knowing and understanding an individual's personal experience, as narratives are storied ways of communicating.[10]

History & Historical Sources

History can seek to understand the meaning of the past but is restricted to the scope of the information available as historians only have access to the artefacts of the past, leading history to be constructed by giving certain events significance and also by giving them meaning.[11] The historic turn in organisation studies was championed most noticeably by theorist Alfred Kieser, who called for further research to be undertaken that uses archival sources and primary documents to understand different aspects of organisational theory, as understanding contemporary organisations relies on having an awareness of how they developed historically.[12] Building on this, within organisation studies there is an increasing dialogue that highlights how historical research and archival research methods are useful approaches for exploring how businesses develop, and subsequently how organisations change within their institutional environments.[13] In addition to these studies, Ventresca and Mohr comment that an interpretive framework that uses archival research methods as a data gathering technique is valuable for drawing

---

[10] Catherine Kohler Riessman, "Narrative Analysis," in *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, ed. Victor Jupp (London: Sage, 2006), 186

[11] Bill Cooke, "Writing the Left out of Management Theory: The Historiography of the Management of Change," *Organization* 6, no. 1 (1999), 83

[12] Alfred Kieser, "Why Organization Theory Needs Historical Analyses--And How This Should Be Performed," *Organization Science* 5, no. 4 (1994), 619; Behlül Üsdiken and Alfred Kieser, "Introduction: History in Organisation Studies," *Business History* 46, no. 3 (2007), 323

[13] See Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory",18; Powell and Colyvas, "The New Institutionalism", 976-977; Michael Rowlinson and John S. Hassard, "Historical Neo-institutionalism or Neo-institutionalist History? Historical Research in Management and Organization Studies," *Management & Organizational History* 8, no. 2 (2013), 112- 113

together "the grammars of action [and] the relational networks that tie elements of organisational life together".[14]

History is more than the careful weighing and sorting of evidence into patterns, arguments and narratives, and more than just a 'chronology of facts'; it is based on judgements. History as a field of study can only be based on the known history from documents and sources that have been saved or survived into the present for interpretation and reconstruction.[15] Organisation theorist Czarniawska-Joerges argues that as social actors attempt to understand their own social world and the lives of others, they will document their understanding in narrative form, and consequently their actions gain meaning by placing these narratives into the narrative context of life.[16]

Archival methods are constrained by the historian's physical access to the sources, but the approach taken by the historian of how to tackle what is available can be fluid. The researcher who deals with history, and whose work is subject to what is available within an archive, has to deal with the problem that their study may be structured and guided too definitively by the research questions.[17] However, if a historian goes through an archive without an aim or directed approach, they are left rambling through reams of information without a clear direction of how to consolidate their finds. Connors draws on historical research methods from the

---

[14] Marc J. Ventresca and John W. Mohr, "Archival Research Methods," in *Blackwell Companion to organizations*, ed. Joel A. C. Baum (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 815

[15] Nell K. Duke and Marla H. Mallette, *Literacy research methodologies*, Second ed. (New York ; London: Guilford, 2011), 216

[16] Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges, "The Narrative in Social Science and Organization Studies," in *Writing Management: Organization Theory as a Literary Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 15-18

[17] Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Newbury Park, Calif. ; London: Sage Publications, 1993), 6

perspective of discourse analysis, and he discusses that researchers that work with sources need to "roll their sleeves up and get [their] hands dirty in the stuff of history", and they should "sift…search and play" in order to find sources that support the research questions.[18] A historian can take a rigid approach, which requires searching for specific sources, whereas in contrast they can take a more fluid approach, which requires browsing through sources as opposed to a strict search. I decided to adopt this approach because I did not want to rigorously stick to a prescribed list of sources, as this may have constricted the sources I consulted in general. I argue in agreement with Connors that the initial approach to archives needs to be guided by a research question, however, the search should not be too directed as valuable information could be overlooked as answers to these questions cannot be forced from the sources.[19]

The sheer size of archives can be daunting, and the abundance of information available can present the obstacle of a historian not having the time or resources to search through a bulk of information. In contrast, not having enough sources can be detrimental to a research project, as of course there may not be enough information from which to draw conclusions. Historians are bound by the sources that are presented to them in the archive, they do not create their evidence and to a certain extent their research can be restricted. Therefore before a historian embarks on the research project, there must be a consideration of how to approach the archive(s) systematically. Connors proposes that having a flexible as opposed to rigid approach

---

[18] Robert J. Connors, Lisa S. Ede, and Andrea A. Lunsford, *Selected Essays of Robert J. Connors* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), xv; Robert J. Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology," in *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*, ed. Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 23

[19] ———, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 23

to sources can aid historians, as sources can often present "fascinating anomalies and unexpected treasures", which enhances and enriches the information that informs the research.[20]

Organisation theorists Rowlinson, *et al.* argue that one approach to the historical analysis of organisations can be to derive the structure of research from the sources. This allows a narrative to be constructed from the evidence generated by an organisation's archive instead of imposing a narrative on a set of sources; they refer to this as analytically structured history.[21] This method is in line with Connors's argument, as both approaches propose that the evidence from the sources should guide the construction of the research narrative, as opposed to drawing on sources that rigidly support a set of research questions. I decided to adopt this approach, as I found that it allowed me to follow storylines within sources, which further led me to other sources and persons of interest. Using this method increased the probability of finding sources 'unintentionally', meaning that I could potentially find a source that initially had an indirect association with the research question, however these 'fascinating anomalies' could turn out to be valuable sources.[22]

One particular example of this was a menu card held in the archive of the Garrick Club in London that had been signed by influential nineteenth century politicians, authors and publishers. I visited the archive with the intention of finding confirmation of membership of the Macmillan family and a range of authors who frequented the Garrick. The archivist was aware of this and he showed me the menu

---

[20] Ibid., 24
[21] Michael Rowlinson, John S. Hassard, and Stephanie Decker, "Theorizing Organizational History: Organization Theory and Historical Theory " *Academy of Management Review* 39, no. 3 (2014), 263-265
[22] Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 24

card as a point of interest. The item is an example of an anomaly that had a significant impact on my research, as it provided the foundation for the subsequent chapter on professional networking in the Victorian publishing industry and how the gentlemen's club was an important factor of doing business in the field.

Connors assesses the challenges of undertaking archival research, commenting that a historian's approach to archival sources cannot be rigidly confined by a hypothesis or set of research questions, although he does argue that historians still must explain and account for their method, what he refers to as a "directed ramble".[23] The physical approach to sources is similar from case to case; the historian must search through boxes, files and documents. However, it is the interpretation of the sources that should be explained in order for a historian to ascertain how they decide what to include in their research and what is of importance. Therefore in order to justify and explain their method of doing archival research, historians can be reflexive by exploring their approach to the sources. This can be achieved through a considered method that is discussed in the body of the study, instead of inputting justifications in the footnotes of the study.[24]

Exploring the Sources

As my research takes an interpretative approach, the types of sources relevant are narrative sources including documents, letters, articles, essays, and to some extent ephemera. As I am taking a qualitative approach, quantitative sources such as account books and royalty ledgers were not utilised in detail. As the thesis is

---

[23] Ibid., 23

[24] Rowlinson and Hassard, "Historical Neo-institutionalism or Neo-institutionalist History? Historical Research in Management and Organization Studies", 116

concerned with examining how and why business practices in the publishing industry were accepted and legitimised, narrative sources that presented evidence of choices by key decision makers were deemed particularly important, as these sources highlighted patterns of operational and strategic change within literary businesses and the organisational field. Fortunately the bulk of communications between decision makers in the literary businesses under study have been preserved in publicly accessible archives in the United Kingdom and United States, and a range were used in compiling documents. This included the manuscripts collection at the British Library, the business archive of the A. P. Watt literary agency held at the University of North Carolina (UNC), and the Berg Collection which is kept at the New York Public Library, as well as the archive of British Printing and Publishing housed at the University of Reading. Throughout the thesis I use an abbreviated citation for each archive in the footnotes and the complete citations are cited in the reference list. Other sources were consulted through published media such as periodicals, memoirs, printed collections of letters and (auto)biographies, which is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Initially the research questions guided my 'sifting' process through the various collections and allowed my approach to the sources to be consistent throughout the process. To begin with I conducted a wide search through documents within a specific time period, initially 1870–1914. This is framed around the establishment of the A. P. Watt literary agency (c.1875) until the death of the founder A. P. Watt in 1914. The emergence of the professional literary agent in the publishing industry was a key point in the development of business practices, and

provided a focal point to explore sources that related to key organisational groups including publishers, authors and editors. From this starting point I was then able to identify sources that presented information on processes and business practices.

As the activities of Watt's agency were integral to the periodisation of my research, I started with this business archive first. The archivists at UNC preserved the filing system that Watt used, which was to group files together in chronological order by author, and then by publication. I spent 3 weeks at UNC starting at the beginning of the catalogue, as I was most concerned with discovering the origins of business practices. I searched handwritten letters for evidence of practices that would be recognised in the industry today, and I also spent a week in the Berg Collection as they held Watt's letter books. I intended to adopt the same strategy by searching the earliest documents in the archive, however the archivist explained to me that the first four letter books had been lost; this would have accounted for Watt's personal and business letters written roughly at the same time that he started his agency. Fortunately, there was still an abundance of letters in later books that I was able to view that confirmed how Watt operated his business in its infancy, therefore the missing books were not too detrimental to my research.

Information from documents in the archive of the A. P. Watt literary agency pointed to other archives and persons of interest, which would further contextualise and inform the research, therefore I decided to use the same strategy for consulting the archives at the British Library and the University of Reading. I could have consulted specific documents relating only to well-known authors or literary titles, but I did not want to limit the sources I consulted. I wanted to analyse a range of

sources that linked to my research question in order to enrich the information gathered. The Watt archive provided a foundation of evidence for my argument and consequently created a map that pointed to other sources in different archives. I was able to layer the evidence drawn from these multiple sources to construct a narrative regarding the institutionalisation of business practices in the Victorian publishing industry.

An intriguing but also sometimes frustrating prospect for historians is the scope and consistency of what is available in the archives. There can be too much information that can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, whereas contrastingly being presented with an abundance of information can be exciting, as the archive becomes an adventure of exploration. This is where the bibliographic information about archives and particular collections becomes extremely useful; the catalogue details for collections allowed me to formulate a method to approach the large data sets available. As mentioned above, UNC preserved the filing system that was used by A. P. Watt: some folders contained only one or two letters in regards to a story published in a periodical, in comparison to sometimes over fifty letters in one folder pertaining to the publication of a novel. This filing system was useful as it allowed me to search for not so well known and prominent authors such as Rudyard Kipling, and the system also allowed for searches to be conducted easily pertaining to a single work, such as *The Jungle Book*.[25] As Watt numbered folders in strict ascending order, his letters and notes were automatically placed in chronological order, which was beneficial when searching through the archive.

---

[25] Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book* (London: Macmillan 1895).

In comparison, the filing system used by the originators of larger collections, such as the archive of the Macmillan publishing house, have not been preserved; instead the sources have been catalogued and arranged chronologically by archivists. For instance the 'Correspondence of Sir Frederick Macmillan…and other members of the firm; 1869–1934'[26] has been arranged in this manner. As items have not been grouped together by author or recipient, the threads of conversations were not as forthright to trace. Similarly, the archive of the Longman Group housed at the University of Reading has been arranged in this fashion, although care has been taken by the archivists to group sources together according to genre/subject. For example, Section 11 of the Longman archive is catalogued under 'Correspondence regarding Longman and Macmillan in regards to the discount question' and Section 12 is 'Longman's correspondence with the Booksellers Association regarding the discount question', therefore it was easier to trace the threads of conversations and it was less time consuming to search for relevant sources.[27]

Corporate documents such as minute books, contracts and letters, have provided valuable insight into the business practices of those working in the Victorian publishing industry. However, analysing corporate documents alone did not provide rich contextual data that highlighted how business practices developed. This was due to a large proportion of business being discussed verbally through informal meetings. In order to contextualise the business documents, other sources outside the leading repository or the primary archive for the firm's business documents were also taken into account. These sources were consulted in what can

---

[26] Correspondence of Sir Frederick Macmillan with Maurice Macmillan, George Macmillan and other members of the firm; 1869-1934, MS 54788, Macmillan Archive, BL
[27] Folders 11/1-20 and 12/1-52, Longman Group Archive, Reading

be referred to as secondary archives as they are linked to the firm in question. Some historians put great emphasis on source triangulation, and a criticism of archival research is that there is an increasing need to work with more than one archive in order to fill the gaps and identify the bias and silences within sets of records.[28] For instance there are sources in the archive of the Society of Authors that document the professional relationship between Macmillan and some of their authors, which demonstrated conversations of disputes and how they were resolved, and these sources were important as copies of these letters were not contained in the Macmillan archive. Broadening the search for documents outside the primary archive allows for additional sources to support and further contextualise theories, which I used extensively. Additionally, sources from other repositories such as newspaper databases can also be referred to as secondary archives.

Periodicals were predominately used in order to provide an insight into the perceptions of how individuals engaged with the publishing industry, and also highlighted personal opinion on influences external to the industry. A rich source was *The Athenaeum*, a newspaper dedicated to commentary and critique of literature, the arts and the sciences, which was available through an online digital archive. Two other sources that were useful for contextualisation were the periodicals *The Publishers' Circular* and *The Bookseller*, both consulted at The British Library. These were produced for those working in the publishing industry, and mainly consisted of advertisements and commentary regarding news in the industry.

---

[28] Stephanie Decker, "The Silence of the Archives: Business History, Post-colonialism and Archival Ethnography," *Management & Organizational History* 8, no. 2 (2013), 163

Source Criticism

In his study on historical research methods, Connors criticises approaches from historians that compile information from sources seen as 'historical fact' and present these in a narrative as the 'historical truth'.[29] Connors argues that historical research involves more than a compiling of facts: historical studies also contain the historian's perceptions, their 'prejudices' regarding the present, and also their assemblage and prejudices of materials from the past.[30] In order to address this, a researcher can be reflexive in their approach to the sources and the sources themselves; this can be achieved through an injection of personal experience alongside the analysis of sources.[31]

Although historians cannot be free from prejudice, being methodologically explicit helps to justify an approach and give a fair presentation of their findings. A researcher not being aware of their own prejudices can limit the scope of the interpretation of the information collected, therefore it could be acknowledged in order to present a balanced argument. Historians can demonstrate their reflexivity through the analysis and discussion of their sources, as an argument cannot be presented without a discussion of the sources in question: the sources must be explored, analysed and cross-checked in order for meaning to be made.[32] Taking an interpretive stance requires an interpretation of narrative and plot rather than a dry recollection of facts intertwined with theory, which can lead to a 'qualitative'

---

[29] Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 15
[30] Ibid., 15
[31] Teresa Brannick and David Coghlan, "Reflexivity in Management and Business Research: What Do We Mean?" *Irish Journal of Management* (2006), 149
[32] Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 17

positivism'[33]. However, collating these facts without an explicit consideration of source criticism can cause the historian's interpretation to overpower the argument without an attention to factual accuracy. It would be beneficial for researchers to demonstrate a dialogue between source criticism and the theory that emerges from the construction of these facts. Furthermore, when discussing sources a researcher should alternate between the 'facts' and the theory that emerges from the pattern of the 'facts'.[34]

Source criticism requires the historian to search within the source for veracity, authenticity and bias, and not only for confirmation of the researcher's questions, what Connors refers to as researching with 'blinders' on.[35] In relation to this position, Alvesson and Sköldberg argue that facts cannot be picked from sources uncritically, as this reduces research to a "compilation of 'facts'" as opposed to offering an interpretation, which interweaves the facts alongside the theory that emerges from the evidence.[36] Connors and Alvesson and Sköldberg address historical methods from the standpoint that theories cannot be imposed on the research. Instead, theories should be drawn from sources and the integral factor that influences the theory is the interpretation of the researcher, therefore the influences and prejudices of the researcher are integral to the research.

Connors mentions that reflexivity requires the researcher to make themselves aware of how they interpret their historical sources by understanding the dialogue

[33] Mats Alvesson and Kaj Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, Second ed. (London: SAGE, 2009), 115

[34] R. G. Collingwood and Jan van der Dussen, *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926-1928*, Revised ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 368

[35] Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 33

[36] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 116

between their own cultural preconceptions and prejudices, and utilise this as part of the research.[37] The inspiration for this research came from personal experience of business practices in the publishing industry, and this provided a direction for me to find evidence of how practices that I had been exposed to were instigated. At the core of the research I establish that I am aware of the legacy of the literary businesses and how they operate in the contemporary industry, and this factor influenced how I interpreted the sources. Using source criticism allows my research to bring to the foreground 'facts' about literary businesses, whilst also exploring my interpretation of these facts in relation to my personal experiences and understanding of the publishing industry.

Alvesson and Sköldberg comment that source criticism is a valuable historiographic method for examining sources as it sets up a criterion for their evaluation and interpretation.[38] The main concepts of this are: criticism of authenticity, which assesses whether a source is genuine or fictitious; criticism of bias; criticism of distance, which examines how long after the event the document was recorded and under what circumstances; and lastly criticism of dependence, which refers to the amount of 'hands' the information has passed through. Dependence is an important factor to consider as information becomes 'distorted' as it passes through intermediaries; this can also be referred to as narrative contagion.[39]

Narrative contagion presents the issue of how distorted information can become embedded in subsequent sources through the misinterpretation or misunderstanding by the creator of later narratives. This could lead to information

---

[37] Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 16
[38] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 107-108
[39] Ibid., 115

being reinterpreted and the meaning from the original source could be changed or lost completely; this is how the information becomes distorted. When this occurs in research it is a fundamental problem as future studies that accept distorted information lead to it becoming further embedded into the sphere of research, an aspect that I explore in detail in Chapter 4 with narratives on the literary agent. Therefore source criticism is a useful method for dealing with the issues of narrative contagion. Within their approach to source criticism, Alvesson and Sköldberg discuss that there are two types of documentary sources.[40] Firstly, the remnant source is a sign that something has happened and has not been exposed to subjective distortion as it has not been open to bias from another person, for instance a contract outlining the terms and conditions of a publishing arrangement. In comparison, a narrative source is information that has been passed through a subjective medium as the entity says something about an event that has happened; these sources would include journalistic articles that report an event, and the reporter in this instance is the subjective medium.[41] I use these terms throughout in order to analyse the veracity and reliability of sources, and to compare and contrast sources that are related to a similar event.

The historian could present evidence of data triangulation to avoid bias and to address the issues surrounding authenticity. For example, I checked publication details of novels in letters written by authors in comparison to advertised publication details in periodicals. This demonstrates that I have considered my approach to the research design, which strengthens my arguments and consequently

---

[40] Ibid., 109
[41] Ibid., 109

highlights that the research has been conducted on a firm methodological foundation. Furthermore some of the documentary sources used in this research have a limitation to their interpretive reliability because they have been subjected to narrative distortion. Often letters or notes were written detailing an event, but these details have been written down after the event, and therefore bias, misinterpretation and prejudice must be accounted for within these narratives through source criticism.

Throughout my research I critique and evaluate the sources I reference, especially those that may have been open to bias or narrative distortion, in order to create a dialogue between the theories drawn from the sources in regards to my research question. In addition, corporate histories of literary businesses, which document the lives of business founders and the development of their organisations, have also been referenced in order to contextualise the sources found in archives. These studies extensively cite historical sources, however in most cases they do not outline where they have obtained their sources, which has led to researchers drawing conclusions with a lack of validation. Due to this absence of a rigorous methodology, it is difficult to be completely critical of the research methods used in these studies, which also further embeds problems in research created through narrative contagion.

I have demonstrated throughout this chapter that it is beneficial for historians to be critical of their sources in order to adequately validate their debates and arguments, as without this misinterpretations and misunderstandings can enter the sphere of research and can lead to distorted information being circulated. This

position is particularly relevant to business history research, as it has been argued within social science that business historians do not engage with their sources with the same vigour that organisation theorists discuss their data in research.[42] Their methodologies have been criticised as a mere description of what sources were consulted rather than an exploration of the sources themselves.[43] Source criticism could be seen as method of following the 'story' within the source; historians can explore the narrative (what is said), but also explore the originator of the narrative (who said it) and their biases. Also it must be noted that there is a differentiation between the creator of the source and the originator, as it cannot be assumed that they are always the same person. An example of this would be a newspaper article: the interviewee is the originator of the source and the interviewer would be the creator.

Why These Literary Businesses?

The literary businesses cited throughout have been included due to their significance to the publishing industry in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. These include Macmillan Publishers, the A. P. Watt Literary Agency and The Society of Authors, alongside notable authors such as Rudyard Kipling and Sir Walter Besant. The literary businesses at the heart of this research have extensive business archives, predominately because these firms (including authors) were market leaders at the

---

[42] Elena Ponzoni and Kees Boersma, "Writing History for Business: The Development of Business History Between 'Old' and 'New' Production of Knowledge," *Management & Organizational History* 6, no. 2 (2011), 133; Charles Booth and Michael Rowlinson, "Management and Organizational history: Prospects," *Management & Organizational History* 1, no. 1 (2006), 8

[43] Emma Bell and Scott Taylor, "Writing History into Management Research," *Management & Organizational History* 8, no. 2 (2013), 132

time, and their influence and legacy is still shown in the industry today. The Macmillan publishing house is the company that forms the bulk of research in regard to publishers, as it was founded in the mid-nineteenth century and today is an international conglomerate based in London and Basingstoke, UK. The Macmillan Publishing Group is known as one of the 'Big Four', a colloquial term for the largest publishers in the industry.[44] I chose this firm due to its size, influence in the contemporary industry, longevity, and also because Alexander Macmillan, co-founder of the firm, was one of the leading publishers of general fiction in the nineteenth century. The Macmillans worked with the A. P. Watt literary agency, which is the oldest literary agency in Britain and it was the agency's significance in the industry that prompted a detailed study into the origins of this company.[45] Authors were chosen according to their popularity within the mass market, alongside the strength of their influence in society and to their peers. Furthermore, it was possible to examine their choices in business as their documents have been well preserved.

I use the term Victorian throughout the thesis as the notable authors and literary businesses analysed, including Charles Dickens, Rudyard Kipling and Macmillan, are referred to as Victorian in cultural and literary studies.[46] I have used the business of Macmillan as a starting point for my research, as they were influential in changing the dynamics of the industry, and tracing their business

---

[44] This term can also be referred to as the "Big Six" depending on whether mergers are referred to; these companies include Macmillan, Hachette, Pearson Group which includes Penguin (a joint enterprise with Random House), HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster; Boris Kachka, "Book Publishing's Big Gamble," *The New York Times*, July 9, 2013.

[45] "Agent Provocateur," *The Sunday Express* 1997.

[46] See J. A. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

practices from inception would be advantageous for the research questions. In addition, my research also analyses some literary businesses who were active before the nineteenth century such as the Longman Publishing House, which was founded in 1724 as an educational house, however by the nineteenth century they had significant influence in the publishing industry and had also diversified into publishing fiction, which is the research area of this thesis.

Limitations

One of the main limitations for a researcher who deals with archives is the issue of the gaps within an archive. A researcher may not always be aware of whether important documents are missing from an archive or have been destroyed. This element is beyond the control of the researcher as what is available is a direct result of how an organisation dealt with and preserved their own history. As the publishing houses forming the foundation of the research have extensive archives, I believed that there would be a plethora of letters supporting the research question. However I found that most of the business letters and agreements held in the archive pertained to business deals that either were in the closing stages of negotiation or were confirming the terms of agreement. This was somewhat problematic as my research is concerned with the processes involved with business practices in conjunction with the outcomes of such business deals and transactions.

Scholars in history predominately study those who are no longer living therefore historians theorise about their lives using the medium of an archive, consequently perpetuating a legacy of representation for subjects who can no longer

speak for themselves.[47] The legacy of these individuals can only be reflected in accordance with what is in the archive, and a limitation of this approach is the documentation (or lack of) oral histories. Although publishers worked with literature, they were not as disposed to detail their everyday workings in diaries or in letters to the press or their friends, in comparison to authors who were vocal in the press. Business deals and transactions were discussed verbally often over dinner, which were informal therefore no minutes of meetings were taken and subsequently a 'paper trail' of how business deals were discussed and agreed are most often non-existent.

Business history as a field has been accused in some instances of favouring survivor bias, meaning that studies tend to document and explore the histories of successful companies.[48] It can also be argued that companies that have not survived to the present day may have had an impact on the organisational field; therefore the influence of these organisations should also be explored in research. In accordance with this, I consulted the archives of some of the smaller or now defunct trade publishers that existed in the nineteenth century, as their archives may also have highlighted how business practices developed. For instance I consulted the archive of Swan Sonnenschein & Co., a publishing house established in 1878 that was later amalgamated by George Allen & Co. (now Allen & Unwin) in 1911.[49] Where relevant, documentary sources either originated or created by these literary

---

[47] Liz Rohan, "Reseeing and Redoing: Making Historical Research at the Turn of the Millennium," in *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies*, ed. Lee Nickoson and Mary P Sheridan (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012), 27

[48] Rowlinson, Hassard, and Decker, "Theorizing Organizational History: Organization Theory and Historical Theory ", 23

[49] "Collection Record: Archives of Swan Sonnenschien & Co. ," University of Reading, http://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/sc-sonnenschein.aspx.

businesses have been included to further contextualise the research. However, in most cases the archives of these defunct or assimilated companies did not provide substantial evidence of the development of business practices, as they were not highly influential or leaders in the industry. In comparison, letters and memoirs of less successful Victorian authors have not been as well preserved, therefore it is more difficult to find sources that document the business practices of these authors. In an attempt to address this, periodicals have been used to illuminate the professional lives of the less popular authors, in addition to essays and articles that address the profession of authorship.

My research explores literary businesses that were founded in Britain before the start of the twentieth century, and the majority of the organisations analysed were either established or had offices in the London by the end of the Victorian era. London was the centre of the publishing industry in Britain, and the literary businesses operating in the city held significant influence, hence why these firms were selected for the study; country or provincial literary businesses have not been included as their practices were slightly different. Additionally, I made the decision not to include the business practices of any international subsidiaries or branches, in order to create a fair comparison between businesses.

The publishing industry is quite broad as it incorporates different types of media businesses, which sell magazines, books and other print material, however I predominately focus on literary businesses that catered to the growing reading market through the sale of novels, stories and, to some extent, newspaper and periodical publishing. Many Victorian literary houses incorporated these forms of

literary outputs, and journalistic contributions from authors were significant therefore the press must be included in the analysis. In addition, the publisher throughout the research refers to a person or publishing house responsible for bringing a book or article to the market. The term does not encompass authors who published their own work; this in the modern understanding would be classed as self-publishing. I have decided not to include this genre as it entails the author being creator, producer and distributor of their own work, which goes beyond the scope of the research questions. Also, the business of booksellers will inform the research in order to provide context, however, they will not be examined in detail in comparison to other literary businesses as booksellers were at the time classed as a trade and they also referred to their occupation as a trade. Furthermore, the publishing industry in the nineteenth century was male dominated, exemplified by the title 'men of letters', a term used to describe those who worked in literature.[50] The route to market for women was quite different in comparison to their male counterparts, and this is explored in further detail in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The literary businesses at the heart of this research are social constructs and the organisational fields they developed are examined through the theories of social constructionism, as the primary aim of the research is to understand how business practices became institutionalised in the publishing industry. This chapter has explored the methodological considerations for my research, in particular outlining

---

[50] See John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life Since 1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), 20

how the sources that provide the foundation for this thesis have been chosen, accessed, validated and analysed through source criticism. My research is situated in the field of business history and this chapter has argued that a consideration should be made for historians to be explicit about the sources they use, and that they should not shy away from discussing them in their research. Therefore, this thesis contributes to other studies that draw on archival methods in business research. The literary businesses I evaluate have been explored through the 'footprints' preserved in archives, predominately business letters, published articles and memoirs, and these sources provide the foundation for the following chapters, which begins with an analysis of the development of authorship in the Victorian period.

Chapter 3
Authorship:
The Development and Legitimation of a Literary Profession

In his comprehensive monograph on the history of the British publishing industry, John Feather believes that the author is often forgotten in the histories of the publishing industry, as "it is after all, the author who writes what the publisher publishes".[1] Although their work is predominately intellectual, I perceive the creation of literature in this context as work – labour that should be recompensed. Taking this perspective of literature as a commodity allows for an exploration of how the Victorian author chose to compete in the marketplace, and what governed their decisions.

There is a selection of studies that concentrate on the history of authorship, however there are fewer that concentrate on the business values of authorship and its contribution to the publishing industry.[2] I define the professional author as an individual who earns a fee for their writing and they do not write solely as a hobby. This chapter puts forward an analysis of the business practices used by authors, and I argue that authors being perceived as professional within the industry and the wider society heavily influenced how they engaged with writing and the sale of their literary property in the Victorian era. The chapter begins by placing the author in the

---

[1] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 132

[2] See Victor Bonham-Carter, *Authors by Profession: From the Introduction of Printing until the Copyright Act 1911*, vol. 1 (London: Society of Authors, 1978),; Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 1993); Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham ; London: Duke University Press, 1994); Carys Craig, *Copyright, Communication and Culture: Towards a Relational Theory of Copyright Law* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011).

context of the nineteenth century publishing industry, before moving onto an examination of how authors used the periodical press to make a living, and closing with a discussion of the business practices used by women as they steered around social constraints of the period to become professional authors.

From Patronage to Professionals: The Rise of the Victorian Author

Studies on book history and literary history have discussed that by the nineteenth century authorship was considered a profession and could be a lucrative form of income, especially in reference to journalistic contributions for those "who could write to deadline".[3] Some Victorian authors considered themselves as part of a profession that had come through the grades of society with rapid advancement, "scarcely behind the legal profession in the same respect" – one critic discussed that authorship should be considered as a profession that was on par with the traditional professions of the law, medicine and the clergy.[4] Identifying authors' perception of themselves as professionals and how society regarded the professional author is fundamental to understanding how authorship progressed as a way of an individual earning a living, and how cultural attitudes influenced the structure of the industry. Authorship as a profession attracted many during the mid-nineteenth century, with the amount of individuals increasing threefold from 626 listed as authors rising to 1,673 between the censuses 1841 and 1861.[5] However, Leary and Nash discuss that these figures should be treated with caution as it also encompasses an increase of

---

[3] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 132; Lillian Nayder, *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 16

[4] "The Literary Profession," *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, 6th August 1842, 225

[5] Patrick Leary and Andrew Nash, "Authorship," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain 1830-1914*, ed. David McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 173

staff who worked on newspapers.[6] Drawing on the data in *The Wellesley Index*, an index of authorship of articles alongside the bibliography, Leary and Nash comment that 12,000 names were listed between 1824 and 1900, however it is impossible to determine how many of these were able to "solely make a living from their writing".[7]

Professions have been categorised most noticeably by Millerson and Larson as activities that require the application of specialist skills and knowledge for which one could be paid.[8] In light of Millerson's categorisation as discussed in Chapter 1, authorship does not satisfy the criterion to be considered as a true profession. However, to Victorian society, novelists, essayists, journalists and poets were considered to be engaged with what they referred to as the 'literary profession'.[9] By 1840 this term, as English scholar Richard Salmon discusses, was also related to 'author by profession', what Charles Dickens (1812–1870) signified as "a liberating independence from patrons and booksellers".[10] As Salmon points out, Dickens alongside George Henry Lewes (1817–1878) and other authors of the 1840s and 1850s, recognised that literature should be a profession, and they accepted that the literary marketplace was a mechanism for rewarding professional labour and emancipating them from patronage.[11] The mid-nineteenth century was a time of change for authors who wanted to become professional, yet there are competing

---

[6] Ibid., 173
[7] Ibid., 173
[8] Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations. A Study in Professional lization*, 4
[9] For instance see "The Literary Profession," *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, 6th August 1842;
[10] Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, 11-12
[11] Ibid., 12

perspectives on the dominant reasons for why this profession grew at such a rapid rate during the Victorian period.

Literary scholar Mary Ann Gillies, as well as Kate Flint and Matthew Rubery in their respective publications, argues that increased literacy rates and the growing demand of the mass reading public were the predominant reasons for authorship growing as a profession during the nineteenth century.[12] In addition, the rapidly developing newspaper press was another outlet for the publication of stories through serialisation, and this has also been identified as a key factor for the rise in authorship.[13] Historians agree that the press provided an opportunity to provide regular income for authors because they could earn a weekly or monthly fee for essays and instalments of stories, as these were a cheap way for the reading public to engage with what Lillian Nayder refers to as "affordable literary commodities", as complete novels were priced outside of what most could afford.[14] Furthermore, the fees that some authors could expect to earn by writing for elitist and highbrow magazines such as *Fraser's* or *Blackwood's* demonstrates that journalism could potentially be a lucrative aspect of the profession.[15] Due to the growth of the reading market, the opportunities for authors grew, which led to the prospect of earning a higher income from the sale of literature because they were able to profit from their 'literary property'.[16] These arguments account for the increased amount of opportunities for authors and demonstrate why there were more writers who

---

[12] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920.* P.15; Rubery, "Journalism", 177

[13] Deane, *The Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market*, 51; Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 61

[14] Nayder, *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship*, 16

[15] Leary and Nash, "Authorship", 180-181

[16] Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, 4; Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, 10

categorised themselves as professional authors, yet their arguments do not discuss in detail why the business practices developed as they did.

Copyright historian Mark Rose argues that authorship was heavily influenced by copyright, highlighting that with the implementation of the Statute of Anne in 1710, the author became a "legally empowered figure in the marketplace" and from this point professional authorship became "economically feasible and socially acceptable".[17] In comparison, Elizabeth Eisenstein in her influential study on print culture highlights that it was the advent of the printing press and technological developments that allowed authorship to develop, as publishers were now able to cater to a mass market, and the growth of the market she discusses gave authors more opportunities.[18]

Although Eisenstein comes from a technological standpoint – unlike Gillies, Rubery and Flint – she acknowledges more forcefully the importance of the copyright and, what is now referred to as intellectual property rights, as an 'agent of change' in relation to its effect on authorship.[19] Eisenstein refers to the relationship between authorship and literary property as the 'celebrated quarrel' and it is from this point that I explore the dynamic of how professional authors formed business practices as they became empowered in the marketplace.[20] I argue that once authors were able to use copyright to their advantage with more vigour, authorship significantly changed in the marketplace, as "copyright was the bargaining chip"

---

[17] Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, 4
[18] Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-modern Europe*, 153
[19] Ibid., 153
[20] Ibid., 122

that passed between the artist (the author) and the entrepreneur (the publisher).[21] In addition, Salmon discusses that copyright became significant as it had an influence on "Victorian professional development", and through copyright there came a definition of "literary property".[22] Salmon draws on Rose's argument stating that copyright law allowed the author to become professional, and as copyright historian Catherine Seville highlights, copyright was one of the key issues that surrounded 'the birth of the profession of authorship'.[23]

Payments & Profits: Copyright and the Effects on Professional Authorship

Alongside Salmon, Rose and Seville, I argue that the development in copyright legislation, and also how authors used this protection to their advantage, was a strong catalyst that helped to propel authorship into a profession. Copyright should also be given more attention in regards to exploring the reasons why authorship developed as a profession during this time, as it affected the business practices of authors. I argue that the key development that allowed authorship to be considered as a profession, as opposed to an occupation or trade, was the Statute of Anne, which was first addressed in Britain from the perspective of the author in 1710.[24]

The Statute of Anne established the author as a "legally empowered figure in the marketplace well before professional authorship was realized in practice".[25] Rose comments that what was referred to at the time as the "literary-property question

---

[21] Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act*, 5

[22] Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, 14

[23] Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, 4; Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act*, 216

[24] 8 Anne, c. 19 (1710) An act for the encouragement of learning, by vesting the copies of printed books in the authors or purchasers of such copies, during the times therein mentioned.

[25] Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, 4

was a legal and commercial struggle".[26] The growing reading market of the nineteenth century provided new opportunities, yet if authors were not able to negotiate contracts or sell their literature in ways that were more favourable to them financially, a larger audience did not necessarily guarantee a larger or more stable income. Without the protection of copyright law it may have still been difficult for authors to get that remuneration despite there being more potential for sales.

In his monograph on the history of copyright law in Britain, John Feather discusses that copyright "regulates the relationship between authors and publishers", and he maintains that it is impossible to analyse the concerns of authors and publishers without having an understanding of copyright history.[27] Initially copyright was primarily the concern of the book trade (booksellers, bookbinders and printers) in the sixteenth century as they were protecting their investments.[28] Authors were the creators of the ideas and the text, yet booksellers added value by shaping creative works into tangible commodities by putting forward the investment, and so copy-owning booksellers as they controlled the product on which the industry was built.[29] For authors to be legally identified as the owner of their intellectual property was a major step symbolically, as the author was given a 'voice' in regards to influencing how copyright was constituted and developed in the law. Authors therefore were able to negotiate and keep more control over their work in the publishing process, and as copyright legislation developed and became more comprehensive, by the late nineteenth century with the establishment of the Berne

---

[26] Ibid., 104
[27] Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*, 2
[28] Ibid., 4
[29] Ibid., 20

Convention in 1886 authors were able to take their literature worldwide, which in turn brought international reputation and further income.[30]

Copyright legislation was the foundation on which literary works could become commoditised products, which could potentially be lucrative for authors as well as the publisher, bookseller and other businesses that are involved in the chain of selling literature. As Lynette Owen argues, without "the bedrock of copyright" there would be little incentive for authors to write, as there would be total freedom for literary works to be reproduced without any obligation to recognise the interests of the creator.[31] This analysis demonstrates that copyright had a significant role in professionalising authorship, as it gave increased opportunities for authors to "break into the commercial market" and, through increased income, authors were able to engage with the social life of the middle classes.[32]

Feather writes that in the early nineteenth century the perception towards authors began to change, as society came to appreciate them as purveyors of creativity and subsequently their role became increasingly recognised in the creative process itself.[33] The notion of authors being identified as creators and owners of their literary property did much to solidify their standing in the industry as it allowed potentially profitable relationships to develop between authors and publishers.[34] It was believed by one literary critic in 1842 that authors should consider the produce of their pen as a matter of business and therefore should be

---

[30] ———, *A History of British Publishing*, 136
[31] Owen, *Selling Rights*, 1-2
[32] Bonham-Carter, *Authors by Profession: From the Introduction of Printing until the Copyright Act 1911*, Vol 1, 25
[33] Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*, 6
[34] Ibid., 4-5

managed and arranged on business principles.[35] In addition, Victorian author Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) agreed with this view arguing, "authorship is a business…an art which no one teaches".[36] Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901), author and founder of the Society of Authors, also believed this. He was a vocal advocate for author's rights throughout the mid- to late-nineteenth century and famously proclaimed in a speech given in 1887 that authors should be granted the rights to the "fruits of their own labour", and that contractual agreements not only formalised business transactions but also ensured that authors could hold publishers to their word and force them to be transparent in regards to their accounts.[37]

There were a variety of ways that authors could make money from their writing. Initially authors would sell their copyrights outright, however the nineteenth century saw a change in practices with the half profits system, which had been commonly used in the eighteenth century and was a common form of payment between the 1830s and 1860s.[38] This would entail the publisher putting forward the initial capital for all production expenses (printing, binding, typesetting etc.) and once these costs were recovered from sales, the profits would then be split equally between the publisher and the author.[39] Although prevalent, this system created tension between the two parties as in some instances it fostered distrust. Publishers were often accused of exaggerating their sales costs or diminishing sales in receipts

[35] "The Literary Profession", 226

[36] Anthony Trollope, *Thackeray*, ed. John Morley, English Men of Letters (New York; London Harper & Brothers Publishers 1901), 11

[37] Walter Besant, "The Maintenance of Literary Property" (paper presented at the The Grievances Between Authors and Publishers: Being the Report of the Conferences of the Incorporated Society of Authors
Willis's Rooms, London, March 1887), 9-10

[38] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*. P. 76; Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*, 179

[39] ———, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain,* 179

provided to authors, therefore allowing them to keep hold of a larger share of the profits.[40] Trollope recounts in his autobiography that his first novels were published by half profits, and he comments how he received "£20 down"[41] on his new historical novel *La Vendee* (1850).[42] Furthermore, he was to receive an additional £30 on the sale of 350 copies, and £50 if 450 copies were sold in 6 months. Yet after he received his initial payment of £20, he heard no more from his publisher Henry Colburn (1784/5–1855) and he did not receive any accounts, therefore he could not query whether his novel had made any sales.[43]

Half profits would dominate publishing contracts between authors and publishers until the 1860s, until it became displaced by the royalty system that entitled authors to receive a percentage share of profits, although some authors like Trollope who became wary of the profit sharing system preferred to receive lump sums up front, as he deemed it "better than a deferred annuity".[44] Similarly, author Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865) stated that "short agreements make long friendships", referring to the contracts in which an author was paid a lump sum for the rights in the novel rather than by royalties over a long period of time.[45] The royalty system for some authors who were short on cash was not an appealing prospect as it could be months before they received a payment. However for some new authors agreeing to royalty payments over a short term was also beneficial as it increased their chance of getting a commissioning contract with a publisher. Primarily this type of contract

---

[40] Ibid., 179

[41] This colloquial term would today be considered an advanced payment before a publication of a work.

[42] Anthony Trollope, *Autobiography* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company 1922), 69

[43] Ibid., 69

[44] Ibid., 94

[45] Quoted in Royal A. Gettman, *A Victorian Author: A Study of the Bentley Papers*, Digital ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 79

insured less risk to publishers, as they would not be tied into any long standing royalty contracts, and secondly, for new authors this type of contract for a debut work functioned as a way to ensure confidence between the author and publisher.[46]

Moving beyond the 1860s, royalty payments started to become more commonplace in the industry, almost displacing other forms of payment entirely.[47] Authors were identified as the owners and creators of their literary property, and the royalty system entitled publishers the right to produce the tangible commodity, in which the author received a share of the profits. Therefore authors had an invested interest in the copyrights as well as publishers, reinforcing the need for mutually beneficial agreements. As copyright protected the 'intellectual' merits of an author's work this created an opportunity for the text, as opposed to the 'book', to be marketed, a springboard for different forms and versions to be used for profitable gain. The Copyright Act of 1842 recognised that protection should last the life of the author plus 7 years or for a total sum of 42 years, whichever was longer, ensuring that authors could benefit for a sufficient time. As illustrated by Feather, new forms of agreements began to emerge between authors and publishers, "implicitly acknowledging the author's role in the creation of literary property".[48] This change in dynamics between publishers and authors enabled authors to create business practices that demonstrated elements of professionalisation; they created a more dominant position for themselves as they were able to have more control in the field.

---

[46] Mays, "The Publishing World", 20
[47] John Feather, "The Publishers and the Pirates. British Copyright Law in Theory and Practice, 1710-1775," *Publishing History* 22(1987), 179
[48] Ibid., 179

Literary Businesses

According to historian Nigel Cross, from about 1830 onwards the vast majority of writers – major, minor and insignificant – began their literary careers as journalists.[49] The media industry was particularly attractive to authors as it provided a steady income for those who could be trusted to write to a deadline, and additionally it exposed authors to editors and publishers with whom they could network with in order to sell additional literary works.[50] The key format that facilitated authors to cross over from journalist into author was serialisation, defined as a publication in any medium in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely.[51] However, in regards to the fiction sector of the industry, serialisation involved the writing of a single story that was issued in parts in a periodical or a newspaper. A way to compare how authorship changed and became more professional in the industry is to use one of Victorian literature's most prevalent journalist-turned-author Charles Dickens, whose serialised stories were extremely popular in the mid-nineteenth century.

Dickens like many others at the time honed his craft in journalism, establishing his name and talents working as a reporter in the antiquated courts of Doctors' Commons before progressing to a parliamentary reporter.[52] Dickens published his first set of sketches throughout 1833 in *Old Monthly Magazine* and the *Evening Chronicle* before they were serialised as a collective, and through this his talents were noticed by the recently formed publishing and bookselling house

[49] Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 91
[50] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 59
[51] Wald, "Periodicals and Periodicity", 422
[52] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, 167

opened by Edward Chapman (1804–1880) and William Hall (1800/1–1847) in the Strand.[53] They had recently employed Robert Seymour (1798–1836), a comic artist who was issuing social and political caricatures, and they were looking for someone to write pieces to accompany the sketches; in 1836 Dickens agreed to the collaboration.[54]

In 1835 Dickens wrote a letter to his wife Catherine (who he refers to as Kate in his letters) outlining a proposal from this publishers Chapman and Hall. Dickens writes:

> "An offer of fourteen pounds a month, to write and edit a new publication they contemplate, entirely by myself, to be published monthly, and each number to contain four woodcuts…The work will be no joke, but the emolument is too tempting to resist."[55]

These stories would become *The Pickwick Papers*, first published in March 1836 and serialised in monthly parts priced at 1 shilling.[56] In this context Dickens was a paid member of staff, accepting a type of salary from Chapman and Hall, an employee as opposed to an independent author therefore the financial interests of the copyrights were with the publishers. By the time the run ended in November 1837, *The Pickwick*

---

[53] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 127

[54] Graham Law and Robert L. Patten, "The Serial Revolution," in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: 1830-1914*, ed. David McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 150

[55] Letter from Dickens to his wife Kate, Furnival's Inn, Wednesday Evening 1835; Charles Dickens, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. His Sister-in-Law and His Eldest Daughter (London: Chapman and Hall, 1880), 3

[56] "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum* 26th March 1836.

Papers had sold over 40,000 copies and had earned its publishers £14,000.[57] According to Dickens's friend and biographer John Forster, by August 1836 Dickens had realised that he had put himself in 'quasi-bondage' through what Forster called a 'hasty contract', meaning that the popularity of the stories kept Dickens in work but he was not entitled to a larger share of the profits.[58] Dickens later agreed to be the editor for a monthly magazine published by Richard Bentley (1794–1871) and also to write another serial story, however the "remuneration in each case [was] certainly inadequate to the claims of a writer of any marked popularity", and Forster claims that Dickens had the agreement with Bentley revised.[59] Forster (1812–1876) mentions that he and Dickens had discussed this through their correspondence in late 1836, however in Forster's publication these letters are not reprinted, and so this is his narrative of the event.

As this format gained momentum, by the late Victorian period novels were also republished in parts and this was also referred to as serial publication. In both cases, as a business practice the publishers were marketing the text as the commodity, rather than the physical book.[60] This was a robust marketing tactic that was upheld throughout the majority of the Victorian period. It created a market through anticipation, ensuring that readers kept buying newspapers in order to get the next instalment in the story of their favourite characters. This strategy of marketing the text as opposed to the physical book benefitted both authors and

---

[57] Michael Slater, *Dickens, Charles John Huffman (1812-1870)*, Online ed. (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2004).

[58] John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* 2 Vols., Vol. I., 1812-1847 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 77

[59] Ibid., 78

[60] Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*, 143

publishers, as they were able to supply a larger market and the importance of copyright protection is demonstrated here. If authors had sold their copyrights outright, then publishers had the freedom to reproduce the text in different formats without paying anything further to authors as legally they were under no obligation to do so. Therefore in this instance, the author would have lost out on additional income from the literary work. Copyright however mitigates this, as the text as well the physical commodity is protected in regards to both the author and the publisher, allowing the author to negotiate payment for the text to be used in different formats. This further demonstrates that copyright had a significant impact on professional authorship. It allowed authors the choice to sell their work in a manner that could potentially prove to be quite profitable, giving them access to upward social mobility, as it did for Charles Dickens whose career was built on the success of his serial publications, earning a profit of nearly £10,000 from *Dombey & Son* between 1846 and 1888.[61]

Throughout the mid-nineteenth century publishing periodically and through serials was generally the first stage in the product life of a literary title, reaction and engagement from the reading public, which would then determine whether the stories would be published as novels and subsequent editions. This practice would progress into what is now referred to as merchandising in the industry; consumers are exposed to fiction in different forms and encouraged to engage with the different forms as the commodity was in the text. As more forms of media and entertainment

---

[61] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 137

filtered into society during the Victorian period, so did the types of exploitations that authors and publishers could use such as film and dramatic copyrights.

The above sections have discussed the changing landscape for authors in the nineteenth century. As the reading market grew there were many more opportunities for authors to become professional, however, as mentioned by Leary and Nash, this did not necessarily mean that all those who called themselves authors made a "living solely from their writing".[62] Although the growth of the mass market and change in demand fuelled the publishing industry, I have argued that these factors, although important, do not distinctly point to why more individuals could become professional authors. Developments in copyright legalisation in the eighteenth century recognised the rights of the author with more vigour, which enabled them to demand fairer remuneration and gave them a 'voice' in the industry. As what would now be termed intellectual property was protected as well as the physical object of the book, the rights could be exploited by all parties involved. As copyrights were a type of profit share between the author and publisher, strong sales warranted potentially more profits so it was in the interests of authors to push their literature to the reading public and encourage a following. One way in which authors could do this was to socialise at gentlemen's clubs, as activities there would in some instances be reported in the gossip pages of periodicals. These clubs also created an environment which allowed professional networking so authors, editors and publishers could meet and talk business, and by the late

---

[62] Leary and Nash, "Authorship", 173

nineteenth century having a membership to an elite club would be a sought after accolade.

Gentlemanly Business: Authors and Gentlemen's Clubs

Victorian authors placed great importance on having a club membership because it kept them within the network of their peers, provided access to opportunity and, furthermore, memberships to elite clubs attached them to the perception of being professional. I argue that authors used gentlemen's clubs, which I refer to as the club throughout for professional as well as social purposes, therefore these hubs facilitated business between literary professionals in the Victorian era, therefore this could be seen as a business practice. This section demonstrates how the club facilitated networking between authors, and how the club had an effect on other literary businesses is discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Originally aristocratic in nature, the club operated with a culture that upheld class boundaries in society. In the early nineteenth century, clubs were extremely strict in regards to the calibre and interests of members. They were established through common interest, political allegiance or by profession, and a person's occupation or profession was one of the main criteria taken into account when a candidate was proposed for membership.[63] These clubs were either highly exclusive, such as Brooke's or White's (which were referred to as elite), or they operated around learned societies or professions; the soldier met with the soldier, and

---

[63] The membership log books at the Garrick Club archive in London highlight that each member on acceptance of membership was required to note down their profession.

associates met with associates.[64] The club provided a comfortable place where politicians, businessmen and artists could meet, converse, exchange information, as individuals were able to widen their immediate networks, and to form ties, what Granovetter describes as individuals who are sources of useful information.[65]

The first elite club for the arts and sciences was the Athenaeum founded in 1824, although the club house did not open until 1830. One of the founding members was statesman and author John Wilson Croker (1780–1857), as he believed that "literary men and artists required a place of rendezvous".[66] By the mid-nineteenth century there were a plethora of literary and artistic clubs, including the Garrick (1831) and the Savile (1868), all of which still exist today.[67] It was noted that these clubs, in particular the Athenaeum due to its 'prestige', would retain their popular status.[68] Indeed the Athenaeum is today still considered as one of the most exclusive clubs for the 'intellectually elite', although broke tradition in 2002 when the club invited women to apply as members.[69]

Despite the club being formed as a light hearted social space of sophistication, where men could go to have access to the traditional rituals of drinking, dining and companionship, the club was often used as a hub for professional networking.[70] Talking about business was seen to be a negative point of club etiquette, and

---

[64] "The Athenaeum Club-House," *Fraser's Magazine for Town and County*, March 1830, 145

[65] Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973), 1373

[66] Quoted in F. R. Cowell, *The Athenaeum: Club and Social Life in London, 1824-1974* (London: Heinemann, 1975), 8

[67] William Thomas, "Croker, John Wilson (1780-1857)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[68] Cecil Hay, *The Club and the Drawing-Room Being Pictures of Modern Life: Social, Political, and Professional l* (London: Robert Hardwicke, 1870), 208

[69] Lee Elliot Major, "Athenaeum opens its doors to women members," *The Guardian*, Thursday 3rd January 2002.

[70] Barbara Black, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012), 113

members were expected to keep conversations light hearted and informal especially as it was deemed that a gentleman would not be expected to network for business; they would be expected to use old contacts fostered through generations of family connections.[71] Although some individuals may have refrained from talking about business specifically, there was no rule in refraining members from making – what I to refer to as strategic friendships – relationships made with a motive in mind to further particular ambitions, a subtle form of self-promotion. In particular, strategic friendships with others in a professional network could provide opportunities and those involved with literature could use the elite literary clubs for these spaces to further their businesses.

Memberships at elite clubs were highly sought after, and to hold one was considered an honour, giving the recipient a "measure of distinction".[72] Throughout the Victorian period these particular clubs were the places for literary professionals to be seen at and to network, as they could often expect to see another author or publisher they would want to work with at these clubs, therefore socialising at clubs became a part of being involved with the profession of letters. With the establishing of the Athenaeum, persons involved with literature had a central club they could frequent, and this enabled new habits to form that had a profound effect on the publishing industry.

As the popularity of literary clubs increased and more began to emerge, it became routine that authors were seen daily at these clubs, either working on their

---

[71] Amy Milne-Smith, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in late-Victorian Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 13

[72] Hay, *The Club and the Drawing-Room Being Pictures of Modern Life: Social, Political, and Professional l*, 209

new novel or reading newspapers, a part of literary life that was vital in order to stay current in the business.[73] As noted by a journalist, the club had the advantages of "bringing persons of power and ability into contact", and consequently authors were able to promote themselves to publishers, editors and to the general public, as men with shared interests and within a variety of professions used club facilities.[74] Popular authors including Anthony Trollope and Charles Dickens used the club frequently and were active in club life. Trollope understood the importance of the club to authorship; he was known to frequent the artistic and literary clubs of the day and was affiliated with the most popular including the Arts Club, the Athenaeum, the Cosmopolitan and the Turf.[75] In his autobiography Trollope wrote that, "a man who could write books ought not to live in Ireland – he ought to live within reach of the publishers, the clubs, and the dinner parties of the metropolis."[76]

The perceived importance of the club to authorship was also apparent in some literature published in the Victorian period. Published in 1891, *New Grub Street* written by George Gissing (1851–1903), a clubman himself, tells the tale of struggling authors in the late nineteenth century. This novel has been acclaimed by some literary historians and critics as an authentic representation of the literary life of the aspiring Victorian author.[77] Gissing makes frequent references to the gentlemen's club and London social life in his novel, and he makes a point of stating how the

---

[73] Black, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland*, 153

[74] "The Athenaeum Club-House", 145

[75] ———, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland*, 91

[76] Trollope, *Autobiography*, 115

[77] George Gissing and Bernard Bergonzi, *New Grub Street. Edited with an introduction by Bernard Bergouzi* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968; repr., 1968); Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street*; John Spiers, *Gissing and the City: Cultural Crisis and the Making of Books in Late Victorian England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 204; Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study : A Social History of the English Novel 1875-1914* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989), 31-32

club was such an important part of being a successful author. The character Alfred Yule, an author close to retirement, relates to his daughter that, "had [he] been able to come into contact with editors and publishers, been able to dine with them and belong to a club then [he] would not be what [he] is in [his] old age."[78] Yule was referring to his lowly status as a contributor to periodicals who did not make a significant income from his work. Although a work of fiction, the novel is rooted in social realism and gives an example of the stratification of the industry, as certain types of authors were only considered as hired pens and stigmatised as hack writers that only 'worked for hire' producing work of low literary value.[79] Due to this status, hack writers did not have sufficient influential social ties to warrant memberships to elitist clubs, and furthermore did not have the financial capital to do so either. This demonstrates how for an author to have access to the networks that the clubs provided could be extremely helpful to an author's career.

Being regularly seen at the club could potentially boost an author's reputation, as it was probable that they would be mentioned in the society gossip pages, as it was common for journalists to provide commentary on who could be seen at what club and where. For instance, the elite social paper the *Court Circular* had a weekly column in the 1880s entitled 'Club and Social Gossip' written by a 'man-about-town'.[80] Gossip, speculation and commentary about club life was a topic of great interest in the press in the Victorian era, demonstrated by an array of

---

[78] Gissing and Bergonzi, *New Grub Street. Edited with an introduction by Bernard Bergouzi*, 60
[79] The term hack stems from "anything used in common, a hired horse," Samuel Johnson, *Johnson's Dictionary* (Boston: Charles J. Hendee, 1836), 158
[80] Amy Milne-Smith, "Club Talk: Gossip, Masculinity and Oral Communities in Late Nineteenth-Century London," *Gender & History* 21, no. 1 (2009), 90

articles, columns and club histories published in leading journals such as *The Athenaeum* and *The Literary Gazette.*[81]

The influence of this culture was so powerful that some individuals would go to extreme lengths to ensure they were kept connected within the network of the clubs. The poet, writer and critic Matthew Arnold (1822–1888) frequented the popular literary clubs and had a membership at the Athenaeum.[82] He was known for being a socialite, and dining out regularly and expensively with the most notable literary and political figures. However, this behaviour quickly led Arnold to run out of money and so he asked his publisher George Murray Smith (1824–1901) of Smith, Elder & Co. for a loan of £200 in order to keep his memberships.[83] This was not an uncommon practice in the industry, as the author Arnold Bennett (1867–1931) also borrowed money from his literary agent James Brand Pinker (1863–1922) to support his sociable habits.[84] This demonstrates that some Victorian authors felt compelled to have a club membership whether they could afford it or not, as it was deemed by some that a membership was vital in order to progress in the industry.

Another example of how authors used the club and the connections it fostered is through the author Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) who began what he refers to as his 'literary career' in October 1889.[85] Less than a month after he arrived in London

---

[81] For example see "Our Weekly Gossip," *The Athenaeum*, 3rd August 1867; "Gossip of the Week ", *The Literary Gazette*, 27th March 1858.

[82] Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1879-1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 514

[83] Bill Bell, "From Parnassus to Grub Street: Matthew Arnold and the House of Macmillan," in *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, ed. Elizabeth James (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 60

[84] Letter to J. B. Pinker from Arnold Bennett 31st October 1911; Arnold Bennett and James Gordon Hepburn, *Letters of Arnold Bennett: edited by James Hepburn*, 4 Vols., Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), 103-104

[85] Rudyard Kipling and Thomas Pinney, *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, 6 Vols., Vol. 1 (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004), 348

from India, Kipling had already been invited to dine by Besant at one of London's most exclusive literary clubs, the Savile. Besant often used the Savile as his club of choice for entertaining and dining with other influential men in the industry, and furthermore he would often introduce new and upcoming talent during these dinners.[86] Kipling wrote in a letter to Edmonia Hill (*flor.* 19th c.), a correspondent whom he wrote frequently, that he felt privileged for being invited to the club as "even Besant goes there…everyone seems to know me".[87] He was fortunate to have been acquainted with Besant via letter before he came to England, and it is likely that it was Besant who recommended him to the Savile Club.[88] Besant was also responsible for the introduction between Kipling and literary agent A. P. Watt, who became his representative in 1891.[89] Besant socialised frequently with authors and persons outside the publishing network, including politicians, historians and scholars, and he was well known as a 'clubbable gentleman' in these social circles.[90] His financial security from working as the secretary to the Palestine Exploration Fund allowed him to dine and entertain much like any other professional man in the middle class.

Kipling is a good example of how networking furthered the career of an author. Besant could have introduced Kipling to the British publishing industry through a succession of private dinners at restaurants or houses, however it is

---

[86] Besant used the facilities of the Savile regularly for dining and entertaining as highlighted in letters from Besant to the S. Squire Sprigge the Secretary of the Society of Authors, MS 56863, Society of Authors Archive, Letters from Walter Besant (1888-1892), BL

[87] Letter to Hill from Kipling, 15th October 1889; Kipling and Pinney, *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, Vol. 1, 353

[88] Simon Eliot, "Besant, Sir Walter (1836-1901)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[89] Letter from Kipling to Besant, 20th November 1889; Kipling and Pinney, *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, Vol. 1, 368-369

[90] Eliot, "Besant, Sir Walter (1836-1901)."

probable that this would not have had the same effect in terms of an exhibition of Besant's support of Kipling as a newcomer in the industry. An invitation to the Savile ensured that Kipling was introduced to the most distinguished literary professionals in a public arena. Not long after Kipling was seen dining at the Savile, he received an invitation from Mowbray Morris (1847–1911), the editor of *Macmillan's Magazine*, a publication that I will explore further in Chapter 6, asking him "to come over and smoke a cigar".[91] It could be assumed that this invitation was an attempt to confirm the commission of Kipling's work as the leading publishing houses were clamouring for his literary talents, including Macmillan and Longman, and this invitation was not the first encounter between himself and the Macmillans.[92] Kipling had met with various employees of the Macmillan publishing house over a series of dinners and informal meetings in late 1889 and early 1890, and these gatherings would eventually work in favour of both Kipling, as he became a contributor to the magazine, and the Macmillans, as they eventually became the publishers of his novels and short stories.

Using literary and artistic clubs was beneficial to some authors as a way to network with others in the field. Throughout this section I have discussed the importance placed upon the club by authors, and consequently it became a practice during this period as a method for finding opportunities, however this tactic did not lend itself well to women writers and novelists. In examining the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, historian Joanne Wilkes notes that despite being outnumbered in terms of contributions by men, female authors did add to literature at the time by

---

[91] Letter to Edmonia Hill from Kipling 8-16th November 1889; Kipling and Pinney, *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*, Vol. 1, 359
[92] Letter to Caroline Taylor from Kipling; 2nd November 1889 ibid., 354

writing on the topics of history, travel and science, and were copiously published in fiction, poetry and drama.[93] Despite the strong contribution to literature by women writers it was in some cases still more difficult for women to reach the higher strata of literary fame. Middle and upper class women were expected to be at home where writing could be a hobby, however in many cases women depended on the income from their writing in order to "permit the smooth running of their homes".[94] Despite this cultural perception of the domestic woman, many did not want to be defined by this cultural stigma and contributed to periodicals in some cases anonymously or under male pseudonyms. To be a female author in the Victorian period meant to be first person anonymous in the male dominated profession of authorship; women would have to manipulate business practices and social conventions for both personal and professional advantage.[95] The next section examines the profession of authorship from the perspective of women, and analyses how they made business decisions that furthered their professional careers.

First Person Anonymous: the Victorian Woman Author

Due to the social conventions of the period, it was more difficult for women to find a route to market for their literary outputs, yet these obstacles did not deter them as demonstrated by the legacy of female writing published in the nineteenth century such as the Brontë sisters, Christina Rossetti (1830–1894) and George Eliot (1819–

---

[93] Joanne Wilkes, *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth Century Britain: The Critical Reception of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot* (Farnham Ashgate 2010), 3

[94] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 115

[95] Alexis Easley, *First Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830-70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 1; Valerie Sanders, "Women, Fiction and the Marketplace," in *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 145

1880). This section explores the business practices used by professional female authors, and how they engaged with the Victorian publishing industry. The impact that societal conventions had on women writers in the Victorian era has been frequently discussed in studies on literary criticism and literary history, yet a wider discussion of how women had to steer through these conventions in order to be published can highlight how gender discrimination affected the opportunities that were open to women to make a living from literature.[96]

In her widely cited sociological study on female authors in the nineteenth century, Gayle Tuchman discusses that writing a book has often been characterised historically as a "job for men".[97] However, John Sutherland puts forward that authorship was a profession equally open to both men and women, and it was social roles that pushed female writers to become more of "a modestly submerged component to their male counterparts".[98] In order to steer around the social conventions of the period, some female writers would use either male pseudonyms or submit their work anonymously in order to avoid criticism based on their gender, in order to improve their chances of receiving fair criticism and increased publication success. Literary historian Catherine Judd remarks that it has been

---

[96] For example see: Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic : the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century LiteraryImagination*, Second ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); "The Lady Novelists of Great Britain," *The Gentlemen's Magazine: and historical review*, July 1853; Walter Besant, *Autobiography*.

[97] Gaye Tuchman, *Edging Women Out: Victorian Novelists, Publishers and Social Change*, Second ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), xvii

[98] Sutherland, "The Victorian Novelists: Who Were They?", 350

embedded in historical literary studies that women were forced to use male pseudonyms referring to it as a 'myth'.[99]

Judd criticises these views and states that this perspective has led to arguments being accepted that female novelists were repressed and victimised.[100] In agreement with Tuchman, she maintains that women were more likely to submit their work anonymously, and it was men that published under 'cross-gendered' or 'female pseudonyms' in the 1860s and 1870s.[101] Judd remarks that women chose to use male pseudonyms so that their work would be judged critically in a league with male authors, as opposed to being recipients of 'ill-judged praise'.[102] She underlines that her argument does not ignore the complex discrimination faced by women in the Victorian period, and she argues that instead the female voice gained authority, commenting that it was not until the late nineteenth century that women were pushed from the marketplace.[103] The research discussed in this section comes from this perspective, examining the mechanisms that women used in order to engage with professional authorship and assess the effectiveness of the business practices they utilised.

Recent studies have demonstrated that during the Victorian period women were engaged with the culture of professional publishing, active in the industry, working as editors, reviewers, publishers' readers, essayists, poets and dramatists,

---

[99] Catherine A. Judd, "Male Pseudonyms and Female Authority," in *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*, ed. John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 251
[100] Ibid., 250
[101] Ibid., 250-251; Tuchman, *Edging Women Out: Victorian Novelists, Publishers and Social Change*, 53
[102] Ibid., 254
[103] Ibid., 252

and of course novelists.[104] In his study of the Victorian literary profession, Richard Salmon agrees with the position that it is a misinterpretation that women were pushed from the publishing industry.[105] Both Sturrock and Salmon in their respective works argue that the issue for women was not garnering new opportunities, as editors and publishers were continually scouting for new literature. They discuss that the issue was defining the relationship between femininity and literature, as it was difficult for women to be taken seriously by critics and this affected the reception of published work in the marketplace.[106] For instance, influential author Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) a devotee to the feminist cause, purposefully adopted a masculine tone in her writing, demonstrating that she chose to portray herself as a male in order to reach a wider audience, what Peterson refers to as "masculine in a womanly way".[107]

Up until the late nineteenth century female novelists often did not credit their names to their work or would write under male pseudonyms in order to avoid prejudices from readers, especially the critics.[108] Despite it being more challenging for women to get literary fame in the nineteenth century, many took the business of writing seriously, challenging the gender stereotypes that their only place was in the

---

[104] June Sturrock, "Literary Women of the 1850s and Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace*," in *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, ed. Nicola Diane Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 116; Judith Johnstone and Hilary Fraser, "The Professional lization of Women's Writing: Extending the Canon," in *Women and Literature in Britain 1800-1900*, ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 231

[105] Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, 174

[106] Sturrock, "Literary Women of the 1850s and Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace*", 116

[107] Harriet Martineau and Linda H. Peterson, *Autobiography : Harriet Martineau* (Ontario ; Plymouth: Broadview Press Ltd, 2007), 711

[108] Alexis Easley, *First Person Anonymous : Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830-70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 36

home.[109] In addition to being negotiators, some women writers also manoeuvred between publishing houses, magazines and editors to maximise their publishing output. Mary St Leger (1852–1931), who wrote under the pen name Lucas Malet, was known for arranging her own contracts with publishers, as she was dissatisfied with how she was treated. According to Gillies, St Leger felt as though she was not taken seriously in the industry because she was a woman, and this was a contributing factor to her employing literary agent A. P. Watt in 1892.[110] Mary St Leger was not the only woman Watt represented that wanted to keep their identity private, and he often marketed their work anonymously at their request. For example, Florence Warden (1857–1929) instructed that Watt refrain from publishing her name with her writing, instead wishing to be credited as "from the author of 'The House on the Street'".[111]

Outside of periodical publishing, authorship for women in most cases was defined and conducted initially under a veil of anonymity, with one of the most famous cases being the Brontë sisters, whose novels became bestsellers under the male pseudonyms Currer Bell, who was Charlotte (1816–1855), Ellis Bell, the pen name of Emily (1818–1848), and Acton Bell, the pseudonym of Anne (1820–1849).[112] The sisters were active during a time in the publishing industry where women were becoming bolder in the field, and furthermore their literary work was taken more

---

[109] Ibid., 7

[110] Mary Ann Gillies, *The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920* (Toronto ; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 66

[111] Letter from Florence Warden to A. P. Watt, 1st December 1887, Folder 1.5, A. P. Watt and Son (UNC)

[112] Karen Smith Kenyon, *The Brontë Family: Passionate Literary Geniuses*, A Lerner biography (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 2003), 11

seriously by critics and publishing houses, yet gender discrimination still brought challenges to female authors.

The pseudonyms of the Brontë sisters are some of the most well-known cases in English literary history, demonstrating the social conventions that women had to steer through in order to be published. In the biographical notice to *Wuthering Heights* written by Emily quoted in Charlotte's published letters, she provides the reason as to why she and her sisters decided to mask their identity. Charlotte writes that they were "averse to personal publicity".[113] Furthermore, she admits that she did not use her real name for fear of being judged as a woman as opposed to a writer. Charlotte writes that she and her sisters had "a vague impression" that as authoresses they would be looked on with 'prejudice'.[114] Charlotte observes that sometimes the critics would use "for their chastisement the weapon of personality…flattery that [was] not true praise", hinting that the critics used gender as a determining factor to judge a work as opposed to its literary merits.[115]

The Brontë sisters first tried their hand at publishing when Charlotte came across a notebook of her sister Emily's poetry, and convinced her sister to allow her to publish them. They removed references to their personal lives and decided to publish under male pseudonyms.[116] Charlotte took ownership of the administration of the publication, and she signed the correspondence to her publishers as "C, E, and A Bell", although the publishers would address all correspondence to 'C. Brontë

---

[113] Brontë, Anne, Charlotte Brontë, and Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey, with a Preface and Memoir of Both Authors.* London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870, viii

[114] Brontë. *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey, with a Preface and Memoir of Both Authors*, vii

[115] Ibid., vii

[116] Christine Alexander, *Bronte, Charlotte (1816-1855)*, Online ed., Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press, 2004).

Esq', as Currer Bell did not exist and a real postal address was needed in order to conduct business.[117] The publishers had assumed that they were dealing with a gentleman named C. Brontë, and Charlotte corrected them asking them instead to address all correspondence to '"Miss Brontë" &c'. Charlotte led her publishers Aylott and Jones to believe that Miss Brontë was acting as an agent for the "real" authors, dealing with the administration for publishing of works by the Bell brothers.[118]

Men who aspired to turn significant profit from their literary outputs fully engaged with the business of publishing, they understood their market and often had input in how the books were produced in terms of choosing fonts and setting the price. As he became more popular, author Wilkie Collins (1824–1889) took interest in the professional side of authorship and was known for being tenacious in securing publishing deals.[119] In comparison, Rudyard Kipling had complex publishing contracts negotiated by his literary agent A. P. Watt, although he approved the clauses at various stages in the negotiations.[120] Similarly Charlotte ensured that she also engaged with the business of how her collection of poetry would be produced. Charlotte self-educated herself by purchasing a volume on preparing a work for press so she would not have to trust in others what she could do for herself.[121] Charlotte sent the collection to Messrs Aylott and Jones of

---

[117] Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Vol. 1, 345
[118] Ibid., 345
[119] Andrew Lycett, *Wilkie Collins: A Life of Sensation* (London: Windmill Books, 2014), 8-99
[120] As shown in an agreement between Watt and Rudyard Kipling, giving Watt power of attorney and to act as Kipling's agent, 13th August 1891; Folder 452.53/4, A. P. Watt (UNC)
[121] Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Vol. 1, 339

Paternoster Row, London and it was published in May 1846.[122] Charlotte had been proactive in sending the work for review, ensuring that the most prominent literary periodicals received a copy of the 'Bell brothers'' debut work. Charlotte's publishers gave her a list of who she should send her work to and the reviewers she needed to contact, including *The Athenaeum, The Literary Gazette,* and *The Critic*.[123] *Poems* by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell was reviewed on 4th July 1846 in *The Athenaeum*, and was deemed to be published "by three brothers" who had things to say that "men will be glad to hear".[124] Despite Charlotte's diligence in attempting to market her new publication, the collection would prove to be a financial disaster; the sisters paid £31 and 10 shillings from their aunt's legacy to have the collection published and unfortunately sold only two copies.[125]

The turning point for the sisters came in July 1846, when *Wuthering Heights* by Emily and *Agnes Grey* by Anne were accepted for publication by Thomas Cautley Newby (1797–1882), giving further exposure to the 'Bell brothers'.[126] During this time Charlotte also submitted her first novel *The Professor* to London publishers. It was not met favourably and was rejected from most houses, including Smith, Elder & Co., although they believed the author had promise, asking for a submission of another work.[127] Smith would eventually accept Charlotte's manuscript of *Jane Eyre,* which was sent to them on 24th August 1846 and was published in October 1847 under the name Currer Bell to favourable reviews proclaiming that it should be

---

[122] Ibid., 348
[123] Ibid., 348-349
[124] "Poetry of the Million," *The Athenaeum*, 4th July 1846, 682
[125] Alexander, *Bronte, Charlotte (1816-1855)*.
[126] Margaret Smith, ed. *The Letters of Charlotte Bronte: 1829-1847*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 22
[127] Sidney Lee, George Smith, and Leslie Stephen, *George Smith, a Memoir* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 19

placed on the top of the list "to be borrowed [from the circulating library]".[128] As Currer Bell was not known in London literary society, the identity of the author of this critically acclaimed novel became the focus of much debate.

By 1848 the sisters were forced to show their true identity almost a year after *Jane Eyre* was first published. In December 1847 Newby, the publisher of *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*, wanted to capitalise on the success of *Jane Eyre*. Newby wanted to use the popularity of the book to spark sales in the other works by the 'Bell brothers', insinuating that Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell were indeed the same person.[129] These rumours caused problems for Charlotte as George Smith had negotiated the sale of *Jane Eyre* to an American house, and simultaneously Newby was in talks with a different American house trying to sell of the works of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell.[130] Smith maintained his position that he did not believe the 'Bell brothers' to be the same person, however Newby continued to profess his rumours.[131] On receipt of this knowledge the sisters decided it was time to come forward and prove not only their separate identity but also that they were women.[132] The sisters travelled to London and placed in the hands of George Smith a letter he had sent to Currer Bell the day before to prove their identity.[133] Although they made themselves known to Smith, the sisters were weary of literary fame and declined to be presented to the literary London circle and settled as being introduced as the

---

[128] For example see "Jane Eyre: an Autobiography," *The Critic*, 30th October 1847, 277

[129] Alexander, *Bronte, Charlotte (1816-1855)*.

[130] Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Vol. 2, 66

[131] Alexander, *Bronte, Charlotte (1816-1855)*.

[132] Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Vol. 2, 66

[133] Ibid., 66

'Miss Browns'.[134] Elizabeth Gaskell comments that Charlotte had to lead a double life

when Jane Eyre was published; an author in public and a woman in private. She

detailed how for a man it was easy to become an author, no different than taking up

a profession, whereas a woman had to juggle being an author, wife and mother.[135]

In Gaskell's biography of Charlotte, Smith's reaction to the revelation of the

Brontë sisters' identity is portrayed as a great surprise, although it is implied that he

did not mind that his author was a woman.[136] Gaskell recounts the event in detail in

regards to the sisters' lengthy trip, the smells and the sights of London and their

'"queer state of inward of excitement"'.[137] She does not cite where she obtained this

information, however Clement Shorter's publication documents that this

information was taken from a letter written to Mary Taylor (*c*.1820–1893), a friend of

Charlotte's in September 1848.[138] This letter was written around 2 months after the

sisters went down to London. The meeting is portrayed in a positive manner,

although whether it was as straightforward as Charlotte recounts cannot be

confirmed through the sources. Charlotte narrates that she and her sisters went to

find Smith at the Chapter Coffee-House, a well-known meeting place for London

publishers as they "did not know well where else to go".[139] Little is said about

Smith's reaction to finding out the 'Bell brothers' were the Brontë sisters, only that

"explanations were rapidly gone into".[140]

---

[134] Ibid., 74

[135] Ibid., 49

[136] Ibid., 68

[137] Ibid., 68

[138] Letter to Mary Young from Charlotte Brontë, Letter 297 4th September 1848; Shorter, *The Brontës: Life and Letters*, Vol. 1, 435

[139] Ibid., 436; "Reminiscences of the Old Chapter Coffee-House, Paternoster Row, London," *The Leisure Hour*, 30th June 1859, 409

[140] − − −, *The Brontës: Life and Letters*, Vol. 1, 437

However, I did find an additional account of the meeting from George Smith's perspective, documented in his memoir published in 1902. Smith writes:

> "For my own part I never had much doubt on the subject of the writer's sex; but then I had the advantage over the general public of having the handwriting of the author before me. There were qualities of style, too, and turns of expression, which satisfied me that 'Currer Bell' was a woman, an opinion in which Mr Williams[141] concurred. We were bound, however, to respect the writer's anonymity, and our letters continued to be addressed to 'Currer Bell, Esq.'"[142]

Despite this, Smith mentions that he was "keenly interested and excited" to find 'Currer Bell' standing before him, yet he does not divulge whether he told the sisters that he had suspected them women all along.[143] Smith's account portrays that the matter of gender was not important to him as he saw merit in Charlotte's writing and a profitable publication, regardless of whether the author was a man or a woman. It cannot be confirmed that Smith did indeed know that the 'Bell brothers' were women, and the subdued narratives in the sources appear to be an attempt to lessen the significance of the event. Yet in the context of the industry at the time, this

---

[141] William Smith Williams (1800-1875) was appointed as Smith's literary advisor in 1847 until his retirement in 1875; Bill Bell, "Smith, George Murray (1824-1901)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[142] George Smith and Sidney Lee, *George Smith: A Memoir With Some Pages of Autobiography* (London: For Private Circulation, 1902), 88

[143] Bell, "Smith, George Murray (1824-1901)", 90

was a major occurrence as it demonstrated that a woman could compete both artistically on literary merit and also in the marketplace, as *Jane Eyre* was a popular novel during the period and today is considered a literary classic.[144]

Although there was some speculation and gossip as to the authorship of *Jane Eyre*, the literary periodicals at the time did not 'make a fuss' when the true identity of the 'Bell brothers' was revealed. Some periodicals understatedly made references to Currer Bell as a woman in the early 1850s, and by the mid-1850s Charlotte Brontë was credited in reviews and articles alongside her pen name Currer Bell.[145] I would have expected there to be a significant conversation in the periodical press in regards to the gender of the 'Bell brothers'. The muted conversations in the press suggest that the literary community of critics may have been embarrassed that they had acclaimed the ideas of men that "men would be glad to hear", which turned out to be the ideas of women.[146] It cannot be known whether *Jane Eyre* would have been as successful had the reviewers known that it had been written by a woman. Yet it enforces the criticism that female authors in the nineteenth century used the mask of male pseudonyms to their advantage in order to compete in the literary marketplace. Exploring the route to publication for Charlotte Brontë highlights how difficult it was for women to be considered seriously as contributors to the literary canon, which consequently affected the opportunities for them to financially profit from their literature.

---

[144] Zoe Brennan, *Brontë's Jane Eyre: A Reader's Guide* (London; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 113

[145] "Literary Intelligence: Gossip of the Literary World," *The Critic*, 15th June 1850, 312; "Our Weekly Gossip," *The Athenaeum*, 5th May 1855, 522

[146] "Poetry of the Million", 682

Detailing the inequality between men and women writers in the nineteenth century demonstrates how women were also barred from influencing business practices at the time. As shown by Charlotte's self-education about the industry, she conformed to the working practices and sought advice from her publishers on how authors could best get their work published. Charlotte Brontë made her own professional decisions in regards to how her books were produced, advertised and sold to the public. More importantly, her acceptance by the industry and the public as a female writer paved the way for women later in the century to publish without male pseudonyms, such as Christina Rossetti who was first published in *The Athenaeum* in 1848 and was credited with her own name.[147]

During the nineteenth century opportunities for women to financially profit from their publications were constrained due to their gender as often they were criticised unfairly. The common attitude was that women should be relegated to the domestic roles of wife and mother, as professional authorship was a job for men. Victorian literary culture was constructed by men and favoured them, as the business of publishing was often done away from the home. I have argued that due to the social conventions of the Victorian period in Britain, professional female authors manoeuvred around barriers to publication with tenacity, instead of shrinking away from authorship because of their gender. They were persistent and instead made choices so they could sell their literature despite the challenges. They were able to sell their novels and journalistic contributions, either by publishing anonymously or by using a male pseudonym in order for their literature to be

---

[147] Christina Georgina Rossetti, "Death's Chill Between," *The Athenaeum*, 14th October 1848, 1032

reviewed without being discriminated against, as some women felt that they had an increased chance of success if they were perceived as 'one of the guys'.

Conclusion

The publishing industry is built on the creative output of authors and value is added by publishers, a pairing which creates a marketable commodity. Authors have a powerful role in the production of literature, and throughout the boom in the nineteenth century they were in some instances underestimated in the value they brought to the industry. Copyright is one factor that influenced authorship, and I have argued that it could be considered to be the most significant, as without it, it may have been much more difficult for authors to earn significant sums from their literary commodities. The evolution of copyright was one of the most important factors that allowed authors to exploit their literary property by leasing or selling copyrights for financial gain. Copyright gave the author control of their literary commodities and placed them into a stronger position; the author became the investor in themselves and the master of their literary business. Without these laws authors had no more than words on paper, however copyright allowed for literary works to become marketable and potentially profitable commodities.[148] By the end of the Victorian age, authors had been campaigning for more effective copyright law for almost 200 years. These actions improved the landscape in both domestic and international copyright legislation, and led to a fundamental change in the way in which authors and publishers did business.

---

[148] John Feather, "Copyright and Literary Property," in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 527

This chapter also explored how authors – who could afford the membership fees – used gentlemen's clubs as a way to socialise with their professional network and use strategic friendships in order to find new opportunities. This demonstrates that the literary and artistic clubs of the Victorian era aided professional authors, therefore it could be argued that the club was a facilitator for literary businesses; however, it did not lend itself to women who were barred from this social space. Despite the rise of the professional author in society, the rise of women writers in the period did not gain such significant momentum until later in the Victorian era. Women used the same business practices as men, sending their work to critics for review and employing literary agents, yet to increase their chances of success, some women chose to publish under male pseudonyms or anonymously in order to steer around the social conventions of the period. Both male and female authors were able to earn significant sums from their writing, however not all authors found the path to mass market success independently. Often some authors had friends who provided them with feedback on manuscripts and in some cases authors also had individuals negotiate contracts with publishers on their behalf. As the position of the author grew stronger in the nineteenth century, an opportunity began to grow for individuals to represent authors in contractual negotiations, and a space in the industry became available for literary agents, another literary business I explore in the next chapter.

Chapter 4
Commercialising on Copyrights:
The Emergence of the Victorian Literary Agent

It was not until the late nineteenth century that literary agents were fully accepted in the publishing industry. There was a time when literary agents were not welcomed by publishers, referred to in the press by William Heinemann (1863–1920) as 'parasites' and 'unscrupulous opportunists' seeking to upset the dynamics of the Victorian publishing industry.[1] The rise of the literary agent has been widely chronicled in research on the publishing industry as contributing to the development of the field in the late nineteenth century, as the service agents provided professionalised how literature was bought and sold by authors and publishers.[2] Yet studies concentrate on what literary agents did once they were established, however I argue that a more in-depth analysis is needed in order to understand in more detail how this literary business developed, and why it changed the dynamic of how literature was sold between the author and publisher. This chapter traces the origins of this relatively new literary business before examining how the literary agency entered the marketplace, and in particular the processes that A. P. Watt used in order to establish a business that became the oldest literary agency in Britain.[3]

---

[1] Heinemann, Middleman as Viewed by a Publisher, 663

[2] For an example of studies about the literary agent see Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*; James Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

[3] Hilary Rubinstein, "A. P. Watt: The First Hundred Years," *The Bookseller*, 3rd May 1975.

Origins of a Literary Middleman

In 1896, Sir Walter Besant (1836–1901), one of the founders of the Society of Authors, wrote the foreword for a collection of letters written to the A. P. Watt literary agency by satisfied clients. This includes a comprehensive account of exactly what the literary agent initially did. Besant wrote:

> "The work of The Literary Agent is to conduct all business arrangements of every kind for Authors and Playwrights; that is to say, to place MSS [manuscripts] to the best advantage; to watch for openings; to sell Copyrights, either absolutely or for a limited period, to collect Royalties, and to receive other moneys due; to transfer Literary Property; to value Literary Property; to obtain opinions to MSS, etc. etc."[4]

This description was written with one person in mind: Alexander Pollock Watt (1834–1914), who is regarded by most book historians as the most notable literary agent in Victorian Britain.[5] Initially, an agent was defined as a person who purchased books on behalf of a bookseller, the term was then applied to the role of literary advisors, to authors and publishers and finally to the definition as applied by Watt in the 1880s. The role of the literary agent is a development of the informal relationship between authors and the functional role of the author's reader.[6] These

---

[4] A. P. Watt, *Letters to A. P. Watt* (London: A.P. Watt & Son, 1896), xi
[5] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 2; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 45
[6] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 95-96

persons were often friends who worked in some capacity with literature, and offered critique on how manuscripts could be improved before they were sent to publishers and editors in order to increase acceptance. John Forster (1812–1876) was one of the most well-known readers in the mid-nineteenth century. Forster has been described as Charles Dickens's unofficial or informal literary agent, negotiating contracts with publishers on Dickens's behalf, and he also held power of attorney when Dickens visited America in 1867.[7] Furthermore, Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), who was one of the most popular novelists at the turn of the nineteenth century, also made use of his business partner and friend James Ballantyne (1772–1833) to check over his work and tout to different publishers, including Archibald Constable (1774–1827) and the House of Longman.[8]

In an interview that Watt gave to the monthly magazine *The Bookman* in 1892, he claimed that the business of the literary agency was his own idea, as when he "started to sell copyrights, the literary agent was unknown in the world of letters", a claim that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.[9] Despite this, literary historians Barnes and Barnes argue that Thomas Aspinwall (1786–1876) should be considered as the first professional literary agent in both Britain and America. However, they fail to acknowledge that Sir Walter Scott used James Ballantyne for similar duties, and this would predate Aspinwall's activities by around 16 years, as

[7] James A. Davies, *John Forster: A Literary Life* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983), 161; Eliot, "The Business of Victorian Publishing", 45
[8] Sir Walter Scott, *Autobiography of Sir Walter Scott, Bart* (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1831), 79; S. Fowler Wright, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott: A Biography* (Wildside Press LLC, 2012), 166
[9] An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt, *The Bookman,* 20

Ballantyne worked as an advisor with Scott on his book *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in 1800.[10]

Sent as a Consul to London in 1816, Colonel of the US Army Aspinwall, when he was not working at the US embassy, made use of his spare time as an intermediary for his friends back home in the States. He would purchase the latest titles by Britain's most popular authors on their behalf.[11] By 1819 Aspinwall became known for his connections in the American literary market, and he was approached by British publishers to act as a broker and sell copyrights of English books in America.[12] Agreeing, Aspinwall became known throughout the network of London publishers, and became regarded as the person to provide negotiation services with American publishers.[13]

Aspinwall had many literary friends on both sides of the Atlantic, including prominent American author Washington Irving (1783–1859), who had secured an honorary position in the U.S. embassy in Madrid in 1826.[14] During his stay he decided to write the first biography of explorer Christopher Columbus in English. This would become the first major sale by Aspinwall when he negotiated the terms for purchase with the publisher John Murray II (1778–1843).[15] Irving had been given an informal offer by Murray, but due to his location in Spain, Irving wanted someone in England who could negotiate on his behalf. He wrote to Aspinwall:

---

[10] Henry Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1874), 124

[11] James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes, "Thomas Aspinwall: First Transatlantic Literary Agent," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 78, no. 3 (1984), 322

[12] Ibid., 322

[13] Ibid., 322

[14] Andrew Burstein, *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 195

[15] Letter from Washington Irving to Col. Thomas Aspinwall, 29th July 1827, Washington Irving papers

"You will no doubt be surprised at the unusual commission I

am about to require from your friendship, yet I have no friend

in London to whom I can entrust it with equal confidence of its

being well fulfilled. I wish you to make arrangements with Mr

Murray for the publication [of *The Life of Columbus*]."[16]

Irving was knowledgeable of the contractual obligations of publishing production and he had a clear set of objectives that he wanted Aspinwall to negotiate. In his letter, Irving specifically asks Aspinwall to sell his manuscript for £3,000 and sets out the terms and conditions he was to negotiate, such as who would be responsible for the printing and paper costs, and the manuscript was sold to Murray on the terms requested.[17] Aspwinall was paid a commission of 2.5% on the purchase money for his services, with Irving claiming that the charge was "justly fair and highly satisfactory".[18] In their paper, Barnes and Barnes discuss that this figure amounted to 75 guineas, which would have been a considerable sum at the time, and by 1840 Aspinwall was charging 10% for his services.[19] Aspinwall charging a commission demonstrates the dynamic of the developing of the professional relationship that was becoming accepted between an author and their agent, an aspect that will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Barnes and Barnes refer to Aspinwall as a literary agent, however, sources do not suggest that Irving, publishers or indeed other authors referred to Aspinwall as a

---

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.; Barnes and Barnes, "Thomas Aspinwall: First Transatlantic Literary Agent", 323

[18] Letter from Irving to Aspinwall, 18th Oct 1828 Port St Marys Cadiz, Washington Irving papers

[19] Barnes and Barnes, "Thomas Aspinwall: First Transatlantic Literary Agent", 323

literary agent. Aspinwall was only referred to as an agent in regards to his work that he did for the government.[20] From their arguments it is apparent that Barnes and Barnes have retrospectively applied this terminology to Aspinwall's activities, comparing what he did to the interpretation of the role used in the contemporary industry. Barnes and Barnes have applied the title of literary agent to Aspinwall in order to trace the development of the literary agent historically, and so this can be considered as an anachronism. This kind of anachronism is contested by organisation theorist Jacques, who argues that instead of helping it hinders our understanding of how features develop. He contends that anachronisms reduce history to illustrating 'timeless phenomena', therefore this approach does not allow for a story of development.[21] Furthermore, Spector warns against using these 'distortions', arguing that it leads to a lack of contextualisation and a mistaken belief that research results are applicable in all times and places.[22]

In the context of my research, applying the term literary agent anachronistically does not drastically alter the meaning, as the role of Aspinwall was almost identical to that of the later definition used by Watt and his contemporaries. One of the earliest references to the term literary agent was published in an advert in the journal *Notes and Queries* in 1851: "Literary Agency – Mr F. G. Tomlins…Southampton Street, Strand."[23] Despite using the term literary agency, Tomlins's advertisement offers services that were more in line with the author's

---

[20] Thomas Aspinwall, *The Aspinwall Papers*, ed. Thomas Aspinwall, et al., Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1871), 24

[21] Roy Stager Jacques, "History, historiography and organization studies: The challenge and the potential," *Management & Organizational History* 1, no. 1 (2006), 41

[22] Bert Spector, "Using History Ahistorically: Presentism and the Tranquility Fallacy," *Management & Organizational History* 9, no. 3 (2014), 306

[23] "Advertisement," *Notes and Queries* 87(1851), 521

reader, as the advertisement does not give any references to negotiating copyrights or contracts, a difference between the author's reader and the professional literary agent. Therefore referring to Aspinwall as a literary agent is not detrimental to tracing the development of this literary business.

On 10th September 1853, an advertisement was posted in the esteemed literary periodical *The Athenaeum*, notifying the public that Nicholas Trübner & Co. were selling new book imports from America, and the company referred to themselves as American Literary Agents.[24] Nicholas Trübner (1817–1884) can also be considered as an early literary agent in Britain, a bookseller from Germany who came to London in 1843. He had been recruited as a foreign corresponding clerk by the Longman publishing house on the invitation of William Longman (1813–1877).[25] His obituary in *The Athenaeum* detailed that after Trübner had worked for Longman for 8 years he established his own house in London at 12 Paternoster Row, located at the other end of the street from Longman who was based at 39 Paternoster Row.[26] The article mentions that in 1851 Trübner, with his partner Thomas Delf (*flor.* 19th c.), made a successful business from selling American books in Britain, and by 1855 the firm also started importing books from India and Asia.[27]

Trübner's role as an agent was slightly different from that of Aspinwall, and later Watt, and his contemporaries as he dealt primarily with the sale of literature between publishers, facilitating the sale of mainly American books in Britain, but

---

[24] "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum* 1852, 1221

[25] Leslie Howsam, "Trübner, Nicholas (1817–1884)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[26] "Mr. Nicholas Trübner ", *The Athenaeum*, 5th April 1884, 444

[27] ———, "Trübner, Nicholas (1817–1884)."

also Germany and the British Colonies.[28] Trübner's advertisement was one of the first entries in the literary periodicals to specifically mention the term literary agent, yet his operations were somewhat different to the definition put forward by Besant cited at the start of this chapter. The multiple uses of the term confirm that in the early- to mid-nineteenth century there was not a firm definition of what constituted the function of a literary agent, but what can be observed is the emergence of a 'middleman' between the originators of literature and the producers. The common function between Aspinwall and Trübner was that they both worked on behalf of another person in the publishing industry and were responsible for negotiating and selling copyrights; this is primarily the function of the literary agent today. Tracing the development of the role in the Victorian publishing industry is important in the context of my research, as it provides a foundation for exploring how the role evolved and became professionalised, which had a significant effect on the business practices of the time. This can be traced back to the establishment of the A. P. Watt literary agency in the late nineteenth century.

Why Did the Literary Agent Emerge?

The development of the literary agent was first chronicled in academic literature by James Hepburn in his monograph *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent* published in 1968. His narrative is mainly informed by periodicals and *The Post Office Directory.* This was followed by *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain* published in 2007 by Mary Ann Gillies, which specifically discusses Watt and the development of the literary agent. Gillies was the first person to extensively draw on

---

[28] Ibid., 444

the business archive of the A. P. Watt literary agency. This allowed her monograph to delve further into the origins of the early literary agents. In her book, Gillies asks an important question: "Why did the Professional Literary Agent Emerge in the 1880s?"[29] There are a range of theories suggested by Gillies and Hepburn regarding the dominant reason for the development of the literary agent, ranging from the professionalisation of authorship, to the transformation of reading culture and the development of copyright legislation.[30] These factors each contributed to the development of the mass reading market and the organisational structure of the publishing industry, which also had a direct influence on the opportunities available to literary businesses.

Gillies states that the predominant reason for the emergence of the literary agent was the rise in literacy due to the Education Act 1870, which created a heightened demand of popular fiction and non-fiction, fuelling demand in the mass reading market.[31] Gillies agrees with Hepburn stating that the professionalisation of authorship had a large part in creating the opportunities for literary agents. They both argue that the eighteenth century saw the condition of the author improve as they created a living from their writing and were able to "pursue the profession" much easier than in previous centuries.[32] Although these factors had a significant influence, an aspect that has not been given as much attention in this research area is the development of copyright, as this was one of the key factors that allowed social-

---

[29] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 12

[30] See Chapter 2 in Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent* and Chapter 1 in Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920.*

[31] ———, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 15

[32] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 6; Gillies, *The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 17

economic development between the producers of literature in Victorian England, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Gillies contends that the literary agent worked with and exploited copyrights, however, her study does not give full attention to the importance of copyright in creating increased economic opportunities for authors. Copyright gave authors ownership and legal protection so they could demand remuneration for their publications. Furthermore, as the complexity of copyright law increased, so did the contractual agreements between authors and publishers. These agreements became more sophisticated and definitive in nature, which led to negotiations becoming as Watt referred to as "time consuming".[33] Some authors needed help to negotiate these contracts and to be freed from what Besant referred to as "the intolerable trouble of haggling and bargaining", which created a demand for a 'middleman' in the marketplace, therefore the development of copyright law directly provided opportunities for authors as well as literary agents.[34]

Another aspect absent from research is a detailed examination of how the role of the literary agent became accepted and legitimised in the publishing industry during the late Victorian period. Both Hepburn and Gillies discuss the increasing professionalisation of the literary agency during this time, a factor they attribute to Watt as he charged for his services, yet there is little discussion on why it became accepted by authors and later publishers.[35] Gillies's research offers a historical

---

[33] Watt relays that MacDonald told him that authors found negotiating contracts time consuming, cited in F. W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt," *The Bookman* 1892.

[34] Quoted in Gillies, *The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 45

[35] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 83; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 26

approach through "two extended case studies" of Watt and another Victorian agent, James Brand Pinker (1863–1922). She details their development and the working relationships with various clients, however, I find that her research has a lack of engagement with the progression of business practices. Both Hepburn's and Gillies's narrative do not discuss in detail how Watt developed practices from other literary agencies.[36] Gillies's monograph discusses that the business model of the literary agent was based largely on Watt's initiatives without an explanation of how these came to fruition. Scholars in publishing studies highlight that Gillies's research invites further exploration of how literary agents developed, and they call for a more in-depth and clarified investigation addressing the issues highlighted in her book. This chapter in particular makes a contribution to this area and is discussed in the subsequent sections.[37]

A. P. Watt: The Most Notable Victorian Agent

Alexander Pollock Watt, born in Glasgow in 1834 and the son of a Scottish bookseller, is cited by Hepburn and Gillies in their respective works as the first notable literary agent in Britain.[38] Despite his importance to the development of the Victorian publishing industry, there is some confusion regarding Watt's early life and early career. Hepburn and Gillies state in their respective works that Watt worked at a bookseller's in Edinburgh, before working as a clerk at the publishing

---

[36] Squires, "Mary Ann Gillies, The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain (review)", 303

[37] J. H. Stape, "Enter the Literary Agent," *English Literature in Transition* 51, no. 4 (2008), 455; Weedon, "The Professional l Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920 (review)" , 721; Squires, "Mary Ann Gillies, The Professional Literary Agent in Britain (review)," 304

[38] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 49; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 27

house of Alexander Strahan (1833–1918). Initially based in Edinburgh, the house was moved to London in 1862, in order to expand the business.[39] According to Hepburn, Watt did not begin to work for Strahan until 1871, after he married Strahan's sister Roberta in Glasgow in 1866.[40] Gillies is in agreement with Hepburn, stating that Watt stated working at Strahan as a reader in 1871.[41] Contrastingly, in her biographical entry of Watt in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Elaine Zinkhan states that Watt started working for Strahan in 1869 when he moved to London and after he had been employed briefly as a drapery warehouseman. This account conflicts with Hepburn who does not mention Watt working in any other trade before or after he moved to London.[42] Patricia Srebrnik, historian on Alexander Strahan, also suggests that Watt was working with Strahan in 1871 after the publishing house had moved to London in 1862.[43] Frustratingly, in the literature published by Zinkhan, Hepburn and Srebrnik, the sources they cite are not specifically referenced; they are only listed as a bibliography, therefore citations are vague. Gillies does cite her sources in the form of endnotes, although only the holding archive is mentioned without the location of the source within the archive. In this instance, the understanding of how these claims are verified can create an issue for researchers who cite this material or attempt to trace the information for themselves.

---

[39] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 51; Patricia Srebrnik, "Strahan, Alexander Stuart (1833-1918)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[40] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 51

[41] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 27

[42] Elaine J. Zinkhan, "Watt, Alexander Pollock (1838–1914)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[43] Patricia Thomas Srebrnik, *Alexander Strahan, Victorian Publisher* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986), 118

Despite the ambiguity surrounding Watt's early life in Scotland, it is apparent that Watt's career began in earnest after he moved to London and became familiar with the thriving publishing network in the capital. Although Strahan published prolific authors such as Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) and Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892), due to financial difficulties the company was declared bankrupt in 1882.[44] The demise of the Strahan publishing house had a direct effect on Watt's financial income and he needed to find a new source of work as he had a family to support.[45] Sensing that his position at Strahan was not secure, in 1879 Watt relinquished his duty as secretary of the company, as detailed in a letter to Reverend John in October, 1879.[46] He chose to enter self-employment, trading on his knowledge of the industry and the contacts that he made during his tenure at Strahan.

One of these contacts was the author George MacDonald (1824–1905), a clergyman who had been regularly published in the periodicals owned by Strahan. Watt had handled all of the advertising of MacDonald's work to periodicals and publishers, and due to the close nature of their professional relationship, a close friendship ensued. Through their friendship, Watt knew that MacDonald was in need of someone to handle his negotiations with publishers, as it was a time consuming business, an aspect that Watt mentioned in an interview in literary

[44] Srebrnik, "Strahan, Alexander Stuart (1833-1918)."
[45] Zinkhan, "Watt, Alexander Pollock (1838–1914)."
[46] Letter to the Reverend John in Oxford from Watt, 18th October 1879; Letter #2 Letter book Vol. II A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

magazine *The Bookman*.[47] Watt seized this opportunity and MacDonald became his client in 1880.

Watt was used to receiving 10% commission for his work as this is what he had been earning whilst working as an advertising agent at Strahan.[48] For example, in a note written in 1879, Watt highlights that he had done a good job as he was able to sell this particular story "expediently and at such a good price".[49] He finished the letter by mentioning to the recipient that they "will not consider [his] commission of 10% on the sale to be too high".[50] However, from the correspondence of A. P. Watt, it is highlighted that he had to negotiate his commission charges with MacDonald, as in a letter written to MacDonald on 18th February 1880, Watt writes:

> "I am getting nothing from Strahan and Co. upon my commission as an advertising agent and every other business [I][51] get to do for my living. I now charge you something to the coin. I have lately sold his stories for well-known authors for one of which I got £250 of which I received 10% for my work. But I should not think of, in this case, is charging you so much as this, but will have you to fix the amount. I shall be glad if

---

[47] F. W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt."
[48] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 27
[49] Letter dated 10th November 1879, no recipient stated; Letter #13, Letter book Vol II A. P. Watt & Son (BC)
[50] Ibid.
[51] There was a smudge on the document here and I am assuming that the text reads 'I.'

you can place your advertising in my hands on your return to

England."[52]

MacDonald's reply to Watt is not in the archive, however it can be assumed that MacDonald was not altogether happy at the prospect of paying Watt 10% commission. Watt wrote MacDonald another letter in March 1880. He makes a point of stating how time consuming the work is and it was the "only way that [he] could earn his livelihood".[53] Watt had to defend what he referred to as the "highness of the charge" as "there is a good deal of labour in the way of letter writing and now personal negotiation which of course takes time".[54] In addition, he mentions that "recompense is fairly due" because of the "knowledge and experience necessary before one can undertake such work".[55] This statement exhibits signs of professionalism as he is trading on the strength of his knowledge in order to position himself in the marketplace. Watt's commercially oriented approach to the business of being a literary agent is an aspect that aided the professionalisation of this previously informal author/friend relationship.

Despite defending how much work he did for his clients, as demonstrated in the letter above, Watt was willing to concede his 10% commission in order to convince MacDonald to use him for representation. Watt states, "I can only repeat what I said in my last letter, that I should never think of asking you to pay me as

---

[52] Letter to George MacDonald from Watt, 1st March 1880; Letter #170 Letter book Vol II. A. P. Watt & & Son (BC)
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

much as 10% but will be content with half of that."[56] MacDonald was a popular author who published regularly in leading periodicals, and as Watt had previous experience of selling MacDonald's publications, he was familiar with the market and also the editors who would be willing to buy his stories.[57] Watt used this strategy to his advantage as MacDonald agreed, and this professional relationship provided Watt with a firm foothold in the industry. Watt did however charge his other clients 10% commission, for instance he negotiated the sale of one of Besant's titles that was sold to Longman for £1,300 on 10% commission.[58] In some cases, Watt's commission charge was as high as 15% as documented in a letter to Richard Pryce in 1891; he charged 15% on sums under £100 and 10% on sums above that amount.[59] Further letters in the archives of the A. P. Watt literary agency do not explicitly highlight whether Watt indeed did raise his commission charge with MacDonald to 10%.

In analysing the letters between Watt and his clients, it is evident that he was confident and knowledgeable in recognising and evaluating the commercial value of literary works, and this aligned with his ability to commission a certain type of writer, for representation was an advantageous set of qualities for a literary agent who was building their client list. Initially, with new clients Watt worked on a project basis, whereby he charged a flat rate according to the work, which included feedback on saleability, proofreading and letter writing.[60] However, he realised after a short amount of time that this proved ineffective as different projects took varying

---

[56] Ibid.

[57] Glenn Edward Sadler, "MacDonald, George (1824-1905)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[58] Letter to Sir Walter Besant from Watt, 20th July 1884; Letter book Vol II, A. P. Watt & Son, (BC)

[59] Letter to Richard Pryce from Watt, 1st April 1891; Letter #39, Letter book Vol XXV, A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

[60] Mary Gillies, "A. P. Watt, Literary Agent," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1993), 24

amounts of time to complete and the flat rate was not sufficient payment for the time he invested.[61] In various letters to clients, Watt states how undertaking communications in attempting to sell copyrights is time consuming and, as with any endeavour, he was not always successful.[62] It appears that initially, Watt may have underestimated the time it would take to complete various projects, especially if a great deal of writing was involved in a single commission. In light of this, Watt adapted his fee structure, instead charging clients by commission on royalties and by 1891 Watt started charging a preliminary fee, which was then deducted from any commission earned if the literary work was sold. This was a safeguard for his income, so if a work was unsuccessful he would still get paid. By charging a preliminary fee, Watt ensured that a steady cash flow was kept in the business, and furthermore guaranteed that he would not expend valuable time and effort on business negotiations that would not result in sales.

Exploring the early letters between Watt and his clients demonstrates the decisions he made to get his business going. He was willing to lower his commission charge in order to secure MacDonald as a client, although this is not how he portrayed this story to the public, an aspect that will be explored in further detail later in chapter. The business letters show how Watt used different methods of charging his customers, including different commission rates according to the price of a work sold, and also charging flat fees. This aspect of Watt's business is rarely discussed in studies on his literary agency, yet bringing this to the foreground highlights the factors that influenced his decision making and demonstrates how

---

[61] Ibid., 24

[62] Ibid.; Letter in reply to Richard Pryce from Watt, 1st Apr 1891, Letter #39 Letter book Vol. XXV A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

Watt formed his business practices, some of which were eventually imitated by other literary agencies in the industry.

Watt continued to be MacDonald's agent and friend for the duration of his career until his death in 1905. Ultimately Watt was named as a trustee in MacDonald's will; he was to be responsible for collecting all monies and royalties for his work, as he had done whilst MacDonald was alive.[63] In 1892, Watt's son Alexander Strahan Watt joined the firm and the agency was renamed as A. P. Watt & Son. By this time the agency had a host of successful and popular writers on its books including Wilkie Collins (1824–1889), Rudyard Kipling and Sir Walter Besant. The agency also diversified and represented companies such as the Carl Rose Light Orchestra and negotiated copyright deals on behalf of publishers and newspaper syndicates such as Australian based company Gordon & Gotch.[64]

Watt may have been the most prolific, but he was by no means the only agent to be operating in the late nineteenth century, as Alexander Macleod Burghes (*flor.* 19th c.) has also been noted as one of Britain's earliest literary agents alongside Watt and Aspinwall.[65] However, unlike Watt, Burghes did not immediately advertise himself as a literary agent, instead, he referred to himself as a publisher's accountant. There is only a small amount of sources that document Burghes's movements as an agent, indeed all that is left of the company are the bankruptcy papers held at the

---

[63] Last Will and Testament of George MacDonald, 21st December 1896, Folder 7, A. P. Watt (UNC)
[64] Demonstrated through a series of letters, for examples see Folders 2.6 and 4.3 in A. P. Watt (UNC)
[65] Linda Fritschner, "Literary Agents and Literary Traditions: The Role of the Philistine," in *Paying the Piper: Causes and Consequences of Art Patronage*, ed. Judith Huggins Balfe (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 56

National Archives in London.[66] In an advertisement in 1882, Burghes stated that he had 25 years' experience highlighting that he had been an agent since at least 1857. However, Burghes was not listed as an agent or as a publisher's accountant in either the Business Directories of London or the Post Office London Directories until 1880, therefore it is not confirmed that he was working professionally as an agent before this time.[67] Operating out of 1A Paternoster Row, Burghes advertised himself as an 'accountant, agent & valuer to booksell[e]rs, stationers, printers & newspaper proprs [proprietors]'.[68] In searching through the Post Office Street Directory, I was able to confirm that there were others operating as literary agents at the same time as Watt, such as Charles M. Clark who registered himself as a literary agent at 40 Staple Inn, in the region of Chancery Lane, in 1880.[69] Furthermore, James Hepburn in 2009 revisited his research on the literary agent, confirming that that there were others who listed themselves under 'Agency, Literary' in the Post Office Directory, including Stefan Poles and Thomas Vary Paterson.[70] This further confirms that Watt was not alone in his venture when he started, despite his testimony, yet he was innovative in how he professionalised the functions of the literary agent, which had a significant impact on the publishing industry, which I discuss in the next section.

---

[66] J. M. Burghes and Company Ltd. Incorporated in 1920. Dissolved between 1920 and 1932, National Archives.

[67] "Post Office London Directory, 1880 [Part 2: Commercial & Professional l Directory]," (London: Kelly's Directories LTD, 1880), 782

[68] Ibid., 782

[69] Ibid., 782

[70] James Hepburn, "The Author's Empty Purse Revisited," *Sewanee Review* 117, no. 4 (2009), 631-632

Professionalisation of the Literary Agency

The role of the literary agent predominately consists of contractual negotiations, arranging publishing deals and informing authors of progress through written communication. The remnant sources left from the early time of the A. P. Watt literary agency contains mostly contracts and note-like correspondence between Watt, authors and publishers. There was not a significant amount of documentary sources in the UNC archive that specifically addressed how Watt developed professional relationships with authors and publishers. One potential reason for this is that most individuals who worked with literature socialised at restaurants, theatres and gentlemen's clubs, therefore it is likely that the formation of these relationships would have been done verbally in an informal social setting.

From the exploration of histories and biographies of Victorian authors and publishers, I have noted that the gentlemen's club was an important facilitator of networking between the men working in the publishing industry. Despite the club being formed as a light hearted social space of sophistication, where men could go to have access to the traditional rituals of drinking, dining and companionship, the club could be used as a hub for professional networking.[71] Talking about business was seen to be a negative point of club etiquette and social historian Amy Milne-Smith writes that in certain clubs talking about business was actually forbidden.[72] Although some individuals may have refrained from talking about business specifically, there was no rule in refraining members from making – what I to refer to as strategic friendships – relationships with a motive in mind to further particular

---

[71] Milne-Smith, *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in late-Victorian Britain*, 29
[72] Ibid., 13

ambitions, a subtle form of self-promotion. In particular, strategic friendships with others in a professional network could provide opportunities and those involved with literature could use the elite literary clubs for these spaces to further their businesses. Those who may not have had fixed office spaces used their memberships for business purposes and kept regular hours at the club, using it similarly to an office space, which allowed people to find them at a certain time each day at a particular club.

Some letters in the archive of the A. P. Watt literary agency confirm that using the club space was a practice used by some men who worked in the publishing industry. In March 1880, A. P. Watt's literary agency was at an early development stage, and so he continued to work simultaneously as an advertising agent for the Strahan publishing house to supplement his income. Watt wished to approach Frederick Greenwood (1830–1909), who was the newly appointed editor of the *St. James' Gazette*, as Watt wanted his agency to handle the advertising for the newspaper.[73] Greenwood was a member at the Garrick, and he was known to use the club for professional purposes; he kept regular hours at the Garrick so he could keep his eye open for fresh literary talent and business contacts.[74] Fortunately for the purposes of my research, Watt did not find Greenwood at the Garrick after attempting to speak with him on numerous occasions, so instead wrote him a letter. Watt wrote: "I called at the Garrick Club…instead by way of letter, the business as to

---

[73] Letter #235, 31st March 1880, From A. P. Watt to Frederick Greenwood, Letter book Vol. II, A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

[74] Black, *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland,* 129

which I wished the favour of an invitation."[75] Watt's letter confirmed that he had intended on speaking about business with Greenwood at the Garrick. This confirms how the practice of keeping hours at the club and using it as an informal space aided literary businesses in the nineteenth century.

Unlike publishers and authors, Victorian literary agents had issues with gaining entry into the gentlemen's clubs. This was predominately due to the reputation that agents had in the industry as middlemen, regarded by some with ambivalence, they were deemed 'ungentlemanly' and the 'middlemen' in contract negotiations.[76] The Garrick was noted for being exclusive and restrictive when it came to its membership policy, as "nearly all the leading actors of the day [were] members, and there [were] few of the active literary men who [were] not on its list".[77] Publishing and authorship were established in society and were increasingly being considered as respectable professions in the Victorian era. Whereas, the literary agent was relatively new in comparison, therefore they were excluded from the 'old boys' network'.

The literary agent was a 'newcomer' to the industry and therefore considered in the lowest rank in comparison to publishers and authors, and this was reflected by the literary agent not being considered within the professional sphere in Victorian society. It would take Watt operating as a literary agent for over a decade to be nominated and accepted by The Reform Club in 1896. By this time, Watt's influence in the industry had risen considerably as he was the most sought after literary agent

---

[75] Letter #235, 31st March 1880, From A. P. Watt to Frederick Greenwood, Letter book Vol. II, A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

[76] William Heinemann, "The Middleman as Viewed by a Publisher," *The Athenaeum*, Nov 11 1893, 663

[77] Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, *The Garrick Club* (London: Stock, 1904), 2

by both authors and publishers, and the role of the literary agent became accepted. Watt received his nomination due to the help of his long-standing client, author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1930), and novelist and playwright Anthony Hope (1863–1933).[78] Despite this, the elite literary clubs upheld their stiff negativity towards this new literary profession. The first literary agent to be accepted for membership to the Garrick was Watt's grandson Peter Watt in 1960.[79]

Watt did not refer to himself as a professional nor was he referred to as a professional by his peers in documentary sources, although Watt has been attributed the title of professional literary agent by contemporary scholars, as he made a living, a career and a successful business from negotiating contracts between literary businesses.[80] To operate as a literary agent did not involve holding special qualifications or admittance to a particular association, and according to publisher William Heinemann, all that was needed was a working knowledge of the industry and a sizeable bank of contacts.[81] According to the framework cited by sociologists, the literary agent could not be considered as a traditional profession. However, Watt grasped an opportunity and took the function of the literary agent through professionalisation – the process that individuals use to constitute and control a market for their expertise.[82] In addition, Watt exemplified signs of professionalism as he possessed a great deal of knowledge about the industry, and in particular he was

---

[78] Waller, *Writers, Readers and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1879-1918*, 520
[79] Confirmed by the Garrick Club Members Records
[80] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 69; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 7
[81] Heinemann, "The Middleman as Viewed by a Publisher", 663
[82] Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*, 50

placed in a position of trust demonstrated by the contracts signed by authors who granted him power of attorney to handle all of their business affairs, another factor which shows signs of professionalism.

Contracts and letters of agreement in various archives present a wealth of evidence that illustrates the business practices that became accepted in the publishing industry. The role of the literary agent is a development of the author's reader, and the key difference between the two is that the literary agent was a professionalised service, whereas in comparison the service the reader provided was a more informal relationship. Feather confirms that readers were operating from around 1830, although "their emergence as employees of authors or paid agents of publishers is obscure".[83] Therefore it is difficult to confirm the boundaries between paid agent and friendly service in the context of the reader, and tracing their involvement in the negotiation process is also difficult, as readers were not formally recognised on publisher–author agreements.

In comparison to the function of the author's reader, Watt protected his interests and ensured minimal risk to the agency, by formalising the negotiation process between author and publisher. He would communicate by letter with publishers, syndicates and editors of periodicals, and specifically state in these letters that he was authorised by an author to communicate on their behalf.[84] This ensured that Watt was kept informed of all developments and would also guarantee that communication was kept linear and formal. Watt had been operating as a

---

[83] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 139

[84] Hundreds of letters to various recipients in the UK and abroad from Watt which state that he has been authorised by the author to act on their behalf, for examples see Folders 18.12, 31.3, 19.14, A. P. Watt (UNC).

literary agent for around 9 years, when in 1889 he insisted that authors and playwrights signed a formal agreement that gave him the legal power to handle all their contracts. This agreement was a letter of attorney that confirmed he was, "authorised and empowered to collect and receive all monies under the terms of agreement…and to act generally in all matters in any way regarding the said agreement."[85] This was fundamental to Watt establishing a place in the industry for his agency, as he was given the autonomy to act for his clients, therefore he could challenge any opposition from publishers. As he was using contractual law, he was able to push forward his business practices and this was a way for the field to more readily accept his way of doing business.

Watt used pre-printed memorandums, and the author was required to enter their name and the company that Watt would be representing the author to, as well as sign and date the document; however, these memos were not explicit in outlining precisely what the activities were.[86] They had the same function as an agreement as they provided written consent of an author for Watt to act on their behalf. Many publishers used pre-printed contacts that were a few pages long, explicitly detailing the nature of their agreement with a client (whether that be an author or another publisher).[87] Spaces were left for details pertaining to the specific contract to be entered, such as the name of the author and the title of publication; this method of contractual arrangements may have influenced Watt to use the pre-printed memorandums.

---

[85] Agreement between Watt and Harold McCunn, 30th April 1889, Folder 4.3 A. P. Watt (UNC)
[86] Ibid.
[87] For example Watt acted on behalf of Chatto & Windus in the purchase of copyrights from Richard Bentley and Watt had signed a pre-printed contract; Agreement dated 8th February 1886, Add MS 46622, Bentley Papers, BL

These documents were short (only a few lines long) and did not require to be witnessed or notarised, which highlights that Watt would have used these agreements primarily as a measure of authority to the publishers he negotiated with, as well as for protection and to lower the risk of misunderstandings between Watt and his clients. If there were doubts or protests of Watt's involvement in the negotiation process he could use these memos to confirm that he had been given authority of representation. Although Watt required these to be signed, in 1891 author Rudyard Kipling had a specific agreement drawn up between himself and Watt that detailed the exact terms of their professional relationship.[88] This document was witnessed, notarised and signed by both Watt and Kipling, confirming that this contract would be legally binding and ensured protection for Kipling and – as he refers to it in the contract – his 'literary property'.[89]

Publishers were not used to dealing formally with a middleman and not all welcomed this newcomer into the industry.[90] Leading up to Watt's emergence in the industry, publishers were used to dealing informally with the author's reader or the author themselves. Due to this, it is likely that the relational dynamic may have been different from how they may have approached negotiations with literary agents. Watt's presence and the writing of the contracts now forced transparency between publishers and authors, causing a shift in power between these parties. Watt embedded himself and his agency into a favourable position by ensuring that

[88] Agreement between Watt and Rudyard Kipling, giving Watt power of attorney and to act as Kipling's agent, 13th August 1891; Folder 452.53/4, A. P. Watt (UNC)
[89] Ibid, the agreement was witnessed by James Brookes.
[90] Heinemann complains that by the literary agent supplanting himself in between publisher and author, he has only done so to enjoy his "perquisites" and ensures no risk to himself but takes all the profit. Heinemann, "The Middleman as Viewed by a Publisher", 663

authors and publishers did not negotiate between themselves or undertake any financial agreements or manuscript transactions. All correspondence and royalty cheques came through the agency and Watt would disburse the payments, minus his commission to his clients. This was a benefit to authors, as correspondence and accounting for payments were kept centralised, as many authors submitted their work to a range of publishers and periodicals. However, Heinemann vehemently argued that the literary agent (referring to Watt although he does not mention him by name) "ha[d] broken the link between businessman and artist, and ha[d] created friction and disloyalty between seller and buyer".[91] Heinemann believed in the chivalrous approach to business, that transactions should be undertaken between two parties without the need for a middleman. Despite Heinemann's very public condemnation of Watt and literary agents, authors found that Watt's services were much required, especially to those who were inexperienced when it came to negotiating.

In a competitive market economy, survival and success of both professional managers and family firm owners usually requires innovation.[92] In regards to this, Watt was innovative by using contract law to his advantage. He used the framework of the law to ensure that all monies came through his office, and that he was the person who would continuously be in receipt of information, as formal communication between author and publisher was broken down through these contracts, by what I refer to as the agency clause. This is now standard on contracts

---

[91] Ibid., 663

[92] James Foreman-Peck and Julia A. Smith, "Business and social mobility into the British elite 1870-1914," *Journal of European Economic History* 33, no. 3 (2004), 491

between literary agencies and publishing houses, and upholds that publishers will communicate with an author through the literary agent.[93]

The factor that triggered the inception of the agency clause was an issue Watt faced of not receiving a regular cash flow when he first started his agency. Before the advent of the clause, an author would receive their royalty payments directly from the publisher and Watt's first client MacDonald was very slow to pass on Watt's commission, and in most cases it would be months before Watt received payment. This led Watt to formally write to MacDonald and ask for payments to be sent by a specified date; it was this that prompted Watt to ask for payments to come through his office first to ensure a regular cash flow.[94] This practice was also a selling point for Watt's services as he could highlight that he could provide administration services by keeping track of all payments and would provide the client with a cheque once all transactions were completed. Watt knew and understood the tenuous working relationship between authors and publishers, and he used this knowledge to his advantage. He would ensure that an author felt they were being taken care of and that the stress and frustration of collecting royalty payments and finalising of fair negotiations was all done by his agency.

Including the agency clause on the publisher–author contract also confirmed to publishers that Watt was authorised and empowered by authors to act on their behalf. Those who were ambivalent towards literary agents may have asked to see proof of Watt's involvement with an author, therefore, adding the clause on the publisher's contract streamlined the process, and furthermore clearly stated the

---

[93] Hugh Jones and Christopher Benson, *Publishing Law*, Fourth ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 99
[94] Letter to MacDonald from Watt, 24th June 1880, Letter #374, Letter book Vol. II A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

responsibilities and accountabilities of all parties involved. This clause allowed Watt to be recognised by the publisher or editor as at this time there was a high level of distrust between the two parties. This also brought the acceptance of the literary agency into the publishing industry.

Watt's talent in negotiation and his knowledge of the marketplace also made his business attractive to publishing houses. As international copyright law became more comprehensive with the establishment of the Berne Convention in 1886, publishing houses in Britain were provided with a new opportunity to sell international rights, as piracy could be more forcefully challenged.[95] British works could now be protected in foreign countries and so publishing houses granted licences to international publishers, providing them the exclusive rights to publish in a specific territory or in a particular language. As Watt had a strong reputation in the industry from his work with authors, publishers also sought his skills in order to take advantage of international sales. Watt was employed to identify sales opportunities for publishers and negotiate contracts on their behalf with other publishing houses, selling the rights either for an agreed sum or for royalties.[96] In addition, Watt was also sought after by foreign businesses for the placement of their publications in England as demonstrated by letters in the agency archive.[97] Watt was working during a time that saw a great change in the trade of intellectual property internationally, and how he worked with various literary businesses demonstrates how globalisation affected the field and the reaction of Victorian literary businesses

---

[95] Feather, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*, 164
[96] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 50
[97] See Letter from R. H. Russell publisher of The Metropolitan Magazine, New York to A. P. Watt Literary Agency; 22nd December 1906, Folder 18, A. P. Watt (UNC).

to the opportunities of selling in different territories due to the decreased threat of piracy.

Watt's international negotiation of copyrights and intellectual property between publishing houses was lucrative for his business, but also highlighted to publishers how they could bring this business in-house by employing someone dedicated to the sale of their literary property to a third party. This would become the establishment of the Rights Department in a publishing house and the function of the Rights Director is essentially that of a literary agent. However instead of representing an author, they represent the collected works of a publishing house and the department as a whole is responsible for selling, and in some cases buying, translation and territorial rights with other houses and also media rights, such as dramatic or film.[98] The A. P. Watt literary agency dealt with these transactions and formalised the process of how copyrights were sold in the nineteenth century.

Despite his prominence in the history of the British publishing industry, there are only a handful of sources written from Watt's perspective regarding how he developed his literary agency. One particular source, which has been frequently cited by a range of historians including Hepburn and Gillies, is an article entitled 'An Interview with A. P. Watt', published in the periodical *The Bookman* in 1892; I will refer to this article as the interview.[99] Unlike many of his contemporaries, Watt did not regularly contribute to periodicals and newspapers, therefore this article is one of a few narrative sources that explicitly details the origins of Watt's early career in London and the development of his literary agency. Although this source has

---

[98] See Chapter 12 in Clark and Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*.

[99] F. W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt"; Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*.

great significance for researchers in this field, there is little dialogue in published studies regarding the reliability and credibility of the source. The information presented in the article is accepted in some cases without question, and this has led to inconsistencies regarding Watt and his agency being embedded into the sphere of research. The interview portrays a confident businessman whose business flourished without too much effort. However, the discovery of primary sources in the archive at University of North Carolina (UNC) has brought to the forefront that Watt's success in business did not come about as easily as he described in the article and demonstrates how misunderstandings of sources can be embedded in historical narratives.

Narratives on the Literary Agent

The Bookman was a literary gossip periodical founded in 1891 by William Robertson Nicoll (1851–1923), a journalist and friend of Watt.[100] The interview is credited to F. W. and Hepburn believes the author was the publisher Frederick Vernon White (1831–1932), although Hepburn does not state the reasons for this assumption.[101] It is highly unlikely that White was the author as he died in 1932 and there are articles in *The Bookman* credited to a 'F. W.' up until 1934.[102] The interview overall is a piece that outlines the factors that led Watt to becoming a literary agent, his current business and clients, and furthermore Watt's general opinion on the publishing industry. Letters in the archives at UNC did not indicate any specific reasons or

---

[100] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 50
[101] Ibid., 52
[102] "1901 Census Records England and Wales," (The National Archives, 2013); F. W., *The Bookman Christmas* 1934

significant events to prompt such an interview. However, while this was not a significant time for Watt, it was a landmark anniversary for the periodical. Although not promoted as a commemorative edition, Issue 13 Vol. III was published in October 1892, a year after the first edition of *The Bookman* was published; this may have been the reason why Watt decided to do the interview at this time, especially as he was a friend of the editor.[103]

The interview starts with F. W. asking Watt 'if the business was his own idea'.[104] In analysing the letters from the UNC archive it is clear that there are discrepancies between the information Watt gives in the interview in comparison to the letters in the archive. The first discrepancy is highlighted by Watt stating that he started his business "some fourteen years ago".[105] This would place the agency being established in 1878, yet the agency today heralds that it was established in 1875, and indeed the firm celebrated their centenary in 1975.[106] Also, from the letter written to MacDonald it is apparent that Watt did not formally act as his agent until 1880, and as stated in the interview Watt regards MacDonald as his first client.[107] Hepburn is also dubious of Watt's account discussing that the "evidence is contradictory", assuming the reasons for the uncertain dates is because he must have acted "informally before he committed himself fully".[108] However, in his monograph on the publishing industry, John Thompson details that Watt's "work as a literary agent appears to have begun around 1878 – when he was asked by a friend the poet and

---

[103] "The Bookman ", (London1892).
[104] ———, "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt", 20
[105] Ibid., 20
[106] Rubinstein, "A. P. Watt: The First Hundred Years."
[107] F.W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt", 20
[108] Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 52

novelist George MacDonald, to sell his stories for him", a narrative that can be contested by historical sources.[109]

An embellishment in the interview was Watt stating that his first client George MacDonald asked for his services.[110] Thompson details that MacDonald received this service as a 'friendly favour', implying that Watt provided his services for free, another misconception as the letters confirm that Watt asked for and received payment.[111] However in a letter written to MacDonald it is clear that it was Watt who suggested to work on behalf of MacDonald as his agent.[112] Furthermore, it is apparent that Watt had to offer his first client an incentive of a 5% commission charge rather than the standard 10% in order to convince MacDonald to use his services. In this case the letters, as discussed in Chapter 2, are remnants and therefore are more credible as sources than the interview. These letters were office carbon copies of those sent to MacDonald and so have not been exposed to subjective distortion. These letters are held within a business archive and have been verified by the archivists, therefore it is highly unlikely that they have been altered and in addition there were not any corrective markings on the letters. Both Hepburn and Gillies discuss in their respective studies that George MacDonald asked to be Watt's client without question.[113] This demonstrates an example of reproducing distorted information due to a lack of source criticism. This story has become

---

[109] John B. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-first Century*, Second ed. (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 58-59

[110] F. W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt", 20

[111] Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-first Century*, 59

[112] Letter to George MacDonald from Watt, 1st March 1880, Letter #170 Letter book Vol. II, A. P. Watt & Son (BC)

[113] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 45; Hepburn, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*, 52-53

embedded in research and has been further reproduced by Thompson, as he cites both their works and further entrenches the misconception into the literature.

The content of the interview has not been widely questioned by historians of the literary agent, and their discussion is limited to the ambiguity surrounding Watt's early life and the founding of the agency.[114] The sources that may have enlightened the narrative and explained these inconsistencies have been lost, hence the importance of the article on the history of A. P. Watt and reliance of scholars, however, I have found that the interview is peppered with other statements that can be contested.[115] Watt believes that the business was his own idea, as "when he started to sell copyrights, the literary agent was an unknown factor in the world of letters".[116] As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there were other agents who were operating at the same time and in the case of Burghes also pre-dated Watt. Although Burghes classified himself as an author's agent, Watt would have known that Burghes was his competitor, especially as their offices were located on the same street.[117] In addition, Burghes often advertised in literary periodicals as a literary or author's agent, particularly *The Athenaeum*, and in one instance both agents were advertised on the front page. This confirms that Watt and Burghes were contemporaries and it is unlikely that Watt would have been unaware of his competitors.[118]

---

[114] — — —, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*; Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*; Zinkhan, "Watt, Alexander Pollock (1838–1914)."

[115] The A. P. Watt & Son (BC) archive holds Watt's letter books although regrettably the first four in the collection were lost as explained to me by the archivist, October 2012; the earliest letter is dated November 1879.

[116] F. W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt."

[117] "Post Office London Directory, 1880 [Part 2: Commercial & Professional l Directory]." Burghes was located at 1A Paternoster Row.

[118] "Front page," *The Athenaeum* 1883.

These discrepancies raise the question: why would Watt embellish or alter his account regarding his career as a literary agent? One motive is that Watt wanted to be perceived in the industry as a strong businessman who had specifically set out to embark on a career as a self-made professional, however, this was not the case. Watt had entered into self-employment through necessity rather than choice due to the decline of the Strahan publishing house as demonstrated from his letter to MacDonald.[119] He may have felt that admitting this could have weakened his image in the marketplace. The predominant readership of *The Bookman* would have been publishers, editors and authors as this was a magazine for publishing professionals and Watt would have known that those reading his interview were his competitors, peers and potentials clients. I believe that Watt wanted to demonstrate that he had not embarked on a career as a literary agent through circumstance. Instead he wanted to be perceived as a businessman who had seized an opportunity that he had specifically identified in the marketplace.

This is supported by how Watt describes that MacDonald approached him, and as he was a very popular author at the time it strengthened Watt's reputation. He could demonstrate the importance of his services, as if a successful author required an agent, employing a literary agent could be perceived as a necessity for ensuring commissions. Watt claims in the interview that he did not advertise formally, that "he never advertises".[120] He implies throughout the article that he is known in the industry through word of mouth, and that he built his agency through

---

[119] Letter to George MacDonald from Watt, 1st March 1880; Letter #170 Letter book Vol II. A. P. Watt & & Son (BC)

[120] F. W., "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt."

"one author recommending [his] services to another".[121] When this article was published, Watt had not specifically taken out advertisements in periodicals and newspapers, instead he paid for notices to be inserted which served as general announcements. Although not persuasive in nature as would be expected of an advertisement, Watt's notices were informative and created awareness that he was operating a professional agency and furthermore highlighted opportunities to potential clients. Only once did Watt place a formal advertisement in the press to advertise for a secretary in 1896.[122]

For his announcements Watt used popular periodicals and newspapers such as *The Bookseller* and *The Athenaeum.* For instance there is an entry published Saturday 13th January 1883, where an announcement by Watt was printed on the front page:

> "Mr A. P. Watt begs to announce at Authors and Publishers that he has been appointed by Herr Karl Graedener of Hamburg, his Literary Agent in England with full powers to negotiate the purchase of English works for Asher's Collection of English Authors – Literary Agency, 34 Paternoster Row, E.C."[123]

This announcement communicates to different audiences; first it holds the attention of publishers who could buy the rights to the work and additionally appeals to authors by highlighting how Watt could also handle their business in Britain and on

---

[121] Ibid.
[122] A. P. Watt, "Advertisement," (London: The Athenaeum, 1896).
[123] "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum* 1883.

the continent. In style, form and content this is an indirect advertisement. Watt stating that he does not advertise implies that he wanted the public to see that his business was strong enough to survive without the need to advertise. This admission of clients being signed through contacts is an example of how in Victorian culture, professionals were deemed to have sufficient connections that did not warrant the need to advertise their services. Gentlemen were expected to rely on 'word of mouth' and recommendations through their social networks.[124]

On average Watt's notices were around fifty words long, and set with eighteen other notices of this length on the same page, therefore these can easily be missed among other entries.[125] In comparison, the interview spans three complete pages which demands attention. With the editor dedicating that amount of space to the article suggests that Watt and Nicoll had a strong relationship, as this space could have been used to generate additional income for the magazine through advertising. Furthermore, Watt discussed in the interview that he had a new client, Mrs W. K. Clifford (Lucy Clifford 1846–1929), an influential author and socialite, and conveniently a half page feature entitled 'New Writer' written about Mrs Clifford was placed directly after the article.[126] This highlights that Watt used indirect advertising for his clients and his agency, a direct contradiction to the claim that he did not advertise. Uncovering this demonstrates the interview is not completely a reliable source for drawing factual information.

---

[124] Howard LeRoy Malchow, *Gentlemen Capitalists: The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessmen* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 16

[125] Notices of this length refer to entries published in *The Athenaeum* between 1883 and at least 1894.

[126] "Mrs. W. K. Clifford," *The Bookman* 1892.

Other studies that cite this article do not discuss the implication of the time lapse between when the events occurred and the publication of the interview. Alvesson and Sköldberg state that the problem with recounting stories after a significant time has lapsed is that long durations can often play tricks on the memory.[127] Watt has given a rational account of professional life as a literary agent, detailing descriptions of factual circumstances. Individuals can often place themselves centrally at the focal point of their story, and as discussed by Alvesson and Sköldberg this can lead to them glorifying their "own role in a process".[128] As highlighted here, it is essential for researchers dealing with historical documents to be critical about the sources they use, especially as these types of sources are often the bulk cited in qualitative investigation.[129] Prominent studies on Watt and the development of the literary agent have not been sufficiently critical of this source and this has led to the researcher's interpretation to overpower, leading to 'narrative contagion'.[130] This places ambiguity on the narratives of Watt and his agency, and casts doubt over some parts of studies that use this source.[131]

Overall this interview portrays the image of an opportunistic businessman, however when analysed closely it is evident that the interview is a clever piece of marketing, designed to communicate with the different readerships of *The Bookman.* This could be expected as the founder of a successful agency would want to portray his business in a positive light, however this is not the focus of my argument. The

---

[127] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 115
[128] Ibid., 115
[129] Ibid., 115
[130] Ibid., 115
[131] Gillies quotes *The Bookman* interview at length, and uses the information to construct her research, Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920,* 44-46.

issue here is that researchers have reproduced the narrative in their respective works, citing the content as fact without questioning whether Watt's account was an accurate representation of events. I have demonstrated through a critique of letters in the archives of the A. P. Watt literary agency that the narratives within published studies that discuss 'facts' gleaned from this interview are misrepresentations as the article has been open to subjective distortion. A dissection of this source illustrates in particular the problem of establishing and documenting histories from primary sources. The interview is an example of why researchers should be critical with the sources they use. If the letters cited in this chapter had been left undiscovered in the archive for a further century then the history about Watt and his agency may have become further embedded into the literature without criticism. This is an indication that other researchers should demonstrate a dialogue between source criticism and the theory that emerges from the narratives. This would endeavour to eradicate the cynical issues concerned with historical research, by explicitly outlining the credibility of sources used.

Conclusion

The literary agent was the most recent addition to the publishing industry, yet in a relatively short span of time this service became an instrumental part of publishing, progressing from being an outsider and in some cases despised by publishers, to becoming a gatekeeper, as all communications, agreements and negotiations went through the office of the agent. They became accepted as the agents overtook the previously informal service of the authors' reader, an invaluable asset providing

them with feedback to the saleability of their literature and in some cases handling the negotiations with publishers. In an attempt to trace the history of this literary business, researchers attributed the title of literary agents to persons such as James Ballantyne and Thomas Aspinwall who engaged with the activity, yet they did not refer to themselves as such.

Although not the first, it can be argued that A. P. Watt was the most influential due to how he professionalised the service utilising contractual law so he could negotiate with publishers effectively and ensure that agreements would be legally binding. It was this structure in particular – the 'agency clause' – which I argue led to the business practices of the literary agent to be accepted and consequently legitimised as there was little scope for an alternative approach. Authors formally gave Watt authority, therefore publishers had to accept negotiating with Watt or risk losing potentially lucrative commissions as demonstrated by the formal communication channel between Watt, Kipling and Macmillan.[132] Watt applied his skills of negotiating and selling alongside his knowledge of the industry to create a profitable business and innovative organisation, which consequently became the 'blueprint' for the second wave of literary agents including J. B. Pinker and Curtis Brown.[133] These later agencies built on Watt's business practices, which further legitimised them into the field.

Research on Watt and his agency has presented him as an enterprising individual who overcame resistance from those established in the field to create a

---

[132] See Macmillan Archive Vols. CXI-CXIX Correspondence with A. P. Watt Add MS 54896-54904, BL and Macmillan Archive Vol. CLV Correspondence with Rudyard Kipling Add MS 54940, BL

[133] Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880-1920*, 7

profitable and pioneering business that still survives to this day, although it is no longer independent.[134] *The Bookman* interview was Watt's opportunity to portray himself to the public as a confident businessman who had created a role within the industry that was regarded as a vital service to authors and publishers. However, this interview, although valuable to chronicling a history of the literary agent, has highlighted how important it is for researchers to be critical of their sources, as numerous researchers have relied upon this article drawing on the narrative as fact without question, leading to misconceptions being reproduced in research.

By the late nineteenth century literary agents were helping authors connect to publishers in an attempt to find a profitable outlet for their work. Similarly publishers were continuously scouting for new literature and new talent, as the reading market was lucrative. They were responsible for the costs of production, pushing titles to the marketplace with advertising, and most importantly they added value to an author's work, helping to create potentially lucrative commodities from literary property. The next chapter details the business practices used by publishers in the nineteenth century, in particular analysing how practices were pushed into the organisational field and why this had an impact on the industry.

---

[134] The A. P. Watt Literary Agency in 2012 became a partnership with United Agents LLP; Phillip Jones, "A. P. Watt Acquired by U. A.," *The Bookseller*, 30th November 2012.

Chapter 5
Publishing Power Houses:
Publishers and the Mass Marketplace

The publisher in the nineteenth century held a pivotal and important position. They were the connection between the author and reader and in most cases were responsible for providing the capital for turning a literary commodity into a tangible and potentially lucrative commodity. Publishers were responsible for capitalising on market trends, and for controlling the publishing process from commissioning through to physical production and finally to the newspaper stands and bookshops; in many cases Victorian fiction's triumphs were products of publishers rather than authors.[1] This chapter examines the various decisions and strategic choices that publishers made that had a profound effect on the construction of the publishing industry. I analyse how publishers chose to commission and market books influenced the behaviours of authors, literary agents and indeed the public. An understanding of this process can provide an enriching insight into how the business practices of the other organisational groups in the industry were influenced by the dominant position of the publisher.

During the nineteenth century, established houses such as Longman adjusted their business practices in order to contend with the new faces in the industry who had entered the field during a time of radical change, including Mudie and George Routledge. These individuals were building on an industry centuries old, yet they

---

[1] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 1

were innovative with the methods they used to produce and advertise literature to the rapidly increasing mass market. These businesses were dominant during the nineteenth century and I have chosen to focus on them as they were able to push their practices into the field, and consequently their behaviour heavily influenced the industry and the practices of smaller businesses, forcing them to compete in an environment that suited the larger houses. This chapter illustrates that in each of the three cases, these businesses were successful because they pushed their practices into the industry by joining with other businesses, causing them to be market leaders. I begin with a discussion of Longman, moving onto an analysis of Mudie and his practices, ending with Routledge and how he joined with WH Smith & Son to push forward cheap railway literature.

Trade Transformations: From Booksellers to Publishers

I start this chapter by placing the Victorian publisher in the historical context of the book trade in order to illustrate the development of how the publisher became a dominant force in the publishing industry. Victorian publishing houses had grown out of either retailing, printing or as wholesalers to the trade.[2] Initially the roles of printer, publisher and bookseller were combined and this remained common until the late eighteenth century, although it should be noted that it was not until the nineteenth century that the terms were used and accepted as they are in modern day language.[3] What is now understood to be the publisher can be traced to the role of the printer in early sixteenth century Britain. Printers were financially responsible

---

[2] Ibid., 9
[3] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 4

for all costs and placing books into circulation for sale. William Caxton (1415x24–1492), England's first printer, can be viewed as one of Britain's earliest publishers.[4] Printers in the early sixteenth century were required to have a special licence granted by the crown to publish, the primary reason being so the crown could censor the material that was supplied to the public.[5] The Stationers' Company was the guild that was given a Royal Charter in 1557 to dispense these licences.[6] However, by the end of the seventeenth century the Licensing Act of 1662 expired to be replaced by the Act of Encouraging Learning[7] (colloquially known as the Act or Statute of Anne) in 1710, and consequently the Stationers' Company lost their Royal Charter and their monopolistic hold over the industry dissolved. The Act of Anne granted printers control of what they produced and with this barrier to trade being relaxed there were now further opportunities for printers as demand grew for new literary genres, including the novel, periodicals and newspapers.[8]

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the bookseller/printers were also the publishers, often buying copyrights outright from authors.[9] This allowed them to publish for an indefinite amount of time, and they had the knowledge of the market that enabled them to exploit copyrights to their full potential as they were potentially profitable commodities.[10] By the late eighteenth century bookseller/publishers had to adapt their business model in order to adhere

---

[4] Ibid., 4

[5] — — —, *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*, 11-16

[6] Cyprian Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: a History 1403-1959* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977), 22

[7] 1710, 8 Anne, c.19.

[8] Peggy Keeran and Jennifer Bowers, *Literary Research and the British Eighteenth Century: Strategies and Sources* (London, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 135

[9] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 75

[10] Ibid., 75

to the development of copyright law in 1774, as literary works were then protected for a period of 28 years. The Statute of Anne initially had granted protection of 20 years for copies published before 1710, and 14 years to new copies that could be extended for a further 14 years. This ambiguous statement caused much confusion and so was amended to 28 years for all copyrighted works.[11] The primary competition between booksellers was in the individuality between literature, so the more editions of a title the less the value of the edition. After the 28-year period another publisher could publish the title, and the original publisher would not be entitled to any compensation later as it was in the public domain therefore they could not rely on their backlist.

As the book trade continued to expand throughout the eighteenth century, small family run firms, usually known by the name of the owner and their apprentices, began to dominate. The house of Longman, which survives today as part of the Pearson Publishing Group, was founded in 1724 in London by Thomas Longman (1699–1755), who is generally referred to as 'Thomas I' as later Longman relations were also called Thomas.[12] Although a predominately non-fiction house that was founded in the eighteenth century, I begin my analysis of Victorian publishers here, and during the nineteenth century Longman had a significant position in the publishing industry as they also published mass market popular fiction. Understanding how the various owners of the house made decisions and adapted to changes in the field over time provides a fuller understanding of how

---

[11] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 55

[12] Asa Briggs, "Longman family (*per* 1724-1972)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

they were able to dominate in the industry and compete with newcomers and a rapidly changing landscape.

Thomas Longman I purchased a bookshop which had been trading since 1640 using his inheritance from a Bristol relative. He purchased the copyrights from the previous owner William Taylor, although one of the period's most popular novels *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe (1660–1731), published in 1719, was not included in the sale.[13] In 1725, Longman took into partnership John Osborn (d.1733) whose father, also called John (d.1734), was the executor of William Taylor's copyrights, and together they acquired the capital to build a publishing house that would be passed down through the generations for the next two and a half centuries.[14] In the early days of the firm, Longmans predominately commissioned non-fiction and educational titles demonstrated by their published catalogues in the press.[15] Thomas – who referred to himself as bookseller and not a publisher – was the inexperienced person in the partnership and he decided to follow Osborn's lead in the types of books he published. Osborn enjoyed producing titles about grammar, dictionaries, editions of classics and instruction books, deciding to leave plays and poetry to other publishers. Namely, the 'Tonsons and Lintots', two rival booksellers Bernard Barnaby Lintot (1675–1736) and the Tonson family, Jacob 'the elder' (1655/6–1736)

---

[13]Taylor had been responsible for publishing the first edition of Defoe's work and held back the copyright from the sale of the business, entrusting it instead to his executors as the copyright had been purchased as part of a conger; ibid.; Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 52-53. Maximillan E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 566

[14] Briggs, "Longman family (*per* 1724-1972)."

[15] For examples of Longman's educational titles see: "Article XIV. A Catalogue of Books for this Month," *Works of the Learned*, February 1737, 158; "The Monthly Catalogue: Being a General Register of Books, Sermons, Plays, Poetry and Pamphlets, Printed and Published in London, or the Universities in the Years 1727 and 1728," (London John Wilford, 1729), 3

and Jacob 'the younger' (1682–1735), were well known booksellers in these genres.[16] The house after almost three centuries is primarily known for its educational works, and today as a brand and imprint of the Pearson Group. Longman produces publications for schools, dictionaries, English language teaching and higher education.[17]

One industry practice that particularly aided Longman and Osborn in their venture was subscription publishing. In the early eighteenth century it was customary for publishers to take 'suggestions' from the public on what to produce, as opposed to commissioning specifically and then supply to the market.[18] It was a means for authors to get paid in advance of publication and also helped with sourcing funds to aid with production costs.[19] The publisher could then "feel the pulse of the book-buying and reading public" and when he received enough interest and money from customers he would put the book into production.[20] However if the interest was not sufficient to warrant a publication, the money would be refunded back to the customer and the project abandoned.[21] This was a strategy with minimal risk, as authors and publishers received the money up front, and this was also a method of gauging interest in the marketplace.

In addition to subscription payment, publishers also limited the risk with new titles by publishing in a consortium, spreading the costs of publication between houses. This practice became a norm in the field, demonstrated by the Stationers'

---

[16] "Histories of Publishing Houses," *The Critic*, 24th March 1860, 367; Raymond N. MacKenzie, "Tonson, Jacob, the elder (1655/6-1736)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[17] Pearson Education, "Longman," Pearson, http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/Imprints/Longman/.
[18] "Histories of Publishing Houses" , 369
[19] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 76
[20] "Histories of Publishing Houses", 369
[21] Ibid., 369

Company register, which included a space in the records of printed books for the allocation of profits according to the shares of the consortium.[22] Although restricting in terms of risk, this method also limited the profits as income was appropriated according to a publisher's share. If many publishers decided to 'try their hand' at commissioning a new title and the work was expensive, there could be as much as sixty-four shares placed on one new book.[23] A publisher's prosperity depended on how the book performed in the market but also on how many shares they had in a new title. In the case of Longman, he and Osborn were active in buying shares that were rising in value from other publishers and getting rid of those that were poorly performing.[24] Longman was fortunate as he had the capital to do this due to the valuable copyrights assigned from when he purchased the business. He was also active in the congers, another type of consortium in which publishers specifically sold to a select number of retailers.

The congers were a measure to keep piracy to a minimum and to also ensure that the books belonging to the conger would be pushed to the forefront of the market; essentially this was a cartel.[25] Longman bought shares in titles, steadily building a portfolio using the capital from each to invest in potential bestsellers. His collection of copyrights significantly increased when his partner Osborn died, and most importantly he was left *Robinson Crusoe*, which gave him further capital to

---

[22] Blagden, *The Stationers' Company: a History 1403-1959*, 44

[23] "Histories of Publishing Houses", 369

[24] Ibid., 369; Records of sales of stock by Thomas Longman and John Osborn are documented in the Receipt Book of English Stock 1745-1778, M.985/1-96 Records of the Stationers' Company 1554-1920, BL

[25] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 52

invest.[26] Although initially Longman had been involved with spreading the risk of publishing, he had been shrewd with how he dealt with his shares of literary property and had made a profitable business out of trading them alone. It would have been beneficial to this research to specifically trace Longman's trade of copyrights, although unfortunately the sources in the archive of the Longman Group date back only as far as 1809.[27]

This aspect of Longman's history has been identified but rarely discussed in detail in contemporary research. It is known that Longman was part of publication consortiums, however how he decided and to what extent he operated within them is not widely discussed in research. The archive of the Longman Group at the University of Reading contains draft copies of the history of the house that was published in *The Critic* in 1860. Handwritten notes are annotated on these drafts mentioning that the firm was dedicated to preserving the memory of the house, although it is not clear who is the author of these notes.[28] The article in *The Critic* was a commissioned history as it was part of a series on the histories of influential publishing houses. The magazine also published articles on the House of Charles Knight and the House of Bentley. *The Critic* was a publication targeted at a wealthy and educated readership and by the time this article was published was claiming to have the largest circulation of all literary periodicals.[29] Longmans would have wanted the founder presented favourably in the press and in addition they would have been mindful that their history was being exposed to their potential readers.

---

[26] "Histories of Publishing Houses", 370
[27] Confirmed by the Collection Finding Aid, Records of the Longman Group Archive, MS 1393, University of Reading.
[28] Folder 27/6, MS 1393 Longman Group Archive, Reading
[29] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, 154

The author of the article (either the Longmans themselves or a third party) supplemented the narrative, with information pulled from other sources such as the register of the Stationers' Company and also the sales records of titles purchased through shares. This highlights that there was a consideration to contextualise the narrative, however an aspect of bias cannot be discounted.

The article details how Longman entered the industry at a time where publishers helped each other and formed alliances to ensure that risk was minimal with an increased chance of profit on return. Longman imitated established publishers, as he had been an apprentice of William Taylor and John Osborn senior, and later guided in business by Osborn junior. However, once he was leading the firm on his own he moved against the practices of the industry. Longman bought and traded shares in copyrights working jointly with other publishers, and this gave an example to his nephew of how to make profit from intellectual property. As Thomas I did not have any children, the business passed to his nephew Thomas Longman (1730–1797), known as Thomas II, upon his uncle's death in 1755. This was the same year that the house signed as part of a consortium to produce Samuel Johnson's Dictionary, one of the most influential publications in the history of the English language.[30] Thomas and later generations of the Longman family continued to buy out other publishers lists just as Thomas I had done, which helped to strengthen their catalogues. This included buying the business of Joseph Cottle (1770–1853) who had issued *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) by William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834), one of the most popular collections

---

[30] Briggs, "Longman family (*per* 1724-1972)."

of Romantic poetry. Buying copyrights allowed the Longmans to take a less risky strategy, as they were able to judge how these titles performed and also what trends were developing in the marketplace. Buying copyrights also gave them an income that could be predicted according to how the title had performed in the past, and subsequently provided the capital to commission new works and test these in the market.

The genteel way of doing business through subscription and bookseller/publisher consortiums was rejected in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Doing business on such friendly terms became out dated and old fashioned, as publishing houses clamoured for market share and profit by attempting to inject competition into the market. Publishers began to advertise and would invest heavily in new publications by offering large sums to writers whose works brought in a high return as they were popular with the mass reading market, what can be described as publishing capitalism.[31] Thomas II in the late eighteenth century was building on the legacy of his uncle, furthermore he was attempting to manoeuvre the firm away from the reliance of joint publication; he aspired for new books to bear the Longman name imprint independently.[32] Exploring the early days of the Longman house highlights how Thomas I came to the field as a newcomer and imitated other businesses, demonstrating his business was isomorphic in nature. Thomas I modelled his publishing house/bookselling business on those already established, although how he traded copyrights was innovative. Building on this,

---

[31] Jean-Yves Mollier and Marie-Francoise Cachin, "A Continent of Texts: Europe 1800-1890," in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 306

[32] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 76

Thomas II moved against the norms of the field by embracing his uncle's strategy of trading copyrights. Instead of trading with the same practices of other houses, Thomas II instigated an alternative method signifying that he would not accept that 'this was the way things were done'.

Longman had generated steady income since the eighteenth century, and had diversified their portfolio and steadily strengthened their presence in the market by acquiring new lists in different formats. Longman started to purchase shares in periodicals and newspapers such as the *Edinburgh Review*, in which they had shares from its inception in 1802 and they later became sole proprietors of the publication in 1826.[33] The Longman house had a financial interest in many different types of works and formats, and they also championed new fiction and authors. Alongside pioneering educational works they were also responsible for publishing some of the period's most popular works, supporting authors whose publications are today considered as classics, such as the works of Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) published in 1886. In 1890 Longman purchased the business of the Rivington family. The house had been founded by Charles Rivington (1688–1742) in 1711 and with this takeover Longman became the oldest publishing house in Britain.[34] Purchasing these copyrights gave their strong catalogue another boost in theological and educational works, reaffirming the house's editorial strength in this area.

By the mid-nineteenth century there was a boom in the industry, helped predominately by the different forms that literature could be produced in, such as

---

[33] Harold Cox, *The House of Longman: With a Record of their Bicentenary Celebrations, 1724-1924* ([S.l.]: Longmans, 1924), 4

[34] Ibid., 4

serialisation, and by readers purchasing cheaply in the remainder market, which shall be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. The acceptance of change in the marketplace by later generations of the Longman family allowed the house to compete in the industry, as by the mid-nineteenth century they were joined by young enterprising men such as John Blackwood (1818–1879), George Murray Smith (1824–1901) and the Macmillans, men who were confident to commission new works and move away from the old cautious 'toe-dipping' spirit of the field.[35] Despite the emergence of these newcomers, the Longmans became known as one of the Leviathan publishing houses of the industry, due to the longevity of the business and their distinguished publications.[36] The term Leviathan status had been appropriated in the Victorian era to a small constellation of profitable firms that dominated the industry. This accolade was also given to the houses of Smith, Elder & Co., Chapman & Hall, Bentley and Blackwood, and by the late nineteenth century Macmillan was also included in this eminent list.[37]

Knowledge of business practices in this instance was literally passed down through the generation with subsequent owners cementing routines in the organisational field, and as the reputation and dominance of the firm grew, others then began to imitate their routines. Newcomers followed the practices as they believed that 'this is the way things were done' as the practices were not challenged. Despite the dominance of this house in the industry for over two centuries, the last family president Mark Longman (d.1972) negotiated a friendly takeover by Pearson

---

[35] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 11

[36] "Thomas Norton Longman, Esq.," *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, November 1842, 551

[37] ———, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 44

in 1970 due to a lack of family capital; Longman is now an imprint of educational works for the Pearson Group and no longer commission general fiction.

The Longman family consciously challenged how business was done in the eighteenth century publishing industry, embracing developments in the marketplace by ensuring that they kept up with the changes in reading demand, and they were also astute with publishing literature in new formats, establishing a wide portfolio of publications through the trading of copyrights and the purchases of other houses. Longman could be considered as one of the first general publishers as they produced fiction and non-fiction general books for the mass market, educational works, dictionaries and periodicals. Furthermore, as the firm had publishing lists of multiple genres and owned publication formats of different types they could also be considered as the archetype of the general publishing house. Analysing the business movements of Thomas Longman I highlights how, although in the early days his house was similar to others in the field, he took the initiative that was later developed by his nephew to change how business was done. In comparison, as Longmans did with the congers, Charles Edward Mudie (1818–1890) pushed his business into a dominant position by also ensuring that he received support from leading publishers so readers were pushed into lending from his circulating library. It became a popular alternative to the bookshops and towards the late nineteenth century Mudie became an influential figure in the publishing industry, with a business that revolutionised English reading.[38]

---

[38] Guinevere L. Griest, *Mudie's Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel* (Devon: David & Charles, 1970), 17

Supplying Literature to the Masses: Mudie and the Circulating Library

Since the early eighteenth century the publisher of fiction in the industry was extremely important. They were responsible for judging the tastes of the reading public and in keeping a regular supply of literature to the market, which kept the industry in a state of economic stability. Yet despite this, the size of the literary market was relatively small as publishing houses predominately aimed their titles at the wealthy – those who had enough income to spend frequently on luxury leather bound titles. The market for this readership was becoming highly saturated and so publishers began to look beyond the wealthy "towards a mass audience".[39] Publishers would pinpoint titles that would be sold cheaply and at high volume, in comparison to high culture literary titles that would attract a higher price and would be stocked for a much longer period than their cheaper counterparts. One contributor to *The Athenaeum* noted that "no Englishman in the middle class buys a book" as they were priced outside the range that most could afford.[40] To put the price of literature into context, literary historian Richard Altick discussed that a literary title for an upper class gentleman would be equivalent to buying a new set of breeches, whereas for a woman in the working class a cheap novel was equivalent to her week's wages.[41]

Leading up to the early nineteenth century the majority of books were bound in expensive cloth or leather and later these came to be known in the twentieth

---

[39] Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street*, 5
[40] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 12
[41] Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, Second ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 51-52

century as the hardback.[42] In contrast the cheap edition, now referred to as the paperback, brought down the cost of production allowing the publisher to draw in readers that could not afford the expense of hardbacks. Publishers also used the strategy to issue a title in hardback in order to test its reception in the market and if it proved popular publishers would then reprint the title in paperback to attract a wider readership.[43] The format of fiction had a significant impact on how readers engaged with literature and strongly influenced sales in the marketplace. Along with serialisation, the 'cheap edition' was a revolutionary format that encouraged a wider readership due to affordability for the working class. Publishers were able to supply more titles and consequently enabled circulating libraries to hold more stock and keep subscription fees at affordable levels. In order to understand how cheap editions became so popular in the nineteenth century, it is important to note the literary businesses that propelled the format into a dominant position.

The circulating library during the nineteenth century became an essential part of the publishing industry, and its eminent position was closely linked to the popularity of fiction. They were the largest purchasers of books and could "make or break an author".[44] Initially circulating libraries were additional businesses for booksellers, they loaned titles for a small fee for those who could not afford to buy the book outright, which increased their income and helped bring literature to a

---

[42] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 91-92

[43] Finkelstein and McCleery, *An Introduction to Book History*, 128; Clark and Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, 29

[44] Thomas William Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 35

wider market.[45] The origins of the circulating library can be traced to the seventeenth century, when bookseller Francis Kirkman opened the first one in London 1661, when "he advertised that he rented books".[46] But it was not until the eighteenth century that the term circulating library became used. Journalist and author Henry Curwen (1845–1892) in his history of booksellers comments that the first circulating library was opened in The Strand c.1730 by Wright, and before this period "circulating libraries were not in use".[47] He discusses that Wright had a handful of competitors including, "John Bell (the cheap publisher), Thomas Lowndes[48] and most noticeably Samuel Bathoe who died in 1776, and to whom erroneously, the credit of the innovation has been very generally attributed."[49] However, it took over a century for Charles Edward Mudie to propel its power into the industry with such vigour that he would guide the tastes of the reading public and influence how publishers commissioned their lists.[50]

Although not a publisher in the same context as Longman, I have included the business of Mudie here as his circulating library during the mid to late nineteenth century was a significant force in influencing how publishers did business. Mudie had been apprenticed in the bookselling trade at his father's

---

[45] Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, 119; John Feather, "The British Book Market 1600-1800," in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 245; Edward Jacobs, "Circulating Libraries," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 5

[46]Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 422 Feather, "The British Book Market 1600-1800", 245; Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, 119; Jacobs, "Circulating Libraries", 5

[47] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 422

[48] The dates of Thomas Lowndes' birth and death are conflicting in the sources, John Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 6 Vols., Vol. 3 (London: Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1812), 646; Robin Myers, "Lowndes, William Thomas (*bap. 1793, d.* 1843)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[49] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 422-423

[50] Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 35

newspaper shop, which also supplied volumes that could be borrowed for a penny, a usual suburban charge.[51] He started with a small bookshop of his own in 1840, however he was more preoccupied with the library side of his business and in 1842 set up subscription charges of 1 guinea per annum as opposed to a penny per volume of literature.[52] A three volume novel to purchase in the mid-nineteenth century was priced around 31 shillings and sixpence, and according to literary scholar Edward Jacobs, Mudie convinced publishers to maintain this price so readers in the middle class would be squeezed from purchasing in the bookshops, therefore their only affordable option would be to borrow from his circulating library.[53] Jacobs does not discuss the sources he references or divulge how he came to the conclusion that Mudie 'convinced' publishers to adopt his plan. Mudie's pricing meant that middle class readers could borrow hundreds of books for the price of two in a book shop. This strategy boosted publishers sales as Mudie would be supplying the market at a cheaper price, therefore opening publishers lists to a wider audience as working-class readers could more easily afford fiction, whilst maintaining an outlet for the middle class who could afford to buy the luxury and higher priced publications. Ultimately Mudie became one of the chief buyers for publishers, purchasing 960,000 titles between 1853 and 1862.[54]

Mudie charging an annual fee as opposed to per volume was extremely important as it allowed a stream of regular income for him to purchase new titles, and furthermore it opened a wider range of titles to the public. It would cost a reader

---

[51] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 424
[52] Ibid., 425
[53] Jacobs, "Circulating Libraries", 5
[54] Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 35

3 pence for a complete novel, as in the nineteenth century novels were issued in three volume parts commonly known as the three decker.[55] Readers now had at their disposal hundreds of novels, and there was no limit as to how many volumes a reader could borrow per year. Mudie allowed for one volume to be borrowed at any one time for the annual fee of a guinea (21 shillings), undercutting some of the other circulating libraries by half.[56] In comparison to buying in a bookshop, for the same price a reader could borrow a maximum of eighty-four novels for the year. Readers now had the flexibility of choice and could decide the rate at which they exchanged volumes.

With business doing well Mudie grew his company – he opened branch libraries throughout London and offered pick-up and delivery services.[57] He also advertised aggressively stating that he could offer twelve thousand titles per annum and often mentioned the new titles of the season that he had in stock.[58] Mudie also acted as a publisher himself, commissioning titles such as the first English edition of James Russell Lowell's (1819–1891) *Poems*.[59] Mudie knew he had significant power in the industry and used this to push his reading tastes to the public, publishing only what he would want to read, dictating the taste of the market. Publishers were eager to supply Mudie with titles as increasingly the reading market was purchasing through his library. However, not all welcomed 'Mudie's Monopoly'; publishers clamoured to supply him with titles therefore the public were left with little choice

---

[55] Ibid., 35
[56] Jacobs, "Circulating Libraries", 6; Mays, "The Publishing World", 15
[57] Jacobs, "Circulating Libraries", 8
[58] For an example of Mudie's advertising see "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum*, 22nd June 1850, 651
[59] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 425

as to where they could borrow.[60] In addition due to his increased influence, Mudie bought according to his own taste, therefore his purchasing habits dictated how publishers commissioned new works, sometimes leaving authors disgruntled as they felt as though they were only to write according to Mudie's personal preferences.[61] This is an example of how organisations or in this case an individual can attempt to push forward their practices to influence the behaviour of a field.

Mudie was openly criticised in the press for how and why he chose specific novels, and the power of his circulating library polarised critics, with some referring to it positively whereas others condemned the might of 'Mudie's monopoly'.[62] In an article published in *The Athenaeum* in 1860, Mudie maintained that his selection process was purely commercial and defended his choices as it was his business, and the public were happy to subscribe to his selection of 'good authorship'.[63] However, some critics questioned Mudie's motives for selecting certain books, commenting that he did so in order to further his own causes – whether it was commercial or moral – despite the literary or artistic merits of a book.[64] One critic believed that Mudie's power was so vast that he "only had to set himself against an author, or against a book, or against a publisher, and a great injustice [was] done. As far as [Mudie] is concerned neither the author nor the book can find a public."[65]

This opinion was also felt by one of the contributors to the Macmillan publishing house; in a letter to Alexander Macmillan (1818–1896) the poet Roden

---

[60] "Literary Gossip and Table Talk," *The Illustrated Review*, December 1872, 385

[61] "Mudie's Library," *Saturday Review* 1860, 550

[62] "Mr. Mudie's Monopoly," *The Literary Gazette*, 29th September 1860; A Second-Rate Author, "Mr Mudie's "Right of Selection"," *The Literary Gazette*, 17th November 1860, 426; "Mudie's Library", 550

[63] C. E. Mudie, "Mr. Mudie's Library," *The Athenaeum*, 6th October 1860, 451

[64] Charles J. Skeet, "Mudie's "Select" Library," *The Literary Gazette*, 24th November 1860, 452; A Second-Rate Author, "Mr Mudie's "Right of Selection"",426

[65] "Mr. Mudie's Monopoly", 253

Noel (1834–1894) documented in 1862 that he was anxious for Mudie to 'push' his poems in order to boost sales.[66] In reply, Macmillan attempts to placate Noel, commenting that Mudie was a 'good friend' and that his power had been "exaggerated [in the press] and his willingness to use that power".[67] Alexander comments that Mudie was a servant of the public in regards to putting forward the best literature, and that it is the job of the reviewers – not Mudie – to estimate what should and should not circulate. Macmillan hints to Roden that it was unlikely that Mudie would accept a poetry volume without it being 'talked about first', meaning that the volume needed to have been reviewed in the press, which confirms that Mudie was also not willing to take risks on unknown authors.[68] Furthermore, Macmillan mentions that he does not ask Mudie to use his influence for any books that he publishes therefore implying that Noel's request was essentially redundant.[69]

Macmillan was a publisher who made use of his contacts, which shall be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, therefore his revelation in this letter jars with his actions. The tone implies that Macmillan was attempting to pacify Noel's concerns. Macmillan often sent review copies to Mudie in order for him to pre-order new publications and it is likely that Noel knew this. Macmillan may not have had the conviction to push Noel's poetry due to its quality or because he was familiar with Mudie's tastes and knew that he would not take poetry. This implies that publishers, or at least Macmillan, complied with what Mudie wanted and demonstrates his significant influence in the industry.

---

[66] Letter to Hon. Roden Noel from Alexander Macmillan, December 13th 1862; Charles L. Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan* (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1910), 196
[67] Ibid., 196
[68] Ibid., 196
[69] Ibid., 196

Mudie's library is a demonstration of how business practices become accepted, and furthermore shows how being pushed outside of the organisational field can have an influence on societal behaviour. Researchers in book history agree that Mudie created a dominant position for himself by convincing publishers to keep the price of the three volume novel high, so readers who did not have high disposable income would be pushed to lend from his library.[70] Therefore publishers could profit from sales either from the bookshop or the library, and Mudie ensured that his business would have demand. As discussed by Feather, Mudie and the other publishers who worked closely with him operated as a cartel, which protected their common interests.[71]

Throughout the mid-nineteenth century, commentary regarding the strength of the circulating library was quiet in the press. Mudie advertised continuously from the time he opened his library in 1842 to the early twentieth century, yet I find it interesting that the critics of the library emerged predominately in 1860, around the time that Mudie went into financial difficulties. There may have been rumours regarding the impending collapse of this business, therefore this may have triggered the debate between the critics. By 1860 the library had grown so large that it occupied the space of eight houses on New Oxford Street, "inaugurated by a festive gathering of literary men and publishers."[72] Mudie had significant purchasing power, so much so that his business grew at such a rapid rate that his spending

---

[70] See Jacobs, "Circulating Libraries", 6; K. Theodore Hoppen, *The mid-Victorian generation, 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 386; Shattock, "Introduction", 7
[71] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 124
[72] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 425

spiralled out of control, bringing him to the point of bankruptcy in 1861.[73] By this time he had over 25,000 subscribers, held stock of 96,000 titles and had also opened branches in Birmingham and Manchester.[74] Publishers had come to depend on Mudie's library and a small collective that could not afford for this sales channel to disappear lent him money until he returned to solvency in 1864.[75] Literary businesses were then constrained by the very practices that had previously been favourable.

Mudie's near collapse highlights how the industry was dependent on his circulating library. Publishers imitated each other in supplying Mudie as he was the most popular choice for readers, and they had not perceived an alternative sales channel to rival Mudie's circulating library. If Mudie had gone bankrupt, publishers would have lost a large share of their readership as the majority of readers were not purchasing in the bookshops, as the demand for books was generated by the subscriptions of Mudie's library. One critic disapproved of Mudie's power in the industry, commenting that Mudie was understood to be the "autocrat of New Oxford Street…The publishers are in his power; and he makes them feel it."[76] Publishers and readers relied so much on the circulating library that a sudden disappearance of this sales channel would have considerably affected the industry, as publishers may not have had the capital to continue trading if they lost the bulk of their readership so quickly. The significance of the power and dominance of Mudie's

---

[73] David Finkelstein, *Mudie, Charles Edward (1818-1890)*, Online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[74] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 426; Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 35

[75] Finkelstein, *Mudie, Charles Edward (1818-1890)*.

[76] "Mr. Mudie's Monopoly", 252

circulating library was demonstrated by how quickly the three decker novel lost its eminent place in the industry. In 1894 Mudie's library – which was then owned and managed by his son Arthur – stopped ordering novels in the three decker format, instead opting for the single edition novel. Within 2 years of Mudie stocking the single edition the three decker format ceased to exist, and the industry followed the field leader.[77]

Although critics in the nineteenth century condemned the might of 'Mudie's monopoly', it is important to note that Mudie was not alone in creating the 'monopoly'. He was supported by publishers and when he almost went bankrupt was saved by the same people who had helped drive the circulating library into its prominent position. As the publishers were working collectively with Mudie, other publishers outside of this group followed suit in supplying the library, as the market demand was with Mudie. They complied as there was not an alternative that could rival him, therefore business practices of these publishers favoured Mudie, and he used this influence for his own advantage. As a consequence Mudie helped to shape the reading taste of popular fiction as his circulating library further allowed literature to become accessible and also by growing a marketplace for books that was low priced. In conjunction, when Mudie opened his library in 1842 London bookseller George Routledge (1812–1888) started selling remainder books, and in partnership with pioneers in bookselling, WH Smith & Son, would help to further supply the reading market, a factor that would see the paperback become a popular product as discussed in the next section.

---

[77] ———, *Mudie, Charles Edward (1818-1890)*.

Railways and Reprints: The Beginnings of the Paperback

With the revolutions in technology that enabled cheaper prints in large-scale quantities, and better railway links for distribution, books were becoming more accessible both in London and outside of London. This section analyses the business practices used by the publishers who reprinted literature that was either out of copyright or in some cases popular fiction from across the Atlantic at low prices, which further pushed affordable literature into the hands of the growing reading public. George Routledge is regarded by literary historians as one of the pioneers in the industry as he supplied the market with remainder books, which were reprints of previously inaccessible titles as usually they were out of copyright.[78] Exploring how literary businesses used this format to their advantage also provides an insight into their business practices, and this section furthers study into an area of nineteenth century book history outside of the dominant sales channel of the three decker novel.

Routledge had made valuable contacts through his years as an apprentice at booksellers Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, as he had been responsible for despatching books to the country/provincial booksellers before he was promoted to working in-house in their binding department.[79] Routledge learned much about the production and printing of novels as his new role involved him taking the quires (unbound printed sheets) to distributors for them to bind and send to the circulating libraries

---

[78] Eliot, "The Business of Victorian Publishing", 51; Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 106; Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 34

[79] Country/provincial booksellers or publishers were termed as any business outside the city of London, Frank Arthur Mumby, *House of Routledge, 1834-1934: With A History of Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Other Associated Firms* (London: Routledge, 1934), 13

and booksellers around the country.[80] This knowledge would provide him with strengths in the production of books in comparison to the commissioning elements of the business, knowledge that put him in good stead when he opened his small bookshop in Leicester Square in 1836.[81] Routledge's lack of knowledge in commissioning fiction meant that he initially struggled to publish his own works, finding it difficult to gauge and respond to market taste. He ran into financial difficulties and by this time had a young family to support, so he took an additional job in the tithe office in order to keep his bookshop open.[82]

As he was able to cushion his business using money from his additional occupation, Routledge moved away from commissioning new works and instead decided to draw on his experience and knowledge of previously published titles from his days as an apprentice, and in 1842 he started to sell remainders. These were excess stock that booksellers would liquidate in a lump sum often to another bookseller in order to clear space in their warehouse. The subsequent bookseller would then sell these cheaply making a slim profit margin on these titles but as they would take stock from multiple booksellers at once, selling remainders could be a viable business. Routledge used his old contacts in the North of England from his days at Baldwin, Cradock and Joy to cheaply secure remainder books, which he was able to resell in his London bookshop at a far lower price to when they had first been published.

---

[80] Ibid., 18-19
[81] James J. Barnes and Patience P. Barnes, "Routledge, George (1812-1888)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[82] Ibid.

Routledge's first advertisement regarding his new stock was in *The Athenaeum*; a full page spread entitled *George Routledge's New List of Remainders* displaying a list of sixty titles ranging from self-help guides for young men to collections of romances.[83] The advert displayed the original as well as the discounted price so customers could be assured they were getting a good price. For instance *The Tin Trumpet* by James Smith was originally sold at 21 shillings, yet Routledge was able to offer the title for 6 shillings and sixpence – almost a third of the original selling price.[84] Through this method Routledge was able to supply the London market with cheap titles and address the needs of readers who were unable to afford Mudie's subscription price up front. In addition, Routledge was also able to profit from printing out of copyright works and sometimes he side stepped copyright law altogether by printing and selling pirated works from America.[85] This way Routledge did not have to find investment capital for sourcing and negotiating works with authors or have to pay a premium for commissioning new literature.

Alongside buying remainders, Routledge expanded his purchases by buying copyrights from authors and at auction houses. The receipts of the various auctions are the earliest confirmations of how Routledge operated his business, and the receipts of these purchases still exist in the company's business archive held at the National Archive in Kew, London.[86] Routledge favoured the auction house of Southgate & Barrett, purchasing numerous copyrights over the years including the

---

[83] "Advertisement - George Routledge's New List of Remainders," *The Athenaeum*, 3rd December 1842, 1048

[84] Ibid., 1048

[85] ———, "Routledge, George (1812-1888)."

[86] For instance Routledge bought the copyright for a school book in 1847 for five pounds from the author Receipt for copyright, 9th July 1847, Folders 1-17/1-5, Routledge

copyright of a popular collection of ballads by Bishop Thomas Percy (1729–1811) in 1857 for 4 pounds and 4 shillings; *Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry* was published as a new edition in July 1857, the original edition was published in 1765.[87] This was one of the earliest sources in the archive, and it is not clear from the archive catalogue record whether the earlier documents of the company have been lost, therefore it is not confirmed as to whether this is one of Routledge's first purchases at auction.

Routledge was not alone in selling remainders cheaply in the market. Bookseller and printer Charles Tilt (1797–1861) and later his partner and successor David Bogue (1807/8–1856) are considered as the publishers who prompted the revolution in cheap literature in 1840 when Bogue became a partner of Tilt's publishing house in Fleet Street.[88] Tilt made a name for himself printing a library of cheap yet elegant illustrated classics until his retirement in 1842, when Bogue bought his business including the remainder stock and started a remainder library similar to that of Henry George Bohn (1796–1884).[89] Bohn had made a reputation for himself as the most popular second hand bookseller in London when in 1841 he astounded the trade and published his guinea catalogue, so titled because of its price. The catalogue held a selection of over 23,000 items, and with a list of remainders 152 pages long it became the largest catalogue of its kind and held such popularity that the catalogue itself became a collector's item.[90] Bohn sold remainders at significantly reduced

---

[87] Receipt for Copyright, 8th May 1857, Folders 17/1-5, Routledge
[88] Frank Arthur Mumby and Ian Norrie, *Publishing and Bookselling*, Fifth ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974), 224
[89] Ibid., 224; Robert L. Patten, *Bogue, David (1807/8-1856)*, Online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[90] John Mitford (ed), "H. G. Bohn's Catalogue for 1841," *The Gentlemen's Magazine: and historical review*, February 1841, 187

prices, discounting books originally sold for instance at 16 pounds 16 shillings to 3 pounds and 3 shillings for a six volume set.[91]

Bogue's European Library Classics were direct competition to Bohn; he sold inexpensive reprints of titles such as *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas (1802–1870) published in 1844 and the historical biography of Scottish novelist John Galt (1779–1839). However, Bogue came into difficulty when he was sued by Bohn in 1845 for printing illustrations from William Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici* (originally published in 1796) for which Bohn owned the copyrights.[92] In winning the lawsuit, Bohn was able to set up a rival library to Bogue in addition to the titles he offered in his guinea catalogue, which he named the Standard Library.[93] A few years later Bogue was forced to retire due to his financial difficulties, so Bohn, spotting the opportunity, bought Bogue's catalogue and merged the two libraries together.[94] When he retired, the copyrights for Bohn's libraries were sold in 1864 to Bell & Daldy for £40,000, his principal copyrights went to Chatto & Windus for £20,000, whilst his second hand books took some 40 days to auction in various rooms around London, which amounted to a further £13,000.[95]

By exploring the strategies of remainder booksellers in the 1840s, it is highlighted that there was a strong market for literature priced at the lower end of the spectrum, confirming that many mid-Victorian readers were willing to buy literature whether new or old for the right price. Like Bogue and Bohn, Routledge was able to sustain a business and make significant profit from selling volumes for

---

[91] "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum*, 10th April 1841, 296

[92] Patten, *Bogue, David (1807/8-1856)*.

[93] Alexis Weedon, *Bohn, Henry George (1796-1884)*, Online ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[94] Ibid.

[95] Mumby and Norrie, *Publishing and Bookselling*, 225

cash at 1 shilling and sixpence, as opposed to selling remainders for 5 or 6 shillings as he had started doing in 1842.[96] In 1850 Routledge launched a cheap reprints series and his books became colloquially known as the 'yellowback' and would eventually make him a fortune. This product would become the precursor to the modern day paperback novel that proved to be the major boon to the publishing industry.[97]

The Victorian yellowback, which in some cases was also known as the 'railway novel', was a publishing phenomenon, which owed its success to the opening of the first railway bookstall by William Henry Smith (1792–1865) in 1848.[98] These cheaply produced paperback novels had a cover of glazed paper with an eye-catching illustration. The paper covering was mostly yellow, hence the name, and this form of production lasted until the end of the century. The yellowbacks would often advertise other books or products in the back and would sell for 2 shillings or less, roughly half of what other fiction was selling for at the time.[99] Yellowbacks were essentially reprints in their fourth edition, a work of fiction that had first been published in serial form, then published in the three decker format that would have been issued through the circulating library before it was reissued for a third time, had been rebound in cloth and sold in the bookshops.[100] These yellowbacks were designed to be read on the train and then discarded, and had the main purpose of providing entertainment for these relatively new yet long train journeys for the British public. The yellowback was a product of high availability, cheapness and

---

[96] Barnes and Barnes, "Routledge, George (1812-1888)."
[97] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 94
[98] Elizabeth Hulse, "Yellowbacks," in *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Sally Mitchell (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 882; Mumby and Norrie, *Publishing and Bookselling*, 230
[99] Hulse, "Yellowbacks", 882
[100] Ibid., 882

popular appeal that shared its characteristics with the later generation of the mass market paperback.[101]

In 1848 Routledge took into partnership his brother-in-law William Warne (d. 1859) and the firm was renamed Routledge and Warne.[102] As Routledge had been dealing with the remainder market he had significant knowledge of what readers were willing to pay for reprinted material. He capitalised on this by producing mainly unprotected American pirated reprints; production costs would be kept low so he could sell a vast quantity at a low price.[103] At the same time that Routledge went into partnership with William Warne, Smith became the first person to systematically supply passengers on trains with newspapers, and in 1848 secured the exclusive right to vend newspapers and books in the Birmingham railway station.[104] Over the next few years Smith and his son, also named William Henry (1825–1891), were established at every major rail station in the country, and this provided a major opportunity for Routledge and Warne. With their new format of the yellowback, Routledge went to WH Smith & Son and made a deal to supply and stock his cheap yellowbacks in Smith's railway bookshops all around the country. The cheap reprints library was first advertised as being available in all bookstores and railway stations in 1850, and Routledge's flagship title was *Oliver Goldsmith: A Biography* by Washington Irving priced at "one shilling each".[105]

---

[101] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 94; Hulse, "Yellowbacks", 882

[102] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 438

[103] Graham Law, "Routledge, George (1812–88) English publisher," in *The Oxford Companion to the Book* ed. Michael F. Suarez, S. J. Woudhuysen, and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[104] Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 434

[105] "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum*, 2nd February 1850, 142

Routledge and Warne were instrumental in further widening the products offered to the mass reading market by providing new outlets for them to purchase literature inexpensively. Their lead was followed by Mudie who also made a deal with Smith for his circulating library to have a fixed location at Smith's flagship shop in Birmingham named the Midland Counties' Branch.[106] Mudie agreed to supply the Birmingham railway shop with a regular stream of new books from London and "passengers were able to exchange books daily at the subscriber's pleasure".[107] Routledge, Warne and Mudie took advantage of these opportunities by reacting to consumer demand and changing taste in society as the development of the railway provided a surge in travelling that was a novelty for many Victorians.[108]

Routledge's business continued to grow, and in 1851 William's brother Frederick Warne (1825–1901) was also taken into partnership and the firm was renamed Routledge & Co.[109] They continued to trade on the success of pirated works from America and in 1852, among forty other publishers, he printed Harriet Beecher Stowe's (1811–1896) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, selling over half a million copies, which was a publishing record for the time.[110] Routledge was printing large quantities of stock and was also able to sell them quickly, which enabled him to generate a steady cash flow and strong profit. This allowed him to attract leading authors to sell their copyrights for his various libraries, which by the mid-1850s included the Railway Library, which Routledge started in 1848 with WH Smith & Son, Routledge's

[106] Newspaper advertisement, 29th October 1859, WHS/1-6, Reading
[107] Ibid.
[108] Susie Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians : Politics, Culture, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012), 13
[109] Barnes and Barnes, "Routledge, George (1812-1888)."
[110] Ibid.

Popular Library and Routledge's Standard Novels. For example Routledge struck a deal with popular novelist Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer (1803–1873) paying him £20,000 for the copyrights of nineteen of his novels for a 10-year period, after which he paid the author £1,000 as a renewal. Furthermore, Benjamin Disraeli also agreed to have his work included in the reprints library, despite his initial scepticism of the series.[111] Disraeli was in demand and other publishing houses, including the Longman's, attempted to buy his copyrights but Routledge's popularity in the market held sway.[112] The strength of Routledge's business continued to rely on his cheap reprints series and he was able to rival Longman by offering large sums to secure copyrights, and throughout the later part of the century he also offered to pay royalties to authors both in Britain and America.[113] Whether Routledge chose or was asked to pay royalties is unclear in the sources held at the company archive, furthermore, whether he gave backdated royalty payments has not been discussed in other studies on the firm.

The nineteenth century saw the introduction of lower priced literature into the marketplace, and publishers experimented with using the same intellectual property in different formats in order to reach the widest readership. Routledge is remembered as one of the most popular publishers in the realm of cheap literature alongside Bogue and Bohn.[114] Yet, towards the late nineteenth century some critics of the industry contributed a brief discussion in the press on the emergence of cheap literature, attempting to trace the persons responsible for this format, despite

---

[111] "Advertisement," *The Athenaeum*, 19th June 1858, 774; — — —, "Routledge, George (1812-1888)."

[112] Letter to Philip Rose from Benjamin Disraeli, 3rd April 1864, Benjamin Disraeli, *Benjamin Disraeli Letters 1860-1864*, ed. J.A.W. Gunn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 343

[113] Barnes and Barnes, "Routledge, George (1812-1888)."

[114] "The Cheap Movement in Literature ", *Book-lore*, November 1886, 12

Routledge's dominance in the field at the time. One contributor notes that John Bell (1745–1831), bookseller to the Prince of Wales during the 1780s, was the first to introduce cheap literature to the marketplace.[115] Whereas Herbert Wroot discusses that it was William Milner (b. 1803) who first offered cheap editions of English classics, as Milner wanted to 'bring the best and most attractive of English literature within the reach of the poorest'.[116] Wroot argues that Milner's contribution to literary history is so significant that he deserves an entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which has not yet been included. This throws speculation at Wroot's insistence of the importance of Milner's contribution to the cheap literature movement.[117]

In the 1770s John Bell produced a small cheap edition of the poets of Great Britain in direct competition with around forty established London houses, earning him an impressive reputation in the realm of cheap literature.[118] Bell also associated with Charles Knight (1791–1873), another publisher who was linked to the development of cheap literature, with his publication the *Penny Magazine* a weekly volume priced at 1 shilling aimed at a working class readership, which proved to be immensely popular.[119] These accounts demonstrate that cheaper editions of literature had been circulating since the eighteenth century, and as mentioned by Charles Knight in 1865, these practices instigated imitators to also produce cheap literature, subsequently supplying the market with literature that the working class

---

[115] Ibid., 10; Hannah Barker, "Bell, John (1745-1831)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[116] Herbert E. Wroot, "A Pioneer in Cheap Literature," *The Bookman*, March 1897, 172

[117] Ibid., 175

[118] "The Cheap Movement in Literature ", 11; Barker, "Bell, John (1745-1831)"; Curwen, *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*, 422

[119] "On Cheap Books in General, and Mr. Charles Knight's Cheap Books in Particular," *Hunt's London Journal*, 17th August 1844, 87

could afford. The sources were written decades after the 'cheap movement' in literature had gained momentum, yet the journalists do not provide a motivation for tracing the development of this change in the industry or where they had referenced their information.

The success of Routledge's library helped to break down the culture that all literature needed to be produced at high cost and sold at a high price, and Victorian critics highlighted that as long as "the workmanship was good and suits the palate of the reader, it is eagerly devoured".[120] This was an important turning point in the industry similar to the use of serialisation for new literature, and the circulating library. These forms opened up the market to publishers and gave authors an opportunity to reach a larger readership. Through various partnerships with family, Routledge was able to create a profitable commodity from selling remainders. He imitated other booksellers such as Bogue and Bohn who repackaged literature to resell to the public, and similar to Mudie they were able to capitalise on the demand for cheap literature. By selling unprotected American works Routledge was able to use the profit to create his Railway Library, and as Longman had done in the eighteenth century, he used the commodity of copyrights to create a successful business. Routledge did not create a practice here but adapted it to his advantage, utilising new technology to produce cheap prints further by working with WH Smith & Son to offer literature on railway journeys, exploiting Smith's popularity in the stations supporting a developing 'working-class market'.[121]

---

[120] "Monthly Report of the Wholesale Book Trade," *The Bookman*, May 1894, 41

[121] Raven, "The Industrial Revolution of the Book", 152

Conclusion

Publishers are at the heart of the process of getting books into the marketplace and they are also responsible for ensuring that these titles generate profit. This chapter has explored the business practices of Longman, Mudie and Routledge and has analysed how they brought literature to the marketplace. In particular I have argued that their business practices were not particularly innovative, in each case they used existing models, and it was the strength of their influence in the industry, and in regard to Longman their financial capital in the nineteenth century, which pushed their literary businesses in dominant positions. The Longmans initially traded copyrights allowing them to generate finance to reinvest, therefore they did not have to rely on the financial help of consortiums; they led the way in independent publishing and this prompted others to follow suit. The Longmans were respected in the industry by their competitors and also their readers, leading to others appropriating them with a 'reverent' status. They were labelled as one of the Leviathan houses, a giant in publishing whose influence and dominance would continue to be exemplified into the mid-twentieth century.[122]

George Routledge and Charles Mudie were able to use their network of contacts and their strategic resources to carve a niche for their businesses in the field, and subsequently create a marketplace for cheap literature that had a lasting effect in the industry. Their example was adopted and their practices accepted by many publishers in the industry. The revolution of the paperback novel and the gradual decrease of prices in the mid-nineteenth century highlights that there was ample supply of literature to the mass market and greater demand. During the Victorian

---

[122] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 52

era the culture of the field was changing and the time would be an ample opportunity for new publishers to join the market. 1843 would see the emergence of what would become one of the most influential houses in Victorian Britain, Macmillan, who are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 6
The Macmillans:
A Leviathan House

The Macmillan publishing house started as a bookshop in London in mid-nineteenth century Britain, and it is now at the forefront of different sectors in the international publishing industry with lists in fiction, education, scholarly and academic publishing. I argue that unlike the Longmans who were innovative in the industry and pushed their practices into the wider context of the field, the Macmillans were successful by imitating their competitors and adopting existing practices to push their organisation into a dominant position. They were heavily influenced by the practices of other literary businesses, and through an analysis of historical sources it is possible to examine the extent to which socio-cultural influences governed how they did business. This chapter examines the 'institutional story' of the Macmillan house from its beginning in 1843 to the death of co-founder Alexander Macmillan in 1896, analysing the origin of this Leviathan literary business, a name attributed to Victorian houses that were dominant in the nineteenth century.[1] The chapter begins with the historical background of the Macmillan brothers, and moves on to a discussion of their choices of business practices and how they were influenced.

---

[1] Leviathan houses were a small constellation of rich firms that dominated publishing fiction and what would now be referred to as literary classics; ibid., 44

The Origins of a Victorian Academic House

In order to explore choices of business practices that the Macmillans used, an understanding of how the house originated is needed to provide a context for their choices. In particular the brothers made significant use of what I refer to as strategic friendships – relationships made with a motive in mind to further particular ambitions – and this historical context demonstrates how they were able to use these contacts to develop their business. I construct this narrative through an analysis of the published documentary sources, predominately Daniel's private journal and his memoir published by the firm in 1882, and edited by popular Macmillan author Thomas Hughes (1822–1896); I shall critique this source in more detail later in this chapter. Scottish brothers Daniel (1813–1857) and Alexander Macmillan (1818–1896) had been involved in the world of letters as assistants and apprentices in various businesses before opening their own bookshop in 1843. According to the information presented in Daniel's memoir, his first position had been as an apprentice for Maxwell Dicks, a bookseller and bookbinder in Irvine, Scotland. This was followed by a position at Mr Atkinson's bookshop in Glasgow before he moved to London to find employment.[2] Historians of the Macmillan family outline that in 1833 Daniel was able to get employment at the bookshop of Mr Seeley in Fleet Street, London, a position secured by Daniel's old friend bookseller and publisher James MacLehose (1811–1885), a fellow Glaswegian whom he had first met when they apprenticed together in Glasgow.[3]

---

[2] Thomas Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1882), 10-11

[3] Rosemary T. Van Arsdel, "Macmillan family (*per. c.* 1840-1986)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Charles Morgan, *The House of Macmillan, 1839-1943* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1943), 12

By September of that year Daniel accepted a better paid position in Cambridge as his previous employer in Glasgow had put in a letter of recommendation for him with his friends, and Daniel was offered a position at Mr Johnson's bookshop.[4] Throughout Daniel's 3-year tenure at Johnson's he established a strong reputation for himself in Cambridge and the academic book trade. He came into contact with the students, learned men from around the country and the dons of the University of Cambridge, and this would prove to be beneficial in subsequent years as they would become his primary customer base. Despite doing well and enjoying the position, London was where he wanted to be, and according to Thomas Hughes "his heart [was] still in London" as in Cambridge there was no "active bustle".[5] In 1837 Daniel secured another position at Mr Seeley's bookshop, and once again Daniel was back in Fleet Street; he would hold this position for a further 6 years.[6]

Tracing the early life of Alexander Macmillan is not as straightforward in comparison to Daniel as there are fewer sources documenting Alexander's childhood and first movements in London. His early life is narrated in Daniel's memoir, where he recounts Alexander's apprenticeship in Glasgow and his struggle to find employment in London to various friends via letters and in his journal. Whilst Daniel was establishing himself in Cambridge, younger brother Alexander's career in publishing was floundering. Daniel writes that as his brother was in financial difficulty the best thing would be to bring him to London.[7] Daniel secured a

---

[4] Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 38
[5] Ibid., 53
[6] Ibid., 60
[7] Ibid., 67

position for Alexander at his place of employment at Seeley's for a salary of £60 per annum in 1839.[8] Alexander accepted the position and like his brother he managed to establish himself in the London publishing industry.

In 1840, Daniel started to look towards independence as their salaries had been increased. In February 1843, Daniel writes how he was looking for a bookshop to rent for £150 or £200 per year, but as he and Alexander did not have much capital he was struggling to find something they could afford.[9] He then received information of a shop in Aldersgate Street in London, although Daniel does not describe in his journal the contact that provided him with the information. He borrowed £100 from Mr Burnside, one of the partners at Seeley's and went into business with Alexander in 1843, although from Daniel's letters and journal it is not clear exactly when the brothers left Seeley's establishment to become independent.[10] The brothers' religious upbringing and Daniel's contact with academics in theology in Cambridge influenced their first venture into publishing later that year when they published their first titles *The Philosophy of Training* by A. R. Craig and *The Three Questions: What Am I? Whence Came I? And Whither do I Go?* by William Haig Miller.[11]

In 1840 Daniel wrote to the authors of *Guesses at Truth* (1827) written by Two Brothers as he wanted to discuss their thoughts on the religious subject they had discussed in their book.[12] During the mid-Victorian period, it was not considered

---

[8] Daniel writes that his employer Mr Seeley happened to be looking for someone to join the firm and he agreed to take on Alexander; ibid., 67

[9] Ibid., 77

[10] Ibid., 77-78

[11] Rosemary van Arsdel, "Macmillan Company," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Vol 106 British literary publishing houses, 1820-1880*, ed. Patricia J Anderson and Jonathan Rose (London: Gale 1991), 178

[12] Letter to "Two Brothers" from Daniel Macmillan, 22nd September 1840; Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 118

socially acceptable to write to an author without letters of introduction, however Daniel decided to break convention and write to the authors, one of which revealed himself to be Julius Charles Hare (1795–1855), the archdeacon of Lewes.[13] The relationship between Daniel and Hare blossomed, and could be considered as a significant strategic friendship. They often corresponded via letter on the subjects of theology and philosophy and Daniel went to visit Hare at his home in Herstmonceux, East Sussex (spelt 'Hurstmonceaux' in his letters).

Hare enjoyed entertaining and often hosted dinners at his home for literati and through these gatherings Daniel was introduced to many writers of the time.[14] Hare was impressed by Daniel's knowledge of literature and his reputation in Cambridge, becoming a regular customer in the small Aldersgate Street shop, however he felt it was "too much out of the way" and so decided to invest in the Macmillans.[15] In 1843 with the aid of his brother Hare provided Daniel with a loan of £500 as an investment bond on 4% interest to buy the bookselling business of Mr Newbury in Trinity Street, Cambridge who was going into retirement.[16] Daniel bought the bookshop on a 14-year lease also buying all Newby's stock and the shop fixtures.[17] Alexander stayed in London and managed the shop in Aldersgate Street and Daniel managed the newer venture in Cambridge, as Daniel had a stronger social network there. Hare continued to be involved with the Macmillans by being a

---

[13] Morgan, *The House of Macmillan, 1839-1943*, 22

[14] Mentioned in a letter to Rev. D. Watt from Daniel Macmillan, 29th September 1842; Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 132

[15] Ibid., 146

[16] Letter to Daniel Macmillan from Archdeacon Hare, 28th August 1843; ibid., 152

[17] Letter to James MacLehose from Daniel Macmillan, 16th October 1843; ibid., 113

valuable customer, and aided the brothers by bringing a large amount of custom ensuring that his friends shopped at their bookstore.[18]

Later that year Daniel suffered a lung haemorrhage brought on by the exertions of moving stock and opening a new business and had to bring Alexander to Cambridge. Hughes writes that the London business had to be given up despite removing the brothers from the social scene in the city, including the network of clubs and literary dinners and as Daniel puts it, it prevented them "from meeting with and hearing from young men".[19] The decision had the support of Hare as he was their main investor, and the shop at Aldersgate Street was closed in Easter 1844.[20] Daniel's correspondence with Hare details that they would continue a close friendship. Daniel at one point writes a letter to Hare stating that if it had not been for his kind help and encouragement and friendly recommendations, he or his brother would not be in their position or would have been "in a position to marry".[21] Hare continued to be a patron to the Macmillans until his death in 1855.

In 1845 the brothers were offered another well-established bookshop and this allowed them to double their retailing potential. By taking on new partners, the brothers paid £6,000 for the business of Mr. Stevenson in Cambridge.[22] By 1846 the Macmillans added to the management of their bookselling business by taking their nephew Robert Bowes (1835–1919) the son of Margaret Macmillan into partnership. According to Hughes, Daniel understood that he was strategically in a good location

---

[18] Morgan, *The House of Macmillan, 1839-1943*, 24
[19] Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 155
[20] Letter to Archdeacon Hare from Daniel Macmillan, 27th February 1844; ibid., 155
[21] Letter from Daniel to Archdeacon Hare 11th June 1855, Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 75
[22] Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 221

at the "heart of a great literary centre" to pool the minds and writing talents of the young academics of Cambridge, who were specially fitted for writing and editing new educational titles.[23] Daniel decided that he wanted to move towards publishing as opposed to bookselling, and due to their location in Cambridge he saw this as an advantage to move into this field. Hughes refers to Cambridge as a "mine…almost unworked, of the best book-producing power of the nation" and from the spring of 1844 Daniel added publishing to his business, and by 1847 a binding business had also been included.[24]

In his portfolio of literary businesses, Daniel had an input in all stages of production, from commissioning all the way through to final sale, meaning he could control the quality and build a brand around the strength of his academic and educational titles. Charles L. Graves (1856–1944), historian of the Macmillan family, writes that Daniel wanted to nurture his authors, as he knew that his success was dependent on the literary talents of the young men at the University.[25] The importance of socialising with academics was so imperative to Daniel that he and his nephew Robert put in a common room in their newer shop at Trinity Street. This room would be "frequented after four o'clock… by undergraduates and dons who came to chat and read the newspapers".[26] The Macmillans formed a literary network of important academics using their bookshop, and the actions of the brothers here demonstrates how they pulled cultural influences from wider society. Most literary

---

[23] Ibid., 221
[24] Ibid., 221, 225
[25] Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 33
[26] Ibid, 27

men were accustomed to socialising at gentlemen's clubs and here the Macmillans were mirroring this cultural norm.

Although publishing was his passion, as documented in a letter to his friend James MacLehose in 1852, Daniel wanted to keep the retail side of his business in order to keep a steady stream of potential authors coming into his professional network and believed that his bookshop was of great value in this respect.[27] The Macmillans had established themselves as reputable educational and academic publishers and they often approached potential authors or editors with strong academic credentials; this is demonstrated in the brothers' relationship with Charles Kingsley (1819–1875). From his early days in Cambridge as an apprentice, Daniel had made friends with Kingsley after they had been introduced by Archdeacon Hare, as Kingsley had been one of his pupils.[28] He had been studying theology at Cambridge and some of his academic titles had been commissioned by the Macmillans in early 1854, however it was not his academic writing that the brothers were predominately interested in. In June 1854 Kingsley sent an early draft of a novel to Daniel and by July of that year Alexander had also read it, and claimed that in reading the early parts it would become "a noble whole".[29] This noble novel would turn out to be *Westward Ho!* published 20th March 1855[30] by the Macmillans, and eventually became a commercial success.[31]

---

[27] Letter to James MacLehose from Daniel Macmillan, 20th July 1852; Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 246

[28] Ibid., 230

[29] Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 58

[30] Date confirmed by published advertisement; "Advertisement ", *The Athenaeum*, 10th March 1855.

[31] Elizabeth James, *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, ed. Elizabeth James (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 2

From Daniel's correspondence to Kingsley, it is evident that he had been active in promoting the book before publication, including with Mudie who ordered 350 copies for his circulating library. Mudie also promised to advertise the novel in the London and Manchester newspapers, leading Daniel to be confident that "other libraries [would] buy it" as Mudie had taken the lead.[32] *Westward Ho!* would be a landmark publication for the firm and a notable moment in the field in general. Macmillan as a strong academic and educational house had published their first general fiction novel and up until that point Longman was the leading house that had strong lists in multiple genres. The Macmillans were on their way to becoming a successful general publishing house in Cambridge, however Daniel wanted to establish the business in the London market. Daniel died in June 1857 before the publishing house had gained significant momentum in London, although the foundations he put in place were built on by his brother and nephew.

The principal source for tracing the early professional lives of Daniel and Alexander Macmillan are referenced from Daniel's memoirs published in 1882. The letters and excerpts from his journal have provided an insightful narrative into how the brothers used the resources in their social and professional networks, and also how they traded on the strength of their social ties in order to start a new business. The source has been edited therefore the narrative presents a story according to what editor Thomas Hughes wanted to put across, and this may not represent a completely reliable account of Daniel Macmillan's life. Furthermore, Alexander had significant input as he wanted his brother's legacy to be perceived in a positive light,

---

[32] Letter to Rev. Charles Kingsley from Daniel Macmillan, 22nd February 1855; Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 261

confirmed by Alexander's son George (1855–1936) in his collection of his father's letters. George writes the volume (referring to Daniel's memoir) was written at Alexander's request so "the achievements of his elder brother…should not be forgotten, his own part in the establishment and development of the publishing business was purposely kept in the background."[33] Hughes pieces together letters and journal excerpts to create a story and intersperses Daniel's narrative with his own explanations. He highlights specific moments in Daniel's life and career, and these are gathered from examples of his choice that illustrate the point.[34]

Although the 'examples' are reproductions of letters, Hughes's choice of letter or excerpt may have been biased, however I have had to be reliant on this source as Daniel's original letters and journal are not in the firm's archives held at the British library. This makes it difficult to assess the validity of statements in the source, as other documents that may have corroborated the narrative are not easily available. This is one problem that faces historians when referencing information from sources that may have been distorted, as they have passed through multiple interpretations. Daniel Macmillan's memoir is an interpretation of what Hughes and Alexander wanted to portray of Daniel's life, as opposed to being a narrative of how Daniel himself perceived events in his lifetime.

Furthermore, information or criticism of Daniel Macmillan which may have helped build a narrative of his life is absent from the newspapers at the time. The press was a vehicle that literary businesses used in the nineteenth century for advertisements as well as what could now be referred to as public relations, as

---

[33] George A. Macmillan, ed. *Letters of Alexander Macmillan: Edited with Introduction by his Son George A. Macmillan* (Printed for Private Circulation, 1908), xviii
[34] Hughes, *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*, 240

biographical or profile pieces were sometimes written about publishers and authors. However, contributions regarding the Macmillans were confined to advertisements and commentary and notices of new publications. This implies that the brothers may have been wary of showcasing their business dealings or private life in the press. Articles about Daniel's life only make an appearance after his death either as obituaries or reviews of the memoir. In 1882 one critic questions why a memoir of 'an obscure life' was worth writing, yet praises Hughes's publication, and presents Daniel Macmillan as a hero in the industry with an admirable story who overcame many disadvantages to create a reputable publishing house.[35] This review demonstrates that Hughes' portrayal of Daniel was a success as he was perceived as a heroic businessman.

As a popular Macmillan author, Hughes could be deemed as sufficiently qualified to write about the founder of the house, however his distance from the life of Daniel suggests that he would have needed input from others in order to compile the sources and create a convincing narrative about Daniel's life. Hughes would have been reliant on the letters and journals as well as to Alexander to provide him with information, as he did not become a Macmillan author until 2 years before Daniel's death, and so could not have had first-hand experience of Daniel's life. Hughes had significant dependence on the testimony of Alexander as the information has not been compiled from the original source.[36]

Charles Graves also commented that Hughes was tasked by Alexander to write the memoir much like a tribute to Daniel. Hughes was to include affectionate

---

[35] "Memoir of Daniel Macmillan," *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 2nd September 1882, 320

[36] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 113

and eulogistic references, however these had been 'deliberately omitted' from the final proofs, which reiterates my point regarding the heroic portrayal of Daniel in the memoir.[37] However, Graves endeavours to "exhibit the relations of the two brothers in truer perspective than was possible for Tom Hughes", also confirming that Hughes's narrative suffered bias due to the story that Alexander wanted to be told.[38] Despite being aware of the bias, Graves still draws on Hughes's memoir in his own work predominately for the confirmation of dates. This highlights that there may be some narrative contagion in Graves's publication, as he used information from a narrative source that has been open to subjective distortion. Therefore although Daniel's memoir and Graves's history of Alexander provide a wealth of information, the credibility of these sources would have been strengthened if they had not been edited, especially in the case of the memoir as it could have provided significant information about the founder of one of Britain's oldest publishing houses.

Although these sources present evidence of bias, these publications demonstrate how the brothers used strategic friendships in order to further their businesses. Daniel was able to secure his first position in the industry on the recommendation of a friend, and similarly Alexander was able to move to London and work in publishing because of his connection to Daniel. It could be argued that their most important connection was to Archdeacon Hare as he provided the initial funds for the brothers to open their first bookshop, and from this they were able to branch out into book binding as well as publishing. Within the midst of these

---

[37] Graves mentions that he had seen the earlier drafts from which these references had been edited, Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, V

[38] Ibid., V

strategic friendships, the sources also demonstrate that the Macmillans pulled influences from the wider environment, which are reflected in their business practices, one of the most prevalent being socialising and using informal spaces to find new talent such as the common room at the bookshop in Trinity Street, Cambridge. The next section details how Alexander also used his strategic friendships to create one of his most popular business ventures *Macmillan's Magazine*.

The Tobacco Parliaments: Strategic Friendships and The *Macmillan's Magazine*

The Macmillan brothers started with owning bookshops, yet their passion had been to bring new literary works to the market and start their own publishing house. This would be realised a year after Daniel's death, when in 1858 Alexander took out a lease for 23 Henrietta Street in Covent Garden in London, and this would be the home of the Macmillan publishing house.[39] The Macmillans entered the industry at a time of rapid change alongside an influx of enterprising young men who also published highly influential literature. These publishers included John Blackwood, who was George Eliot's publisher, George Smith of Smith, Elder & Co., and Chapman & Hall (Dickens' publishers of his first major works).[40] Publishing has been noted by John Sutherland as a traditional and conservative profession and he argues that most early nineteenth century publishers were incurious about the growth of markets and were slow and unresponsive to the rapid changes in the

---

[39] Morgan, *The House of Macmillan, 1839-1943*, 50
[40] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 10

industry.[41] Competition between houses had been kept to an acceptable minimum and there was a comfortable co-operation in terms of price, with "trade sales of remainder titles being conducted at dinner over the wine and walnuts".[42] Although, as mentioned by publishing historians, the field was becoming more adventurous, Alexander Macmillan still embraced the traditional ways of the industry, and in the first instance was also reluctant to turn towards innovation. From Alexander's letters to long-time family friend James MacLehose during the infancy of the Macmillan publishing house, it is evident that Alexander did not have the same confidence as Daniel in terms of securing new authors, especially as he knew that he would have to compete with established London houses. Alexander writes that his initial objective for the London house was to keep his connections together rather than to "break new ground".[43] He did not have any intention to branch out but instead chose to work with what he had and expand as he had no intention of doing a 'country business' – he did not want to open any accounts outside of London.[44]

In 1858 when the publishing house was established in London, Alexander was still based in Cambridge as Robert Bowes had initially moved to manage the London business. In order to foster professional relationships and get his house up and running, Alexander made a weekly trip to London on a Thursday and would host dinners at Henrietta Street. These weekly dinners would eventually become well known and were informally labelled the 'Tobacco Parliaments' as guests would

---

[41] Ibid., 10

[42] Ibid., 10-.11; also see Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 103

[43] Letter to James MacLehose from Alexander Macmillan, 4th June 1858 Macmillan, *Letters of Alexander Macmillan: Edited with Introduction by his Son George A. Macmillan*, 1

[44] Ibid., 1

discuss current affairs and socialise over a cigar.[45] Alexander referred to Henrietta Street as his home, and in a letter to MacLehose comments that he "'makes a point' of spending an evening at home so any friend coming in can have a cup of coffee or a glass of beer and a chat".[46] He goes on to say that Charles Kingsley was one of his chief guests and that he often brought other author friends with him to Henrietta Street. In particular, at the end of this letter Alexander comments that he believes "the London house will answer" as a business, as it would provide him with the opportunity to having more authors.[47] Alexander used these dinners as a way for authors to be introduced into the firm and for him to foster a personal and professional relationship with them in an informal setting.

This emphasis on nurturing the relations with authors and others in the industry led to a key business venture for the Macmillan firm – the formation of the *Macmillan's Magazine* – as there was a gap in the market for a magazine offered by a publishing house, as *Fraser's Review*, one of the leading publications, had been suspended.[48] During the nineteenth century it was common for publishing houses to offer monthly or quarterly publications, which provided a platform for showcasing new talent and serialising popular works.[49] The idea for *Macmillan's Magazine* was first discussed at one of the Tobacco Parliaments by Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown's School Days*, which aptly became the first story to be serialised in the

---

[45] Letter to James MacLehose from Alexander Macmillan, 27th October 1858; ibid., 4
[46] Ibid., 4
[47] Ibid., 4
[48] Ibid., 4
[49] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 115; Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, 423

magazine in twenty parts.[50] Alexander had also wanted Kingsley to be heavily involved due to his popularity with the readers, however Kingsley was only 'half-heartedly' invested in the venture.[51] Despite this Alexander went ahead, employing David Masson (1822–1907) who was already a Macmillan author as its first editor. *Macmillan's Magazine* first appeared in November 1859 and is regarded by some historians as the first shilling monthly, established at a time in which periodical journalism was at its most popular.[52] The magazine was regarded by critics as a publication of great literature and comment, and it became known in the industry as a publication that boasted the latest fiction and a showcase of Macmillan talent, as well as critical commentary of current events.[53]

The Macmillan publishing house became known as one of the best houses to work with, with one author describing admittance to this "illustrious company" on par with "election to a first class club".[54] Booksellers were considered by some authors and writers as "venal monsters and ruthless profit-seeking entrepreneurs" who sought to only publish genres that were close to their own interests rather than for the benefit of the public.[55] However, the Macmillan brothers' approach to their authors and contributors served to help to break down the tension in the

---

[50] Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, Nov. 1859 - April 1860 ed., Vol. 1, Macmillan's Magazine (Cambridge, London: Macmillan and Co., 1859).

[51] Letter to James MacLehose from Alexander Macmillan, 27th October 1858; Macmillan, *Letters of Alexander Macmillan: Edited with Introduction by his Son George A. Macmillan*, 4

[52] George J. Worth, *Macmillan's Magazine: 1859-1907; "No Flippancy Or Abuse Allowed"*, The Nineteenth Century (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 1; Brake and Demoor, *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, xvi

[53] Worth, *Macmillan's Magazine: 1859-1907; "No Flippancy Or Abuse Allowed"*, 1; "Macmillan's Magazine," *Examiner*, 5th November 1859.

[54] J. S. C., "Obituary," *The Academy*, 1st February 1896, 96; "A Great Publishing House," *The Speaker*, 5th September 1891, 285

[55] John Brewer, "Authors, Publishers and Literary Culture," in *The Book History Reader*, ed. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 323

professional relationship which in turn helped to create strategic friendships. For instance Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), who eventually became a Macmillan author, sent a 440-page unsolicited manuscript to Alexander, who took the time to reply with a detailed letter, which historian Michael Milgate finds surprising as Alexander had a large family taking up his time and had recently gone into partnership with George Lillie Craik (1837–1905).[56] His other letters to both prospective and current authors show his commitment to supporting authors, providing detailed critiques of how they could improve their writing.[57]

Alexander also used this approach with other authors, his strategy in some cases for securing commissions was that of fostering strong personal links. For example Alexander wanted to secure a poem by Tennyson for the first volume of *Macmillan's Magazine*, as Tennyson was a critically praised poet at the time and would draw a large readership.[58] He went to great lengths to secure Tennyson by liaising with his wife Emily (who also managed his literary affairs) by sending her complimentary copies of new titles, inviting them to networking dinners at his home, and by ensuring that he spent a great deal of time with Tennyson – an alumni of Cambridge – whilst he was in town.[59] Similarly, Alexander took this approach with Christina Rossetti as he wanted to publish an anthology of her poems as a special Christmas edition. Women writers were excluded from the arenas of

---

[56] Letter from Alexander Macmillan to Thomas Hardy, 10th August 1868 cited in Michael Millgate, "Thomas Hardy and the House of Macmillan," in *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, ed. Elizabeth James (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 72

[57] For example see letter to Rev W. H. Freemantle from Alexander Macmillan, 22nd May 1861; Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 175

[58] Christopher Ricks, "Tennyson, Alfred, first Baron Tennyson (1809-1892)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[59] Stated in a letter to James MacLehose from Alexander, 6th October 1879, Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 133

networking and it was common for women to get commissions through a male friend or relation. Alexander liaised with Christina's brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) whom he had invited previously to his Tobacco Parliaments and ultimately he was commissioned by Alexander to do the illustrations for Christina's publications.[60] This demonstrates how the cultural conventions of the era affected how organisations did business.

Alexander approached commissioning new titles with caution as he wanted to exercise "sound judgement on what to take and on what terms to take it".[61] Alexander decided to use the magazine as a springboard to trial new and upcoming authors, yet ensured sales would be profitable by supporting fresh fiction with in-house talent such as Hughes and Kingsley.[62] Christina Rossetti is an example of how Alexander used the magazine for a long-term strategy; he trialled Rossetti's poems in the marketplace by holding a reading at a working men's society in London. The reception of the audience gave him much confidence to pursue the publication as they gave a "tremendous burst of applause" when he finished reading what is now one of Rossetti's most famous poems *Goblin Market*, which was first published by Macmillan in 1862.[63]

Alexander also drew on his contacts from Cambridge, "friends of Hughes' and [his] own", and he used the names of notable contributors in order to persuade

---

[60] Letter to D. G. Rossetti from Alexander Macmillan, 28th October 1861; Macmillan, *Letters of Alexander Macmillan: Edited with Introduction by his Son George A. Macmillan*, 94-95
[61] Letter to James MacLehose from Alexander Macmillan, 27th October 1858; ibid., 4-5
[62] Macmillan writes to Kingsley asking whether he will be a contributing author to the magazine, 19th July 1859; Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 130-131
[63] Ibid., 181

other authors to write for him.[64] He ensured that the magazine was an extension of the various lists published by Macmillan, and therefore his knowledge and personal tastes were at the core of the magazine and also the titles that were published. Although the magazine had a capable editor and popular contributors, both in comment and fiction, throughout his management of the house Alexander shaped the policies of the magazine. When the magazine was in its infancy Alexander took responsibility for soliciting material and held editorial authority over commissions, regardless of a contributor's experience or reputation.[65] The magazine was a success until the general decline of house magazines in general circulation towards the late nineteenth century and the last volume of *Macmillan's Magazine* was published in 1907.

This section has detailed how Alexander used his contacts and colleagues for strategic advantage to his business, a trait that would be embraced by his nephew Frederick Macmillan (1851–1936), which shall be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The Tobacco Parliaments were popular gatherings as it was a positive boost to the reputations of the guests.[66] However, when Alexander wanted to entertain his authors outside of the office he would use The Garrick, an exclusive gentlemen's club that was popular with those involved in literature and the dramatic arts. This demonstrates that how Alexander did business was influenced by the cultural conventions at the time.

---

[64] Letter to George Wilson from Alexander Macmillan, 18th July 1859; Macmillan, *Letters of Alexander Macmillan: Edited with Introduction by his Son George A. Macmillan*, 16

[65] Worth, *Macmillan's Magazine: 1859-1907; "No Flippancy Or Abuse Allowed"*, 19

[66] Morgan, *The House of Macmillan, 1839-1943*, 52

Club Dinners: The Macmillans and the Garrick

During the nineteenth century the Garrick prided itself on being a club for "the purpose of bringing together the 'patrons' of drama and its professors, and also for offering literary men a place of rendezvous".[67] The archives at the Garrick have extensive records of previous members, alongside all proposal forms that state the individuals who proposed and seconded new members. Other than this, there are not many qualitative primary documents left in the archive, apart from a handful of ephemera. In his historical study of the Athenaeum, Cowell comments that if researchers were able to reprint club menus and wine lists from dinners it would be an interest to many people, although he states that unfortunately such ephemeral facts were not preserved by the Athenaeum club.[68] Unlike the Athenaeum, the Garrick has kept some ephemera relating to its history, and in consulting the archives, I was fortunate to view a menu card that, as argued by Cowell, has been invaluable to research in this area. The card is dated 9th December 1880, and on the back it has been signed by publishers, authors and politicians. Items such as these were rarely kept by publishing houses or authors therefore this menu card provides further insight into the social and professional lives of these literary figures.[69]

The Garrick has two dining rooms, and in the nineteenth century these were used regularly by members for everyday meals but also as dining rooms for more formal occasions. According to the archivist at the Garrick, attendees at a party or special occasion signed the menu card as a commemoration of their attendance at the

---

[67] John Timbs, *Club Life of London with Anecdotes of the Clubs, Coffee-Houses and Taverns of the Metropolis*, 2 Vols., Vol. 1 (London: Richard Bentley, 1866), 257

[68] Cowell, *The Athenaeum: Club and Social Life in London, 1824-1974*, 31

[69] For facsimile of Menu Card see Appendix A

particular event. He explained that the menu card was kept because his predecessor had kept it, which in turn had also been kept by their predecessor, etc. Therefore the card has been passed down from archivist to archivist but unfortunately the initial reason as to why the card was kept has been lost. The knowledge for keeping the source has been accepted as 'this is the way things are done' between the archivists. The knowledge between archivists has been legitimised and it is now normal practice for them to keep the card and other sources similar, another demonstration of how the process of institutionalisation can be seen within organisations.

The menu card is now considered by the archive as an important piece of historical evidence of club culture; it has been signed by significant political figures and literary men. In order to verify the authenticity of the signatures I compared the menu card with a range of independently verified primary sources, which also displayed the signatures of those believed to be in attendance at the dinner.[70] The signatures on the menu card matched the hand-scripts displayed on verified source materials and therefore this gives further credibility and authenticity to the document.

Altogether there were twelve who signed:

- Matthew Arnold, poet, critic and writer (1822–1888)

- George Lillie Craik (1837–1905) (nephew of popular Scottish writer also called George Lillie Craik), partner in Macmillan publishing house and Director of Macmillan's New York

- Henry James (1843–1916), author who was published by the Macmillans

---

[70] For instance the signature of John Morley was compared to a primary source authenticated by Dr Richard Ford, Antiquarian Bookseller, and member of the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB).

- Alexander Macmillan (1818–1896), co-founder in 1839 of the Macmillan publishing house

- Frederick Macmillan (1851–1936), Alex Macmillan's nephew who at the time was working in the family firm alongside George and also became partner

- George Macmillan (1855–1936), son of Alex Macmillan who worked and was later partner in the family firm

- John Morley (1838–1923), Viscount Morley of Blackburn, politician, writer, editor of *Macmillan's Magazine* and aide to Alex Macmillan

- James Russell Lowell (1819–1891) (known as J.R. Lowell) American poet and politician

- Philip Gilbert Hamerton (1834–1894), author, artistic and art critic

- Lawrence Alma Tadema (1836–1912), artist and painter

- The other signatures are not discernible[71]

The dinner was held as a celebration by Alexander Macmillan for the new edition of *Etchers and Etchings* written by P. G. Hamerton, which was published in December 1880.[72] Hamerton had been working on a new edition of his publication since July of that year, and in one of the letters he wrote to Craik he details that he had finally made a start on the revised edition, as it had been proposed since

---

[71] I have taken advice from a Professional document examiner and handwriting expert and he mentioned that it is extremely difficult to decipher signatures as they do not necessarily contain letters from the person's name, and to his knowledge there are no experts in the field that decipher signatures, stated in email dated 7th February 2014.

[72] Philip Gilbert Hamerton and Eugénie Gindriez Hamerton, *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834-1858, And A Memoir By His Wife 1858-1894* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1897), 437; Publication was advertised in the Publishers' Circular Vol 43 15th November 1880, 1008; P.P.6481, Publishers' Circular and Booksellers Record, BL.

February 1880.[73] The new edition was well publicised: it was advertised in the Publishers' Circular in November 1880, and another advert was placed in the Christmas edition of *The Bookseller*, in bold print highlighting that "The text of the New Edition has been thoroughly revised, and increased by one-fifth".[74]

A short discussion of this meeting is detailed in a memoir written by Hamerton's wife Eugénie Gindriez Hamerton (b. *c.*1839). She comments that Macmillan had thrown the party in honour of her husband, "who was warmly congratulated by the other guests".[75] Eugénie does not mention by name all the attendees, or comment further on what happened during the remainder of the dinner. Hamerton himself does not narrate this dinner in his autobiography, and as it was held at a gentlemen's club Eugénie would not have attended, therefore her discussion of this event is a reproduction of what her husband told her. I consulted the documents in the Macmillan archive relating to Hamerton and his publications, hoping to find some details about this dinner as usually the Macmillan's organised dinners and lunches by letter.[76] However the last letter addressed to Hamerton before the dinner took place is dated 19th July 1880, and subsequent letters are missing until 31st August 1881.[77]

---

[73] Letter to George Lillie Craik from Philip George Hamerton, 19th July 1880, Add MS 55225, Macmillan Correspondence with Philip George Hamerton, BL

[74] Advertisement, The Christmas Bookseller 1880, 128, LOU.LD 65, The Bookseller, BL

[75] Hamerton and Hamerton, *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834-1858, And A Memoir By His Wife 1858-1894*, 437

[76] There are other examples of the Macmillan's organising meetings at the Garrick, for example letters between Frederick and Maurice Macmillan detail meeting for lunch to discuss the terms of buying out Bentley's publishing house, May 19th 1898 Letter #138, Add MS 59637, Correspondence of the Macmillans, BL.

[77] Letter to George Lillie Craik from Philip George Hamerton, 19th July 1880; Letter to Frederick Macmillan from Philip George Hamerton 31st August 1881; Macmillan Correspondence with Philip George Hamerton, Add MS 55225, BL

The rules of the Garrick in the 1880s state that non-members could dine at the club on the invitation of a member, and the member had to be present.[78] Alexander had a membership at the time as confirmed by the Garrick membership records. John Morley, Lawrence Alma Tadema and Matthew Arnold previously held memberships but had resigned some time before this dinner had taken place.[79] Due to the number of signatures on the card it is likely that the dinner had been held in the small dining room, and this would have been an ideal function room for socialising and discussing business as it was a more private location.[80]

Although this dinner was a social function, thrown in honour of a new publication, from Alexander's perspective this dinner may have also been to socialise with his authors and team. Craik and Morley worked with a range of Macmillan authors and the house had been Lowell's publishers in Britain since 1864, and he was also a contributor to the *Macmillan's Magazine*.[81] Matthew Arnold was also a regular contributor to the *Macmillan's Magazine* during the last years of his life. He had become a popular figure due to his criticism and reform of the education system in England, and he was usually invited to make speeches and dine with the influential people of the late Victorian era.[82] Arnold wrote a letter to his son on 3rd December 1880 outlining that the following week he would be dining at the Garrick in order to meet a number of authors.[83]

---

[78] Confirmed by the archivist at the Garrick.
[79] Confirmed by the Garrick archivist through email, 18th September 2015
[80] Location of the dinner in the small dining room suggested by the archivist at the Garrick.
[81] Worth, *Macmillan's Magazine: 1859-1907; "No Flippancy Or Abuse Allowed"*, 21
[82] Ibid. p.153; Stefan Collini, "Arnold, Matthew (1822-1888)," Online edition ed., *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[83] George William Erskine Russell, *Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848-1888* (New York, London: Macmillan and Co. , 1895), 215-216

Eugénie Hamerton writes that her husband's reputation and popularity increased rapidly due to the publication which was 'universally admired and praised', but he decided to keep away from his burgeoning celebrity 'only accepting invitations from his friends and publishers', which in this instance was a book launch party at the Garrick.[84] The gentlemen's clubs of the Victorian era were one of the most utilised channels for self-promotion, as in some cases being invited as a guest to a club was a mark of social prestige.[85] When popular individuals were seen dining at prominent clubs, sometimes the 'gossip' would spread around the literary community through to some extent within the gossip pages in the literary and general topic periodicals.[86] For instance the elite social paper the *Court Circular* had a weekly column in the 1880s entitled 'Club and Social Gossip' written by a 'man-about-town'.[87] Gossip, speculation and commentary about club life was a topic of great interest in the press in the Victorian era, demonstrated by an array of articles, columns and club histories published in leading journals such as *The Literary Gazette*, *The Athenaeum* and *Fraser's Magazine*. Unfortunately for the purposes of this research this particular meeting was not commented on in the leading periodicals.

The menu card, although kept by the Garrick archivist as an example of the routines of club life from the nineteenth century, provided the foundation of a case study into the social and professional networking habits of the men who worked in the Victorian publishing industry. Yet the story of the source goes beyond a

---

[84] Hamerton and Hamerton, *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834-1858, And A Memoir By His Wife 1858-1894*, 437

[85] Amy Milne-Smith, "A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880–1914," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006), 805

[86] Laurel Brake, "Writing, Cultural Production, and the Periodical Press in the Nineteenth Century," in *Writing and Victorianism*, ed. J. B. Bullen (Essex: Longmans, 1997), 56

[87] Milne-Smith, "Club Talk: Gossip, Masculinity and Oral Communities in Late Nineteenth-Century London", 90

demonstration of practices, as this menu card has emerged to literally have two faces. In her memoir, Eugénie Hamerton reproduces a facsimile of the menu card which she mentions was given to her by Alma Tadema, who believed that she should receive a 'souvenir' of the evening and told her husband to "present her with this (the menu card) in [his] name".[88] She discusses that the card was given to her, and at the time of writing was still in her possession. I have included a facsimile of the menu card held by the Garrick, which although shows identical signatures situated in the same place on both cards, the one published in the autobiography has an illustration done by Alma Tadema.[89] The card at the Garrick does not show any signs of images being erased or modified in any way, yet it is intriguing that there appears to be two separate cards almost identical in content.

Alexander was known by his friends and family to have attendees at a dinner sign the menu card they were using, a tradition he often used at the Garrick.[90] Furthermore, this routine was usual for dining guests, as the card was signed for commemorative reasons.[91] As the original reason why the Garrick Club kept the card has been lost, it seems as though the story behind the source may not be uncovered. As signing menu cards was a common practice, it could be argued that potentially there are hundreds of menu cards that the Garrick or previous members may have kept. However, the two cards are so similar it is difficult to confirm that these were indeed two separate cards as the placement of the signatures and the

---

[88] Hamerton and Hamerton, *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834-1858, And A Memoir By His Wife 1858-1894*, 437

[89] See Appendix B for facsimile of the menu card published in Hamerton and Hamerton, *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834-1858, And A Memoir By His Wife 1858-1894*, 436

[90] Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 266-267

[91] This was confirmed to me by the Garrick Archivist.

flourish of the handwriting appear to be exact replicas of each other. Eugénie's account of the dinner documents the story as to why the source exists, however the legacy of the source has been lost as the reasons as to why it was kept by Garrick is not known. The attendees at this dinner at the time were influential, popular and respected members of the literary community, and today their legacy from their contribution to literature and publishing makes this rare source a valuable depiction of cultural practices in the gentlemen's clubs of the Victorian era.

Conclusion

After a long and successful career in publishing Alexander died in 1896 aged 78. His obituary in *The Athenaeum* highlighted his many successes in the field including his tenure as publisher for Oxford University Press, his venture into the American market, the successful enterprise of *Macmillan's Magazine* and the foundation of one of the leading scientific journals *Nature*, which is still published today.[92] Exploring how Alexander Macmillan reacted to competition and changes in the marketplace demonstrates that although Macmillan was not highly innovative with business practices, he exemplified how an organisation can draw on different practices from the field and utilise them for their strategic advantage. In contrast to Longman and their conscious effort to challenge how business was done, the Macmillans imitated others, picking the most exploited and established practices. The modern Macmillan publishing house has a publishing list in every sector and this 'blueprint' was constructed through the vision of its founders.

---

[92] "Mr. A. Macmillan," *The Athenaeum*, 1st February 1896; "Mr. A. Macmillan." *The Athenaeum*, 1st February 1896, 150

Literary Businesses

The Macmillan brothers were passionate about literature and believed that a house should publish only what they believed to be quality literature and this ethos was reflected in the care and attention they gave their publications. The house continued to grow throughout the Victorian era and is now internationally renowned with offices in Europe, America and Asia, and controls a host of imprints ranging from fiction to education to academic, and is the last house in Britain that has carried forward its family name from the Victorian era. The appeal of Macmillan titles to the mass market boosted their influence in the field, and by the end of the century they were also considered one of the Leviathans of the Victorian age. The influence of these houses can be seen by how their business practices still dominate the industry today, and is demonstrated by how later generations of the Macmillans used this to institutionalise new practices in accordance with how they wanted the field to progress, such as the NBA that is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 7
Protecting the Future:
Professional Associations and
the Net Book Agreement

Two of the most prominent associations that helped shape the business practices of the publishing industry were formed in the nineteenth century by influential publishers and authors. The Publishers' Association, which will be referred to as the Association throughout this chapter, was founded in 1896 by some of England's most popular publishing houses. Preceding the Association was the Society of Authors (referred to as the Society throughout this chapter), founded in 1884 and was established for struggling authors who aspired to make a living from their publications. It became a benchmark by which authors could outwardly display their professionalism, noted by one contributor to the periodical *The Bookman* in 1891 that "the easiest way to become a man of letters is to join the Author's Society. That many know."[1]

These societies were instrumental in professionalising these literary businesses and have grown to become prominent and important organisations in the industry today, acting as the authority in Britain for industry disputes and also for furthering change in the field. This chapter traces the issues leading up to the formation of the professional associations of authors, publishers and booksellers, and why these organisations pushed forward the ideals of some individuals. In particular I analyse the NBA, which exemplified how business practices can be

---

[1] "Another, London," *The Bookman*, October 1891, 28

pushed into the organisational field and govern the behaviour of an industry once accepted and legitimised.

The Professional Association

Various organisational groups in the publishing industry actively sought to raise their profile in order to be perceived as professional in the field. It has been argued from a new institutionalist approach to the professions that the formation of associations is a commonly used practice by individuals to induct a normative pattern within an organisational field.[2] Analysing how groups in a field use the structure of professional associations can illustrate the changes and developments of institutionalisation within that field.[3] In contrast to a trade union, which predominately deals with working and remuneration conditions, professional associations are concerned with furthering the economic and social status of social and organisational groups.[4] Millerson discusses that in the late eighteenth century, professional associations were predominately dining clubs. He comments that although most of these failed by the nineteenth century, these early societies represented attempts of expanding professionalism as they were a means of discussing business and maintaining contact with others in the same industry.[5] Similarly in the case of literary businesses, professional associations were formed in order to instigate change within the field. These associations allowed the different

---

[2] Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations: A Study in Professionalization*, 10; Royston Greenwood, Roy Suddaby, and C. R. Hinings, "Theorizing Change: The Role of the Professional Associations in the Transformation of Institutionalized Fields," *Academy of Management* 45, no. 1 (2002), 61

[3] Muzio, Brock, and Suddaby, "Professions and Institutional Change: Towards an Institutionalist Sociology of the Professions", 700

[4] Millerson, *The Qualifying Associations. A Study in Professionalization*, 14-19

[5] Ibid., 14-19

organisational groups to represent their interests both at the field level and to the wider society.

In the mid-nineteenth century some of the relationships between authors and publishers, and to a certain extent booksellers, had been tenuous and fractious. Decades of lax protection for copyright, high levels of price-based competition between booksellers, and weak contractual arrangements between authors and publishers had led to distrust between these groups and subsequently caused the formation of the two leading professional associations in the field; the Publishers' Association and the Society of Authors. Some publishers wanted unification against the booksellers that challenged their pricing strategies and similarly authors sought a solidified standing against the publishers, campaigning for increased remuneration for their work. My examination of the conflict between these parties begins with a discussion of the Society of Authors, demonstrating how the formation of the organisation helped to institutionalise the business practices of authors in the Victorian period.

The Fight for Authors Rights: The Origin of the Society of Authors

From its formation in the nineteenth century, the primary focus of the Society of Authors is to protect "the rights and further the interests of authors".[6] Sir Walter Besant helped to found the Society of Authors and he passionately believed that all authors should be able to make a comfortable salary from their publications, as argued in his famous lecture *The Art of Fiction* delivered at the Royal Institution in London in 1884. He commented that society had forgotten the artistic talents of the

---

[6] "The Society of Authors," http://www.societyofauthors.org/

novelist, claiming that "the art of novel-writing has always been, by the general mass, undervalued…no one ever hears of honours being bestowed upon novelists", referring to the 'distinctions' granted to men of science and those in the professions.[7] He strongly believed that authorship was a profession "and it was possible to unite its members, as those called to the Bar are united, into a guild or company governed by its own laws".[8]

He was not the first to attempt bringing authors together to change the status of authorship. In an article written by Besant published in *The Contemporary Review*, he writes that he:

> "Was able to secure the whole of the papers which ha[d] been preserved, and [he] proposed to place on record…the story of a movement begun before the time was right, conducted without an appreciation of what was wanted, and ending in failure."[9]

This article narrates the foundation and failure of the British Society of Authors in 1843 whose founders, including Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer (1803–1873) and Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), met in regard to establishing a professional association for authors. This was an informal meeting and documentation of minutes were not preserved.[10] However the second meeting was recorded on 8th April 1843 and attendees were popular authors including Charles Dickens and William Makepeace

---

[7] Walter Besant, *The Art of Fiction. A lecture ... With notes and additions* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1884), 5

[8] — — —, "The First Society of British Authors (1843)," *The Contemporary Review*, July 1889, 15

[9] Ibid., 10

[10] Ibid., 12

Thackeray.[11] This meeting involved the attendees agreeing to lobby support of authors from all over Britain and the prospectus for the governance of the society was laid out. Besant writes that the prospectus was "the feeblest and most futile that was ever put together by any body of oppressed and indignant mortals".[12] He argued that the committee could not do enough for its members as it did not have a clear direction, and compared it to being no different to authors making each other's acquaintance at the various literary clubs of the day such as the Athenaeum, the Garrick and the Clarence.[13]

Some authors had been displeased with their lack of standing in the publishing industry. For example, one contributor wrote in *The Examiner* calling in favour of an "Association to Protect the Rights of Authors" in order to deal with the "evils that overtake an author in the exercise of his profession".[14] Dickens had been one of the most vocal authors regarding the lack of international copyright protection, displayed most vehemently on his tour of the United States in 1842 condemning how piracy was rife across the Atlantic, referring to copyright law in America as "unjust and iniquitous".[15] Dickens would have been an ideal person to bring together authors to join the Society. However, according to Besant, with its lack of clear direction Dickens stated that it would "work in theory but not in practice" and ultimately withdrew his support of the organisation alongside Thomas Carlyle – one of the founding members – and the society was disbanded later that

---

[11] Ibid., 13
[12] Ibid., 13
[13] Ibid., 14
[14] "The Rights of Authors," *The Examiner*, 20th March 1875.
[15] Charles Dickens, "International Copyright," *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, 23rd July 1842, 59

year.[16] Besant does not cite where he obtained his information, and the meeting of the Society of Authors was not mentioned in Dickens's published letters nor is it mentioned in Forster's biography of Dickens.

Besant's article published in 1889 looks back at some of the failings of the British Society of Authors. Drawing on letters from the founding committee and members, Besant discussed that unlike the Society of 1843, the Society of 1884 was helping authors and was building on the plea for a practical association that had their best interests at heart. Throughout his article Besant is critical of the 1843 Society, commenting that the founding members had the best intentions yet their lack of direction hindered how much they could help their members. By the time the first Society was disbanded it had a membership of one hundred authors, yet crucially it still lacked the support from the leading authors at the time, with notable writers like William Wordsworth (1770–1850), Robert Browning (1812–1889) and Alfred Tennyson withholding their support.[17]

This could be deemed as the fundamental reason for the failure of the first Society, especially as strong influence and strong connections with other powerful individuals in society was needed in order to influence copyright reform in parliament. Lack of support can also be seen by the absence of discussion about the formation of the Society in the literary periodicals. Besant comments that not a single paragraph was dedicated to advertising the Society in *The Athenaeum* neither the *Literary Gazette*.[18] Charles Wentworth Dilke (1789–1864) was the presiding editor of *The Athenaeum* at the time and was one of the first members of the Society yet did not

---

[16] Besant, "The First Society of British Authors (1843)", 16
[17] Ibid., 16
[18] Ibid., 18

aid its cause by advertising it in his newspaper.[19] Dilke's actions imply that he may have been unconfident in regards to the reception of the society by the literary community, especially as he may not have wanted to alienate publishers who generated revenue for the periodical through their purchase of advertising space.

In comparison to the first Society of Authors in 1843, Sir Walter Besant was able to garner prolific support for his cause, an example of how powerful individuals in a field can push forward their goals through their immediate network. Besant was a clubbable man, a respected author and had friends in politics, academia and business – strategic friendships that he could use to his advantage. The first committee meeting of the Society of Authors met in the Chambers of Mr. Bapiste Scoone in Garrick Street; this was an informal meeting and minutes were not taken.[20] The meeting was led by Besant and was attended by twelve authors who, although were not prominent within literature, were Besant's friends (predominately from the Savile Club) who believed in his cause.[21] They advocated that authors need to be further educated in regards to how to make the most of their intellectual property, and in particular needed to understand their contracts with publishers and what constituted reasonable clauses.[22] Besant had been vocal about the lack of international copyright protection in the press and one of his first aims for the Society was to be committed to consolidating international copyright alongside

---

[19] Ibid., 19

[20] From Sir Walter Besant's Speech at the 1892 AGM of the Society of Authors, MS 56869, Society of Authors Archive, BL

[21] This meeting is detailed in Bonham-Carter, *Authors by Profession: From the Introduction of Printing until the Copyright Act 1911*, Vol. 1, 119

[22] − − −, *Authors by Profession. Vol. 2, From the Copyright Act 1911 Until the End of 1981* (London: Bodley Head, 1984), 30

clarifying publishers' agreements, and defending authors' financial interests in the increasingly complex publishing market.[23]

The Society was registered with Companies House on 30th June 1884[24] and the first prospectus was published stating that the Society would aim towards the following objectives:

1. The maintenance, the definition and the defence of literary property

2. The consolidation and amendment of the laws of domestic copyright

3. The promotion of international copyright[25]

In February 1885, the committee held their third meeting and took offices in the second floor of a house in Ceil Street, Strand. By this time the Society had accumulated one hundred members, with the majority agreeing to pay life membership fees in order to cover the initial expenses and running costs of the Society.[26] Although the momentum was growing, the Society was met with some opposition from publishers who felt threatened from the prospect of authors collectively rallying against the way they did business. One publisher Andrew Tuer (1838–1900) attempted to join the Society as a means of being privy to the debates between authors. He sent them a guinea for membership, only to have it returned

---

[23] Peter D. McDonald, *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 14-15
[24] Confirmed by the Companies House register, London
[25] From Sir Walter Besant's Speech at the 1892 AGM of the Society of Authors, MS 56869, Society of Authors Archive, BL
[26] Ibid., 10

and his application for membership denied.[27] As a frequent contributor to the press he made his dissatisfaction with the decision of the secretary well known to his peers in a letter to *The Athenaeum.*[28]

In comparison to its predecessor, the Society of Authors was more successful in gaining a foothold in the industry because popular authors outwardly demonstrated their support. Alfred Tennyson, who had initially declined to support the first Society of Authors in 1843, agreed to become the first President of the 1884 Society on persuasion by Besant.[29] Tennyson's standing in the literary community was then paramount as he had been offered the position of poet laureate in November 1850 by Prince Albert (1819–1861) and had accepted a seat in the House of Lords in March 1884.[30] William Henry Smith, son of the founder of railway bookshops, also accepted the position as the first Lord of the Treasury.[31]

In 1887 Besant presented a paper entitled *The Maintenance of Literary Property* at the conference of the Society of Authors. He believed that the interests of the distributors of literature (the publishers) were purely commercial and they operated as a business as opposed to the producer (the author) whose function was purely intellectual. Although, this comes across as a contradiction as he is an advocate for authors treating their literary property as commodities. He comments that when finished with their work producers would always be faced with the practical question of how to dispose of their produce and "how best and most profitably to

---

[27] Andrew W. Tuer, "The Incorporated Society of Authors," *The Athenaeum*, 11th October 1884.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 138
[30] Ricks, "Tennyson, Alfred, first Baron Tennyson (1809-1892)."
[31] Ibid

invest the fruits of his labour".[32] He maintained that authors should not be afraid to be compensated for their work, commenting that Sir Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray and George Eliot did not shy away from accepting payment for their literature and did not despise the monetary value of their copyrights.[33] Besant was most sceptical of the half profits system. He noted that some publishers would 'massage' the figures by entering a cost of production on the accounting record of the book, without acknowledging whether they received a discount from the supplier. He gives the example that printing could be on the production account as a debit of £100 although the publisher paid only £70 due to his discount, therefore unbeknown to the author, the publisher would make an additional £30 as he would still claim for 50% of the profits from the sale of the title.[34] Because of this, Besant was an advocate for the royalty system, as he lobbied authors not to sell their copyrights outright unless it was commissioned for a newspaper for example, and he also encouraged authors to use a literary agent.

Besant favoured this system as this is how he chose to do business, demonstrating that he pushed forward a practice to suit how he wanted the field to operate. In 1869 James Rice (1844–1882), author and editor of the periodical *Once a Week*, published an unacknowledged article and according to Besant it was, "printed badly, uncorrected and full of mistakes."[35] The article was withdrawn and Rice made a public apology yet asked Besant for more contributions to his periodical. Rice had devised a plot for a novel and he wanted Besant to contribute, by

[32] Besant, "The Maintenance of Literary Property", 9

[33] From Sir Walter Besant's Speech at the 1892 AGM of the Society of Authors, MS 56869, Society of Authors Archive, BL, 13

[34] Besant, "The Maintenance of Literary Property", 55-60

[35] ———, *Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant* ([S.l.]: Hutchinson, 1902), 169

rearranging the novel into a set of works to be serialised. This collaboration became *Ready Money Mortiboy* published in *Once a Week* between January and June 1872 and was issued as a three volume novel later that year.

In his autobiography Besant commented that he was "extremely averse to making terms and arrangements for [himself]", and so the collaboration between him and Rice allowed him to be free of "the worry of business arrangements", confirming that Rice performed a job similar to that of a literary agent; however, he did not refer to him as his literary agent but instead as his *'collaborateur'*.[36] Besant narrates that he had been often asked to explain his "method of collaboration" with Rice and he says that they worked "without any binding conditions…[and] each man was free to carry on his own literary work".[37] Besant's explanation suggests that Rice worked as an editor, but this 'collaboration' crossed into what would now be understood as the role of a literary agent. Rice continued to commission work from Besant and the partnership lasted to Rice's death in 1882.[38] He then employed A. P. Watt as his agent in 1883 and also asked Watt to act as the literary agent for the Society. Watt declined the offer, but his reasons are not documented in the Society's archive. However, Besant continued to recommend Watt through the Society as the agent of choice that all authors should employ.[39] As he had worked with an agent and found it to be a profitable partnership he encouraged his peers to do the same, pushing his practices into the wider organisational field.

---

[36] Ibid., 187-188

[37] Ibid., 187-188

[38] Ibid., 188-189

[39] Meeting from 14th February 1887 referenced in Sir Walter Besant's Speech at the 1892 AGM of the Society of Authors, MS 56869, Society of Authors Archive, BL, 115

The Society still wanted an agent in-house and William Morris Colles (1865–1926), a barrister who had offices in the same building as the Society at 4 Portugal Street, was then appointed as Secretary to what at first was called the Authors' Agency.[40] This was later renamed the Authors' Syndicate and had the primary function to deal with the business elements of authorship, and where necessary provided advice in regards to publishing agreements, collecting royalties and to generally relieve authors "of the trouble of examining business details".[41] This attitude towards the business of publishing was the primary function that A. P. Watt advertised was the strength of his agency, therefore placing him in direct competition with the Authors' Syndicate. With authors gaining a stronger foothold, there were further opportunities for literary agents and by 1915, almost 30 years after the Society was founded, literary agencies listed in the London Post Office Director had gone from two to fifteen.[42]

After his retirement as Chairman of the Society in 1892, Besant reflected that the Society in the late nineteenth century had been a movement that had revolutionised the production of literature, and for the first time in history authors were "the masters and administrators of their own literary property".[43] Besant challenged the way that publishers practiced their business, in particular bringing the debate to the foreground about the half profits system that was gradually being phased out towards the late nineteenth century. Besant's criticism of business

---

[40] Minutes of Meeting 23rd October 1890, MS 56869, Society of Authors Archive, BL

[41] Appendix Sir Walter Besant's Speech at the 1892 AGM of the Society of Authors, MS 56869, Society of Authors Archive, BL, 116

[42] "Post Office London Directory, 1915 [Part 3: Commercial & Professional l Directory]," (London: Kelly's Directories LTD, 1915).

[43] Walter Besant, *The Pen and the Book* (London: Thomas Burleigh, 1899), 21

practices and the support he had from his peers led to the Longmans being the first of the Victorian leading houses to side with Besant for transparency in the industry. Charles James Longman (1852–1934), managing partner in the firm at the time, wrote to Besant stating that Longmans "will adopt the practice of giving vouchers for accounts" and Besant referred to this as an 'honourable example' that he hoped others would follow.[44] This demonstrates how practices were manoeuvred as those with significant influence adapted how business was done in order to suit their own goals.

Analysing the foundation of the Society of Authors is an example of how practices can become accepted and then legitimised. Besant's collaboration with Rice was profitable, leading him to become a popular author, and due to Besant publicly discussing their working relationship, others could see the outcome of the "successful partnership with James Rice"[45], therefore reinforcing that the way he chose to do business could be potentially beneficial. Also it was known in the literary community in the late 1830s that Forster acted as literary adviser to Charles Dickens, and prior to him Bulwer, demonstrating that successful novelists were receiving aide with their literary affairs.[46] Furthermore, as Watt was in a prominent position also working on behalf of well-known authors, and being the friend and agent of one of the Society's founders, Besant used this to push forward what he believed should be the practice of all authors; they should all use an agent.

---

[44] — — —, "The Maintenance of Literary Property", 61; A voucher is a detailed statement made on the recordings of different transactions, showing the debits and credits of cash, cheques, invoices etc.; V. K. Goyal, *Financial Accounting*, Second ed. (New Dehli: Excel Books, 2007), 50

[45] "Besant and Rice," *The Saturday Review*, 23rd July 1887, 132

[46] See Davies, *John Forster: A Literary Life*.

Besant's position within the organisational field helped his cause and because he was able to persuade influential authors to be a part of the Society, this increased memberships, and consequently members were encouraged to adopt the practices of this professional association. Belonging to the Society reinforced these values, as authors pledged their membership their behaviour became governed, and subsequently the practices of the Society became accepted and legitimised. Although it is not a requirement to belong to the Society of Authors to be a published and successful author, the ethos of how to go about being a professional author instilled by the Society in some instances can still be seen today. The Society continues to offer services on finding representation and contract clause vetting, they also offer special rates to an exclusive members club in London that accepts both men and women.[47]

This section has discussed what Suddaby refers to as the 'institutional story' of the Society of Authors, in particular examining the reasons why in 1884 it was able to establish a foothold in the industry in comparison to its predecessor, which in 1843 did not last a year.[48] The key difference was that leading figures were persuaded by Besant into prominent positions of the 1884 Society, and his actions here caused Feather to refer to him as a "master of propaganda".[49] The Society and Besant's views were not challenged with enough force by publishers, who in this context may have put forward strong objection to change, as the influence they had in the field was being destabilised. Instead the practices to an extent were accepted,

---

[47] Confirmed on the website of the Society of Authors, www.societyofauthors.org [accessed 17th March 2014]
[48] Suddaby, "Challenges for Institutional Theory", 16
[49] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 138

as demonstrated by the Longmans' willingness to be more transparent with their authors in regards to accounting procedures. Whether other publishers imitated the Longmans' procedures is not clear, but the strength of the Society in the field can be seen by how some other publishers dealt with their authors. For instance there are letters in the business archive of the Macmillan publishing house, which demonstrate how they had to change their business dealings with an author because they were supported by the Society.[50] This is an example of how organisations can push their practices into the field, and due to their dominance can force other organisations to comply, putting them in an advantageous position. Another example of this can be seen in the NBA, a treaty instigated by Frederick Macmillan in order to control the prices of books in the marketplace, which is discussed in the next section.

Retail Price Maintenance: The Origins of the Netbook Agreement

Although the NBA was not created until 1900, previously there had been decades of failed attempts and discussion that led up to its formation, and this section details the history of this now defunct agreement. Although the NBA is concerned with booksellers and the bookselling trade, it is an important factor in analysing how business practices developed in the publishing industry. The agreement became a significant factor in how books were sold to the public and how royalty agreements were made between authors and publishers, as the agreement became a base on

---

[50] For example see letter from W. M. Colles to Frederick Macmillan, 28th September 1897, Letter #8, Add MS 54190, Correspondence of Macmillan, BL.

which to base the royalty scale.[51] Booksellers and publishers approached the pricing of literature from different perspectives and consequently they had conflicting interests, with some booksellers pushing for free trade whereas an amalgamation of publishers and booksellers argued for retail price maintenance (RPM). The Net Book Agreement is the product of which side won the argument of free trade versus price maintenance, and demonstrates how those with the most influence can push forward favourable business practices to serve their own cause.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the bookselling trade faced a predicament, mainly caused by the different sales channels that had been established in the early decades of the century. Publishers had become increasingly interested in new ways to supply a growing market and they wanted to appeal to different types of readers predominately through the strategy of offering literature at affordable prices. This included part publication through serialisation in newspapers and magazines, and by supplying novels in three volume parts, which was the favoured format of the circulating libraries.[52] Although these sales channels were profitable for publishers and allowed readers more choice when purchasing, it could leave the bookseller out of the loop, as readers purchasing through circulating libraries, newspapers and magazines could 'bypass' the bookshop.[53] This led to a cash flow problem for some booksellers and instigated price-based competition between these businesses,

---

[51] Bonham-Carter, *Authors by Profession: From the Introduction of Printing until the Copyright Act 1911*, Vol. 1, 180

[52] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 123

[53] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 39

"offering discounts that other traders could not match".[54] This friction caused a group of booksellers to initiate an agreement in the early nineteenth century with publishers, in which the publishers would fix a retail price but would sell stock to the booksellers at a discount. This would give a specific profit margin to the bookseller, as they had agreed to sell the printed work at no less than the retail price, consequently protecting the value of the title in the marketplace and their profits.[55]

The major publishers and booksellers of 1829 came together to develop bookselling regulations, however this proved to be almost impossible to regulate and enforce and by 1830 the system had dissolved.[56] This was followed by a second attempt by the Booksellers Association[57], which had grown out of the committee that had devised the previous bookselling regulations, however this feat was again to be short lived and broke down in 1848.[58] Booksellers then decided that the failed attempts at regulation hinted that there should be a free trade in books, causing some booksellers to move away from regulation, instead opting to lobby for free trade. However, there were others on the opposite aide of the argument who supported RPM, and they put forward a set of terms and conditions to those in favour of free trade. These were published in an article published in *The Leader* in 1852 stating that:

---

[54] Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*, 52; Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 100; Stevenson, *Book Makers: British Publishing in the Twentieth Century*, 2

[55] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 100

[56] Ibid., 100; Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*, 52

[57] This association is not to be confused with the Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland founded in 1895 who now refer to themselves as the Booksellers' Association (of the United Kingdom & Ireland), The Booksellers Association, "About Us," http://www.booksellers.org.uk/aboutus.

[58] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 101

"All booksellers keeping a shop in London, or within 12 miles of the General Post Office are to become members of the association, and are to receive a ticket entitling them to buy new books from the publishers; that the publishers of new books specify a retail price for each copy; that they sell copies to the retail booksellers at around 30 per cent under that price; that they require an engagement from the retail booksellers not to allow to their customers a larger discount than 10 per cent from the retail price; that without this engagement, the retail dealers cannot be supplied with copies of new books; and for that breach of this engagement they forfeit their tickets, and are cut off from any further dealings in new books with the publishers."[59]

The Booksellers Association of 1852 included representatives of leading publishing houses such as William Longman (1813–1877), who acted as Chairman, John Murray III (1808–1892), either George (1801–1858) or Francis (1805–1885) Rivington – the article does not state which member of the family was present – and Henry Bohn.[60] Their proposal was to protect the profit margins of booksellers, and they argued that RPM would ensure that booksellers would always receive a 20 per cent profit margin, however this suggestion was opposed by those pushing for free trade. These booksellers wanted to ensure they could achieve high volumes of sales by undercutting their competition, arguing that if all booksellers were bound to sell at the same price and could only offer identical discounts to their competitors, how

---

[59] "The Bookselling Question: The Arbitration," *The Leader*, 22nd May 1852, 480
[60] Ibid., 479

could they compete in such a market? The opposition was led by the booksellers Messrs Bickers and Bush, referred to as the representatives of the undersellers, who were content to operate on a narrower profit margin in order to boost their turnover.[61]

During the talks of 1852, those opposed to RPM argued that free trade brought down the price of books to the consumer and therefore boosted the circulation of titles in the marketplace. In addition they argued in reference to the bookselling regulations that: "the book trade could not flourish while embarrassed by such restrictions."[62] However, one journalist believed that allowing books to be "sold in one street at one price and at another price in another [street]" would cause problems, as the "public would not be confident in the value of literature and the trade would be thrown into confusion."[63] In agreement with this position, the committee gathered together to arbitrate the opposing parties ruled against the Booksellers Association and its proposal deeming that "the regulations [were] unreasonable and inexpedient".[64] This meeting was led by Lord Campbell (1779–1861), a distinguished lawyer and politician, and his ruling led the Booksellers Association to be disbanded in 1852 and free trade was permitted to resume.[65] Booksellers enjoyed the lack of regulation as it allowed them to undercut their rivals, although this proved to be detrimental to many of the smaller businesses. Books were being sold cheaply despite retaining their wholesale price from the publishers

---

[61] Ibid., 479
[62] Ibid., 480
[63] "The Bookselling System," *The Examiner*, 17th April 1852, 250
[64] "The Bookselling Question: The Arbitration", 480
[65] "Authors, Publishers, and Booksellers," *The Critic*, 1st June 1852.

and this led to many booksellers having to declare bankruptcy due to heavy cash flow problems.[66]

Underselling was re-addressed in the industry almost half a century after the initial development of bookselling regulations, and was again led by some of London's most influential publishers. The revival of the 1852 attempt to regulate prices was led by Frederick Macmillan, son of Daniel Macmillan and part of the managing team of the Macmillan publishing house. Macmillan posed options to his peers in order to appeal to the different organisational groups including authors. Macmillan had found the decision by Lord Campbell in 1852 to be a "selfish and narrow minded stance" in regards to the arbitration, and he believed that resurrecting the practice of net books would be welcomed by the industry.[67] His view in regards to underselling was similar to that of his uncle Alexander Macmillan, who also had been opposed to those lowering the value and prices of books in the market.[68] Firstly, Frederick presented the option to publishers and booksellers who wished to trade on RPM terms. They would voluntarily enter into a NBA, by which 'net books' were subject to be sold at the published price and no less. Alternatively, Macmillan proposed that 'subject books' were eligible for discount and no regulations could be imposed regarding their price. Macmillan argued that

---

[66] ———, *A History of British Publishing*, 101

[67] Letter to George Norton Longman from Frederick Macmillan, 6th June 1894, MS 1393 Part II 11/15, Records of Longman Group, Reading

[68] As outlined in a letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, MP, 10th April 1868; Graves, *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*, 287

this method was favourable as it allowed publishers and booksellers to choose how their books were sold.[69]

In order to stimulate interest and address issues that had also been circulating in the periodicals regarding 'the bookselling question', in 1890 Macmillan published a letter in *The Bookseller* entitled *A Remedy for Underselling*.[70] This letter was accompanied by a printed slip encouraging publishers and booksellers to offer their opinion on whether they would like to enter into the voluntary agreement of the net book system (NBS). Joseph Whitaker (1820–1895), editor of *The Bookseller*, wrote in his editorial article that "selling books at published prices has become a myth…an allowance of threepence in the shilling is the universal rule, and anything short of that is an exception."[71] This amounted to a 25 per cent discount, a movement that some were pushing for to be legalised and made standard, a practice that Macmillan was staunchly against and the proposal of the net system moved against this.[72]

Despite the mixed reaction from his peers, Macmillan decided to trial net prices on a book of high quality in order to test whether it would sell due to its 'netness' rather than its quality.[73] He chose *The Principles of Economics* written by Professor Alfred Marshall (1842–1924), a well-known economist and then Professor of Political Economics at Cambridge; Macmillan was sure that the book was to be a

---

[69] Frederick Sir Macmillan and Edward Bell, *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906-1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: including a narrative of the dispute between The Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell* (Glasgow: printed for the author by Robert Maclehose & Co., 1924), 5

[70] Frederick Macmillan, "A Remedy for Underselling," *The Bookseller*, 6th March 1890, LOU. LD65, The Bookseller, BL, 244

[71] Joseph Whitaker, "Editorial Article," *The Bookseller*, 6th March 1890. LOU. LD65, The Bookseller, BL

[71] ibid. LOU. LD65, The Bookseller, BL

[72] Macmillan and Bell, *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906-1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: including a narrative of the dispute between The Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell*.

[73] Ibid., 14

market leader in the literature of Economics.[74] However, it has been noted that Macmillan's choice is surprising considering the topic of the book, and also that Marshall was strongly opposed to restrictive practices and was not in support of the NBS.[75] Macmillan and Marshall had initially disagreed over price, as Macmillan wanted to set a higher price of 18 shillings as it was a quality academic book. However Marshall did not want to alienate his readers – primarily students – who he deemed would not easily be able to afford such a price for an academic book.[76]

After haggling it was decided the price should be 16 shillings. Yet when Macmillan proposed that Marshall's book be the test for new the net system, he decreased the price to 12 shillings 6 pence, which essentially was the retail price less 25 per cent discount, the practice that some booksellers were attempting to legalise.[77] Therefore Macmillan was proposing a price that buyers would have been used to, but instead of advertising a price and allowing a discount, the price was set at the lower end of the spectrum that most buyers could afford; Macmillan may have done this in order to get the public used to buying at the published retail price. In July 1890 *The Principles of Economics* was published and was met with poor sales, as many booksellers boycotted stocking the book in opposition to the net system, and they also threatened to boycott any other title that had these regulations imposed on them.[78] However, Macmillan claimed he had been ready for this and was able to douse the fire of unsupportive booksellers by proudly displaying his net book with

---

[74] Ibid., 14

[75] C. W. Guillebaud, "The Marshall-Macmillan Correspondence Over the Net Book System," *The Economic Journal* 75, no. 299 (1965), 518

[76] Ibid., 519

[77] Macmillan and Bell, *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906-1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: including a narrative of the dispute between The Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell*, 15

[78] Ibid., 16

the leading booksellers in London, Cambridge and Glasgow. These were close friends that supported his views and had the strength of reputation in the industry to coerce doubting booksellers to stock *The Principles of Economics*.[79] Macmillan's support demonstrates that due to his position in the industry he was able to instigate a practice. Similarly to Sir Walter Besant, although Macmillan was not innovative with the system, it was the strength of his ties that allowed him to use the resources in his network to influence the field.

Echoing the terms proposed in the failed 1852 attempt of RPM, he also stated that he would refuse to sell net books to any bookseller that insisted on discounting.[80] The first victims to be cut off were Messrs E. & J. Stoneham who outwardly discounted Macmillan's net books, irrespective of the regulations, and found their account was promptly closed. As Macmillan was one of the leading houses at the time, Messrs Stoneham could not afford to estrange themselves and ultimately they were forced to comply with the net system or faced going out of business altogether.[81] They outwardly showed their disproval in *The Bookman* in 1892, stating that net prices should only be imposed on luxury titles that had a limited print run as they would be collectors' items, however they still adhered to the rules of the net system.[82] Macmillan sought further reinforcement by targeting the main wholesalers of his titles, Messrs Simpkin, Marshall and Co., who agreed not to supply any bookseller who intended on discounting, or those who had been

---

[79] Ibid., 16
[80] Ibid., 23
[81] Ibid., 16
[82] "The Net System," *The Bookman*, February 1892.

blacklisted by the Macmillans.[83] In 1894, Frederick also enlisted the support of Charles James Longman as he was sure he could get the NBS supported in the industry if he had Longman's help, especially as Charles's father William had been involved with the Booksellers' Association in 1852.[84]

Being one of the leading houses, Macmillan could utilise the strength of his business to manoeuvre the direction of the industry to his advantage. He had strong influence and numerous ties, and furthermore the quality of literary titles produced by Macmillan was well respected and sought after by the buying public. Therefore Macmillan was able to instigate practices that suited his business, forcing other businesses with less influence to comply otherwise they would not be able to compete. The introduction of the NBS became cemented as an industry practice when in January 1895 a meeting was held at Stationers' Hall, and the Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland was formed.[85] The first general meeting laid out the new constitution of the association, including a rule which stated that "every member pledges himself to maintain net prices for all books published on the net system…and to limit the discount upon books issued on the old terms to 25 per cent off published price."[86] The minutes confirm that the Honorary Secretary Thomas

[83] ———, *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906-1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: including a narrative of the dispute between The Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell*, 17; also documented in a draft announcement by Messrs Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co. Limited, MS 1393 Part II 11, Records of Longman Group, Reading

[84] Letter to George Norton Longman from Frederick Macmillan, 28th May 1894, MS 1393 Part II 11/12, Records of Longman Group, Reading

[85] This organisation was an expansion of the London Booksellers Society, and now is referred to as the Booksellers' Association (of the United Kingdom and Ireland), The Booksellers Association, "About Us"

[86] Minutes of the first General Meeting were published in "The Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland ", *The Bookseller*, 6th February 1895. LOU. LD65, The Bookseller, BL, 122

Burleigh (*flour.* 19th c.) had a conversation with Macmillan prior to the general meeting, where they had:

> "Agreed to adopt a system of invoicing net books at the published price. A trade allowance of 2d. in the shilling will be made when these books are not sold to the public at less than advertised price within six months from this date, or without written permission of Macmillan and Co., the acceptance of the books to be considered as an agreement to these terms."[87]

As the ruling by the Associated Booksellers had been made, it further rooted the NBS into the industry and Macmillan's proposal was upheld, as he was supported by individuals and now most importantly by the organisation that governed the book trade – a demonstration of how professional associations can build practices into the wider organisational field.

I have discussed throughout this section the opinions and narratives from those involved during the time of the 'discount question'. Predominately these articles were drawn from periodicals, but one of the most valuable sources regarding this topic is Frederick Macmillan's book privately printed in 1924, a memoir detailing how the NBA was formed. Macmillan wrote in the preface to the book that he wanted to write this "history for those interested in the matters".[88] Not only has

---

[87] Ibid., 123

[88] Macmillan and Bell, *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906-1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: including a narrative of the dispute between The Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell*, (no page number given).

this publication provided some insight into the debates surrounding the NBS, it also demonstrates that Macmillan wanted to chronicle his involvement with setting up this practice, which at the time of writing had lasted for over 30 years. This publication is a hybrid between a remnant and documentary source, and acts a method of Macmillan securing his legacy in the history of the publishing industry. It is constituted of Macmillan's personal recollections woven in between reprints of letters and newspaper articles, building a story about the origins of the NBS. Macmillan chose the quotes and articles that he believed portrayed the difficulties he encountered, however in order to contextualise his arguments I consulted other articles on the NBS not referenced in his book.[89]

Macmillan's book was written at a time when the NBS had been firmly in place and was being upheld successfully; he was writing from a place of triumph. He could include the voices of opposition in the narrative with full vigour, as he did not need to overshadow the criticism he received. Instead, he makes a point of it by printing letters of strong opposition from individuals, including Messrs Stoneham, to reinforce how he overcame challenges.[90] Here Macmillan documents that the negativity he faced was irrelevant and that his vision was the way forward for the industry. This book is a valuable source as it is evidence of Macmillan's perception of events, and provides an insight into the opinions of the person credited

---

[89] For example see "The Net System," *The Bookman*, March 1892. ibid., 5; Edward North, "Net Prices," *The Athenaeum*, 23rd January 1892; W. Shore, "The Crisis in the Book Market," *Fortnightly Review*, December 1904

[90] Macmillan and Bell, *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906-1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: including a narrative of the dispute between The Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell*, 10

responsible for instigating the NBA.[91] However, it should be noted that his narrative may not reflect how events progressed in their entirety as there was a significant lapse in time after the events, and he may have created a heroic portrayal of his actions, lionising his role in the development of this industry practice.

The NBS then progressed to being a legally binding agreement between publishers and booksellers in 1900, enforcing that booksellers could not sell below the price set by the publisher.[92] Yet over half a century later the constitution of the NBA was assessed by the Restrictive Practices Court in 1962. It was deemed that the agreement was "not detrimental to the consumer" and would continue to protect the profits of booksellers and publishers, therefore the practice was allowed to continue in Britain.[93] However, the publishing industry towards the later part of the twentieth century was changing dramatically with an increase in chain retail booksellers, which included supermarkets who argued that consumers should be allowed to benefit from discounted products.[94] Some publishers like Macmillan and Longman wanted to uphold the agreement as they always had done, however Britain's other major houses including Random House and HarperCollins, alongside retailer WH Smith, decided to initiate large scale discounts on mass market fiction, which triggered the collapse of the agreement.[95]

---

[91] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 102; Simon Eliot, "The British Book Market 1800-1890," in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Oxford Wiley-Blackwell 2009), 298

[92] James Dearnley and John Feather, "The UK Bookselling Trade Without Resale Price Maintenance: An Overview of Change 1995-2001," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (2002), 17

[93] Elaine Ansell, "Some effects of the end of the Net Book Agreement," *New Library World* 99, no. 1144 (1998), 248

[94] Clark and Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, 35-36

[95] Ibid., 36

With the leading houses deciding to move against the practice of RPM it proved difficult for the NBA to be upheld in the industry with force. Publishers with less share of the market followed suit to abandon the NBA in order to compete with the houses that were now offering large discounts. Again there was division in the industry as disagreements arose between publishers and booksellers with those for and against the NBA. The houses that published the significant share of mass market fiction, including HarperCollins and Hodder Headline (now part of Hachette), dictated how the industry should move forward. The Publishers' Association that had worked vigorously to uphold the agreement in the nineteenth century voluntarily suspended the netbook agreement from operation in 1995.[96] It was formally made illegal in 1997 after the case was pushed forward by the Office of Fair Trading, and the Restrictive Practices Court ruled that the NBA was against public interest.[97]

After just over a century of being initiated, the collapse of the NBA signalled how business practices in the publishing industry in some instances need to be adapted or developed in order to move with socio-economic and technological changes. The late twentieth century publishing industry became almost a mirror image of its Victorian predecessor, with some publishers attempting to keep their recommended retail prices high in order to compensate for the discounts expected to be given to booksellers and retailers, as this is a challenge for their profit margins. Consumers now expect heavy discounts for fiction and it is normative practice for

---

[96] Dearnley and Feather, "The UK Bookselling Trade Without Resale Price Maintenance: An Overview of Change 1995-2001",17

[97] Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-first Century*, 52; Dearnley and Feather, "The UK Bookselling Trade Without Resale Price Maintenance: An Overview of Change 1995-2001",17

publishers to offer and account for as much as a 35 per cent discount to their retailing customers such as Amazon and Waterstones.[98]

Discussing the events leading up to the creation of the NBA illustrates how the factors of institutionalisation can significantly influence an organisational field. Through the analysis of historical sources it has been possible to trace the institutional story of how this practice became adopted and legitimised in the publishing industry. Frederick Macmillan took hold of an idea that favoured his business and used his influence to convince his peers that it was best practice. Their agreement led to others with less power in the industry to imitate as they were not in a strong position to oppose these practices, and the most important factor that allowed this practice to stand was the adoption by the Associated Booksellers. As a professional society they governed the behaviour of those who were members, therefore they were forced to comply with Macmillan's net system, a crucial step in legitimising this practice.

Similarly, the abolishment of the NBA further supports my argument as its collapse was also triggered by those who had significant influence in the field. Similar to Macmillan, leading companies in the late twentieth century such as WH Smith and Hodder decided that the agreement was a barrier to their economic opportunity and so broke it down choosing to support free trade as opposed to RPM. They argued that it benefitted the consumer as they were able to receive a discount, although in conjunction free trade supported the strategic ambitions for these publishers and retailers. This is another example of how those with influence

---

[98] Albert N. Greco, Jim Milliot, and Robert M. Wharton, *The Book Publishing Industry*, Third ed. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 23

can dissolve institutionalised processes within a field. The creation and dissolution of the NBA demonstrates how the opinions and actions of influential individuals can instigate and institutionalise behaviours, and adapt systems that they believe are not best practice in order to suit their businesses. Although the NBA was abolished in the late twentieth century, the associations responsible for its establishment are still a strong force in the industry including the Publishers' Association, which was also a product of industry reform in the Victorian era.

Rallying Together: The Origins of the Publishers' Association

The Publishers' Association is the final professional society that is discussed in this chapter, as its formation is intertwined with the creation of the NBA, and furthermore its development details how professional associations legitimise knowledge and practices in the industry. Throughout the 1890s London booksellers had been discussing Macmillan's proposal of the NBS, and gradually they started to agree with his suggestion. They invited their bookselling colleagues from around the country to support the net system and by 1894 they had the support of over a thousand booksellers.[99] By 1895 the Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland was formed, and the NBA had found its support through this organisation.[100] The London publishing houses including Longman, Murray, Bentley and Smith, Elder were invited to a meeting by the booksellers, as they wanted to

---

[99] Document dated 25th April 1894, stating the names of London and country publishers agreeing to "not give away a greater discount than 3d in the 1/-" MS 1393 Part II 11/1, Records of the Longman Group, Reading.

[100] Notice of establishment of the Society of Booksellers sent to Longman Publishing House from E. Gowing-Scopes, 22nd May 1894 regarding the size of markets and various publishing outputs; MS 1393 Part II 11/11, Records of Longman Group, Reading.

coerce these leading houses to adopt the net system and refuse to trade with any bookseller that insisted on heavily discounting books.[101] Approached via letter by W. Gills (*flour.* 19th c.) of the London Bookseller Society, John Murray (1851–1928) was eager not to repeat the failed attempts at collective action against underselling. He wrote to other publishers including Longman, Bentley and Blackwood to discuss the proposal given by the bookseller's in regards to underselling.[102] These publishers alongside other leading houses including Macmillan met informally at Murray's house at 50 Albemarle Street, London in 1894.[103]

Although the initial motivation behind the association was to act as a committee to address the proposal of discounting by the booksellers, it had been noted by publisher William Heinemann that there was a lack of unification in the industry for publishers, as both the authors and booksellers had rallied together to protect their collective interests.[104] In an attempt to document the argument for a Publishers' Association, Heinemann published a volume called *The Hardships of Publishing,* which was a collection of letters sent predominately to *The Athenaeum* and *The Bookman,* as well as letters sent to him personally by publishers, documenting the support for a professional association for publishers.[105] The motivation for this volume would seem that he wanted to highlight that influential persons in the industry were supportive of his call for unification. Only 128 copies of *The Hardships*

---

[101] R. J. L. Kingsford, *The Publishers Association 1896-1946* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 7

[102] Letter to George Norton Longman from John Murray 22nd June 1894; MS 1393 Part II 11/18, Records of Longman Group, Reading

[103] Letter to George Norton Longman from John Murray 10th May 1894; MS 1393 Part II 11/10, Records of Longman Group, Reading

[104] William Heinemann, "The Hardships of Publishing," *The Athenaeum* 3rd December 1892

[105] — — —, *The Hardships of Publishing* (Privately Printed, 1893), 69, the copy referenced is no. 9 of 128 housed at the Mark Longman library, Reading.

of Publishing were privately printed in 1893, and it is likely that these were circulated to those whom he wanted to canvass.[106]

In Heinemann's publication there is a letter written from Frederick Macmillan stating his lack of support for a publishers' association. This stance was inconsistent with how he had previously gone about industry reform, as Macmillan had gone about instigating the NBS by gathering support from his peers and friends. However, in Heinemann's suggestion of forming a collective association in defiance of the Society of Authors, Macmillan was somewhat opposed to the idea, stating that it did not seem to him or his partners that anything would be gained by a publishers' trade union for the better regulating of authors. He believed that because it would be quite impossible to formulate any general rule as to the royalties that could be paid by publishers.[107] He feared the association would be viewed "as an act of hostility" by the Society of Authors and erred that Heinemann act with caution as not to alienate the "authors whose books are most worth publishing", as they often did not quibble about their agreements.[108] Macmillan did not want to be viewed in support of industry regulation, also at odds with his support of RPM, which is also a form of regulation. This letter is an example of how those with significant influence can enable and constrain how practices are developed. Macmillan did not champion Heinemann's suggestion or offer resources and consequently an association was not formed.

George Bentley (1828–1895), in agreement with Macmillan, also did not support Heinemann's call for a trade association but would "gladly join if a

---

[106] Ibid., 69
[107] Letter to Heinemann from Frederick Macmillan, 9th December 1892, ibid., 69
[108] Letter to Heinemann from Frederick Macmillan, 9th December 1892, ibid., 70

movement was initiated by Mr Murray or Mr Longman".[109] Bentley's letter reiterates how the strength of influential people and organisations guided the progression of the field, as leaders in an organisational field can use their power to manoeuvre the direction of a field and the formation of the Publishers' Association is an example of how others in the industry with less resources or power followed suit out of compliance. This was a feat noticed by author George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) who commented that the "Grand Old Men" of the publishing world – Alexander Macmillan, Longman and Bentley – were "so powerful that they held the booksellers in abject subjection".[110]

The publishers met again on the 10th October 1895 in Anderton's Hotel, London, and George Routledge forwarded the motion to form an association in reply to the London Booksellers Society, which was seconded by his previous business partner Frederick Warne.[111] With these leading publishers at the head of the campaign, they mustered 'a call to arms' to the rest of the London publishers, inviting them to a meeting on 21st November 1895 at Stationer's Hall. This would be the first meeting of the Publishers' Association and, at the suggestion of Frederick Macmillan, Charles Longman was elected as its first president.[112]

The first publishing houses represented in the Association were:

- Longman Green & Co.

---

[109] Letter to Heinemann from George Bentley, 9th December 1892, ibid, 71

[110] Letter to Mr. Macmillan from George Bernard Shaw 11th September 1943, Simon Nowell Smith, *Letters to Macmillan. Selected and edited by Simon Nowell-Smith. [With plates.]* (London: Macmillan ; New York : St. Martin's Press, 1967), 192

[111] Article in *Letter Book 22nd November 1895 – 9th March 1901*, PA Archive

[112] Ibid

- John Murray

- Macmillan & Co.

- Sampson Low

- Marston & Co.

- Smith, Elder & Co.

- R. Bentley & Son

- Heinemann

- W. Blackwood & Sons

- George Bell & Son

- A.D. Innes & Co.

- Cassell & Co.

- Fisher Unwin

- Chapman & Hall

The representatives of these houses formed the first committee and subsequently became the first Council of the Publishers' Association.[113] Heinemann had been voted as Chairman and he was to draft the rules and regulations of the Association, a fitting task especially as he had been one of the most vocal advocates for the unification of publishers.[114] In March 1896, the Association held its first general meeting at the Stationers' Hall and it was attended by over fifty publishers from various houses in London. It was agreed that the objective of the Association was:

---

[113] Kingsford, *The Publishers Association 1896-1946*. P. 217
[114] Article in *Letter Book 22nd November 1895 – 9th March 1901*, PA archive

"to promote and protect by all lawful means the interests of the Publishers of Great Britain and Ireland."[115]

Today the Association is the leading organisation in Britain that serves the different sectors of the publishing industry including general fiction, non-fiction, academic and educational publishers. The Association is dedicated to the advancement of the industry and frequently conducts research and generates statistics regarding the size of markets and various publishing outputs. The Association states that their mission is to strengthen the trading environment for UK publishers by providing a strong voice for the industry in government, within society, and with other stakeholders in the UK and internationally.[116] In the late nineteenth century the houses in the Association were responsible for the bulk of Britain's publishing output and it has continued this ethos by endeavouring to work for members who represent roughly 80 per cent of the industry by turnover.[117] This ethos also reiterates that those with the most influence are those in control; the Association was organised in this fashion and this has been legitimised and subsequently institutionalised since its inception in 1896, and newcomers to the industry had to comply.

The various professional associations formed in the nineteenth century characterise how social actors mimic the behaviour of each other within an institutional context, instigating business practices and legitimising behaviour that then gets reproduced by the next generations. The Booksellers Association (BA) of

---

[115] "The Publishers' Association: Election of Council and Officers," *The Publishers' Circular*, 14th March 1896; quoted from The First Rules of the Association, Kingsford, *The Publishers Association 1896-1946*, 213

[116] Stated on The Publishers' Association website, www.publishers.org.uk, [accessed 25th March 2014].

[117] Ibid.

1852 was formed to address underselling versus free trade in the early nineteenth century, followed by the Society of Authors who also wanted their rights to be recognised, and finally the Publishers' Association were formed as a response to other collective action. Leading booksellers, authors and publishers in the UK today belong to their respective professional associations, as the culture of the field in the nineteenth century deemed that membership was required in order to display your standing in the industry. Members of associations have a voice in the industry and collectively lobby for change within the field and in the wider socio-economic environment. The culture of belonging to a professional association has been legitimised in the industry and can be considered a normative practice in the field. Furthermore, following the lead of these professional associations others were later founded, representing the smaller organisational groups in the industry such as the Independent Publishers Guild founded in 1962 and the Association of Authors' Agents which was founded in 1974.[118]

Conclusion

Professional associations in the nineteenth century were formalised structures that helped to legitimise normative actions and encourage a particular culture within the publishing industry. The Society of Authors helped strengthen the relationships between authors and publishers, and I believe that Besant achieved his goal of making "authors for the first time in history the masters and administrators of their

---

[118] Dates confirmed by email by the Association of Authors' Agents (25th March 2014) and the Independent Publishers Guild (1st April 2014).

own [literary] property".[119] Similarly, Frederick Macmillan was able to instigate and encourage the organisational field to uphold a change of direction in regards to RPM in the industry that had failed earlier in the century.

These individuals were able to push these changes in business practices forward due to the strength of their influence. They had strong ties and were respected in the industry, and so they were able to garner support for their respective causes. They were leaders and their example was regarded as the way to move forward and subsequently other literary businesses in the field with less power modelled their own behaviours in line with these instigated practices. Their influence enabled these routines to become rooted in the industry and legitimised by later generations of publishers, booksellers and authors, leading to the practices becoming institutionalised in the industry. Examining the origins of these professional societies and associations has demonstrated the processes of adoption of practices, and how these can enable and constrain how businesses operate in the future.

---

[119] Besant, *The Pen and the Book*, 20

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed how literary businesses in the Victorian period instigated various business practices, exploring how and why these were accepted and legitimised within the field. My research has brought to the foreground the 'institutional story' surrounding these businesses, examining their histories in order to go beyond the outcomes of the institutionalisation of practices. This has provided a fuller understanding of the processes to which gave rise to these practices. I have analysed the institutional contexts of authors, publishers and literary agents, documenting why certain practices were championed over others and how they shaped the direction of the field, and in some cases my research has highlighted whether certain practices enabled or constrained how business could later operate. Furthermore I have argued throughout that business practices were accepted because they were pushed forward by those with influence, and as others followed suit their reproduction of the practice legitimised it within the industry.

Overview of the Thesis

The main objective of my research was to analyse the business practices of the Victorian British publishing industry, and how those developed became accepted and why in some cases they became institutionalised. The thesis began with a critique of relevant studies in the areas of book history, new institutionalism and professionalisation in organisations, moving to a discussion of the methods used for this research. The empirical chapters began with an analysis of the professional

author, the sometimes forgotten literary business in publishing history despite their significance in the field as the creators of literature.[1] This chapter assessed the impact of copyright on the professionalisation of authorship and the business practices of authors, as it provided the opportunity for authors to use their copyrights as a commodity.

The legal history of copyright continues to have a profound effect on the studies of authorship and the publishing industry. Some researchers in book and publishing history argue that the development of copyright was an important contributing factor to the rise of authorship as a profession, but not as important as the change in printing technologies or social reading habits and literacy.[2] Although these were contributing factors, I posed the argument in Chapter 3 that the development of copyright was the leading factor that impacted the professionalisation of authorship, as it gave further opportunities for authors to make a living from their intellectual property. Without this protection the profession of authorship may not have flourished as it did, as ideas and creativity would not have been protected like a tangible commodity, and authors therefore would not have had as many options when negotiating payment.

In analysing the autobiographies and letters of authors, it is highlighted that there was an importance placed on club membership, as some clubs attracted individuals involved with the arts and literature and consequently promoted the formation of professional networks. I argued that socialising at gentlemen's clubs

---

[1] Feather, *A History of British Publishing*, 132

[2] — — —, "Copyright and Literary Property", 527; Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*, 132; Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836-1916*, 89; Simon L. L. M. Stokes, *Art and Copyright*, Second ed. (Oxford: Hart, 2012), 65

could be seen as a business practice, and as discussed in subsequent chapters alongside authors it was an informal way of securing opportunities for literary agents and publishers. Although informally it was accepted that business should not be discussed, the club fostered social ties and professional links between those who frequented the libraries, dining rooms and smoking rooms of the clubs. Literary life and club life were intertwined, as depicted in George Gissing's *New Grub Street*, a realist novel on social culture of the Victorian publishing industry. Men of letters understood that being a member of a club was not simply for entertainment but was a part of the profession, as without the access to the network the club provided, some authors noted that it was more difficult to get opportunities.[3] Popular authors such as Dickens, Trollope, Besant and Arnold frequented particular clubs such as the Savile, prompting other authors to also follow suit, therefore instigating a way of doing business in the field that was later imitated by others.

However this method did not lend itself to female authors, as they were barred from the spaces where business was conducted, therefore their access to publishers and editors was limited in comparison. Chapter 3 closed with an analysis of some of the practices used by women writers, as the social conventions of the period restricted how they engaged with the publishing industry; I analysed one of the most famous cases in literary history, the Brontë sisters. Afraid of their work not being judged on literary merit they masked their identity by using male pseudonyms and in the first instance this was successful as their work was praised by critics for saying things that "men would be glad to hear".[4] The sisters had

---

[3] Gissing and Bergonzi, *New Grub Street. Edited with an introduction by Bernard Bergouzi*, 60

[4] "Poetry of the Million", 682

penned popular novels and used their anonymity to get a foothold in the industry, however by the time it was public knowledge that they were women, the literary works of the Brontë sisters had been critically acclaimed. If they had not been forced into showing their hand, the identity of the 'Bell brothers' may not have been identified. Despite this, the Brontë sisters helped to challenge the ambivalence towards women writers in the period. They provided an example that women could write literature that could be successful in the marketplace, therefore indicating to male publishers and editors that there was a space for literature written by women.

I then discussed the literary business that helped both male and female authors to maximise the commercial value of their copyrights: the literary agent. Through an analysis of sources held at the archives of the A. P. Watt literary agency, Chapter 4 detailed how notable Victorian agent Watt was able to push his business forward, as eventually the role of literary agent became accepted in the publishing industry. This is a relatively new aspect to the publishing industry in comparison to authors and publishers, as they emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. His business practices influenced how others in the field worked with, utilised and traded intellectual property. Watt built an agency that advised on the saleability of a literary work, found various publishers and outlets for an author to sell to, and he also negotiated all contracts and payments – a service that many authors were in need of. Watt professionalised the previously informal process that used to be undertaken by the author's reader and created a successful enterprise and business practices that were imitated by later agents.

I argued that it was his use of the agency clause that empowered him to publishers, granting permission to act on behalf of his clients, and this was an important practice as it pushed publishers to accept this new way of doing business or face losing some of their authors. For example Rudyard Kipling only communicated with his publishers Macmillan through Watt, and his stories were some of the most popular in the late nineteenth century.[5] Although Watt made a successful agency, the last section of this chapter discussed how he embellished the story of how he started his business, as some of his testimony can be refuted through documentary sources in the archives. I challenged that this narrative was a clever piece of marketing as opposed to a faithful account of the history of the A. P. Watt literary agency. This aspect is not discussed in detail by other researchers who accept the narrative without question, thus leading the story to become embedded in research and reproduced with little criticism.

The next chapter analysed the businesses of Longman, Mudie and Routledge. My research traced the foundation of how these organisations initially imitated the routines of other publishers, then adapted them in order for their businesses to gain dominance in the field. As these firms developed I argued that they were able to use their partnerships with others in the industry to become more influential and this allowed them to champion specific business practices. In the case of Longman and Routledge they used copyrights as a commodity to fund other publishing ventures, and in particular Routledge was able to supply a growing working-class market who demanded low price fiction. Due to their dominance these businesses were able to

---

[5] Thomas Pinney, "Kipling, (Joseph) Rudyard (1865-1936)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2016).

manoeuvre and guide the direction of the field. Mudie used this to his advantage pushing publishers to keep the prices of literature high in the bookshops and enticing readers to borrow from his library, as a three volume novel in the bookshop was equivalent to a week's wages for a working-class woman.[6] However, this was not a practice that was taken for granted or institutionalised as demonstrated by the complaints on 'Mudie's monopoly' in the press. It was a conscious effort between Mudie and the publishers, and it was accepted at the time because there was little competition until Routledge began the Railway Library in 1848 with WH Smith & Son.

The thesis then moved to analysing the Macmillan publishing house, a literary business that frames the periodisation of this research as they were founded in 1843, a time of change in the industry. I began the chapter with a discussion of the origins of the house, which was predominately an analysis of Daniel Macmillan's movements in Cambridge and London as he was the driving force in shaping the business in its early stages. I used this house to explore how strategic friendships also shaped their business practices. This was particularly useful for analysing how Alexander used his professional and social network to solicit commissions from some of the most popular authors at the time. Furthermore his use of strategic friendships helped him to publish one of the Victorian period's most successful house magazines *Macmillan's Magazine.* I concluded the chapter with an analysis of how Alexander used the Garrick club to celebrate the publication of a new edition of *Etchers and Etchings* by P. G. Hamerton, and brought together some of the Macmillan

---

[6] Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900*, 51-52

team and the popular authors they worked with. I found the menu card that prompted an investigation into this in the Garrick Club archive. It was a practice to sign a menu card on a special occasion to commemorate the event something, which Alexander did on a regular basis. Furthermore, the reason as to why the menu card had been kept is not known by the archivists, another example of institutionalisation.

The final chapter explored how professional associations were key factors in shaping business practices in the field, and I argued that their formation helped to institutionalise them in the industry. These intellectual societies as I refer to them were formed in order to protect the interests of their members and consequently aided the legitimation of behaviour. The Society of Authors was the product of Besant's long standing aim for authors to be more powerful in the field and also to raise the profile of authorship in society. As he was influential he was able to solicit support from his friends and peers, and through the Society he pushed forward his agenda. How authors should interact with their copyrights and negotiate with publishers was influenced by the Society, and the authors who were members had their professional behaviour governed by this association. For example, the Society of Authors pushed for authors to use literary agents, demonstrated by the formation of the Authors' Agency, therefore it became expected that authors should use literary agents and consequently were accepted in the field. In comparison the Publishers' Association was also formed specifically to appeal to the beliefs of influential publishers, most noticeably Frederick Macmillan, who lobbied publishers to his cause to keep books sold at a fixed retail price through the creation of the

NBA. Both Besant and Macmillan used their influence to push forward their personal goals and their associations helped to shift the boundaries of the field. This generated new practices that became accepted and legitimised by the relevant intellectual societies and consequently the practices were institutionalised in the industry.

Contributions

This thesis has explored the practices of literary businesses encompassing authors, literary agents and publishers, and has analysed how and why they became accepted in the field. In particular this thesis had added to the sphere of research that examines the extent to which individuals reproduce patterns of behaviour, and what are the factors that constrain and enable certain behaviours from the new institutionalist perspective on organisations.[7] An example of this was in Chapter 3 when I analysed how women writers manoeuvred around societal constraints in order to be published and critiqued fairly. Some female writers masked their gender using male pseudonyms or by writing anonymously, highlighting their business practices were conditioned by their environment, not accepting that 'this was the way things are done.' During the nineteenth century this was a challenge to the publisher's dominance and so literary agents helped to change the dynamic of the field, which pushed forward an alternative method of selling literature. In comparison the inclusion of a middleman in negotiations between authors and

---

[7] Jepperson, "Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalism ", 147; Battilana, "Agency and Institutions: The Enabling Role of Individuals' Social Position", 654; Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 341; DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", 149

publishers changed the landscape of the industry, and Watt's business became the 'blueprint' for later literary agencies, consequently institutionalising practices such as the agency clause.

My research has highlighted that those who were dominant in the Victorian publishing industry led the way with business practices, as those with less influence complied and encouraged others to imitate. William Heinemann's unsuccessful attempt to create a union for publishers demonstrates this, as other publishers mentioned they would only agree to the initiative if supported by Longman.[8] Behaviour such as this pushed the field towards homogenisation in the industry, what DiMaggio and Powell refer to as isomorphism.[9] Therefore I have demonstrated in this context that the theories of new institutionalism can be applied to the publishing industry. In addition, as these were family businesses the next generations would build on the work of their fathers and uncles, therefore reproducing practices and routines within the organisations as the practices were passed down. The further the practice would be accepted from the original source the easier it becomes taken for granted, and dependent on the situation not as straightforward to challenge. The knowledge would eventually spread and be absorbed by other organisations, which would then operate with these processes.

As Meyer and Rowan point out, powerful organisations "force their immediate relational networks to adapt to their structures and relations, [powerful organisations then] attempt to build their goals and procedures directly into society

---

[8] Letter to Heinemann from George Bentley, 9th December 1892; Heinemann, *The Hardships of Publishing*, 71

[9] DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields", 149

as institutional rules".[10] My research has discussed how Frederick Macmillan was able to do this with the NBA by using his network to support his ambition for RPM. The NBA was then further pushed into the society as it became a taken-for-granted rule. Books were to be sold no less than the published price; booksellers adhered to this and the marketplace followed suit. If the agreement had not been deemed illegal in the late twentieth century, those opposed to RPM may not have had enough influence to usurp the practice from the wider society, as it had been acknowledged and accepted for almost a century. Analysing the emergence and the departure of the NBA shows how institutionalisation and accepted taken-for-granted knowledge can have a profound impact on an industry, and in some cases can dictate how individuals act beyond the field in the wider society.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Meyer and Rowan argued that evaluating how organisations become institutionalised should also take into account whether the adoption of practices is accepted through rational choice or because social actors could not perceive a set of alternatives.[11] As explored, market forces and socio-cultural factors guided the choices of actors, constructing an institutional context for the field. However, there is evidence of both rational choice and adoption between individuals – as shown in Chapter 5 – by Thomas Longman I moving against the old traditions of publishing by consortium, and his nephew's decision to build on this by publishing books independently. In comparison, adoption can be seen by the importance placed on gentlemen's club memberships by authors as analysed in Chapter 3 – popular authors socialised at specific clubs and so others who wished to

---

[10] Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony", 348
[11] Ibid., 345

be a part of the same network imitated their behaviour. In addition, I have also discussed how professionalisation has an impact on the formation of business practices, and this approach also highlights aspects of adoption over rational choice. This was demonstrated predominately in Chapter 4 with A. P. Watt and his literary agency. He was able to control the market using his expertise and by professionalising an informal practice, yet later agents adopted his practices. These business practices became so influential that it is now very difficult for an author to approach a publisher without the representation of an agent.[12]

This thesis has traced the development of the institutionalisation of business practices of the Victorian publishing industry through the analysis of documentary and narrative sources. These sources include business and private letters to family or associates held in archives or published in edited collections. The letters have presented a wealth of information regarding how the individuals in the Victorian publishing industry engaged with business practices and how they also sought to challenge those routines that constrained how they wanted to operate. Examining these documents has provided an insight into how individuals perceived the industry and therefore I was able to piece together a narrative, which in some cases showed business practices from their origination through to institutionalisation. In addition to letters, I also referenced articles from newspapers and periodicals and ephemera such as the menu card, which was discussed in Chapter 6.

I have also referenced narrative sources that I have been explicitly critical of, in particular *An Interview with A. P. Watt* as discussed in Chapter 4. My research has

---

[12] HarperCollins one of Britain's leading publishers do not accept unsolicited manuscripts; HarperCollins, "Have you written a great book?," http://www.harpercollins.co.uk/Pages/Have-you-written-a-great-book.aspx.

utilised the approach of source criticism in order to establish the authenticity of documents and the veracity of the information portrayed in the sources. Researchers have noted that dealing with historical sources can lead to misinterpretations being embedded into a sphere of research if they are not challenged, leading to "historical fact" being portrayed as "historical truth".[13] I have been critical of the information presented in sources by assessing the context in which they were written or published and by comparing them with other relevant sources. I have done this in order to determine whether they had been exposed to subjective distortion. In some cases – such as with the interview published in *The Bookman* – I have been able to identify how misinterpretation has become embedded into studies about the literary agent due to the lack of source criticism. Therefore, I have demonstrated some of the issues that can arise if sources are not approached without a critical appreciation of the authenticity and the veracity of the source itself. My research as a historical study through the use of qualitative sources has added to other historically oriented research in organisation studies, and also studies in book and publishing history.

Limitations Within the Thesis

One problem I encountered whilst in the archives was explicitly tracing strategic movements or evidence of pioneering business deals. In some cases business was done verbally, and so tracing a direct development of business practices was difficult as a paper trail relating directly to some strategic movements were not created. Letters and documents in archives confirmed that there was an intention for

---

[13] Connors, "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology", 15; Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*, 115

business to be done verbally as there were frequent references for lunch appointments made between literary businesses, and in addition there was also evidence of the outcome of such meetings. This did create a problem tracing a direct storyline, however in pooling sources from repositories indirectly connected with these literary businesses it was possible to construct a narrative of how business practices were formed.

As discussed in the methodology, my research focuses on publishing houses that were formed and operated in Britain. Some of these houses, such as Macmillan, by the end of the nineteenth century opened American branches and also did trade in the British Colonies. This limited the analysis of how business practices were influenced by the cultures and routines of those outside the country, and also how practices became institutionalised in similar businesses outside of Britain. The publishing industry is international with many houses operating offices outside of the UK, and the geographical boundary imposed on the research limits the extent to how influences outside of Britain shaped business practices; this provides directions to broaden the study for future research.

Directions for Future Research

Today there are six major publishing houses that dominate the fiction market in the UK and internationally, including the Pearson Group (which owns Longman and Penguin books), Macmillan, Hachette, Random House, Simon & Schuster and HarperCollins. These houses were founded in Britain, Germany, France and the USA, and as mentioned above it would be advantageous to conduct similar research

on the institutionalisation of business practices in other countries to draw comparisons as to how other factors such as socio-economic and cultural factors influenced how business was done. Similarly to Britain, there are well preserved archives from American literary businesses that could support research in this area. For instance the records of American literary agent Curtis Brown are held at Columbia University, New York, and some parts of the archive of the Hachette Publishing Company are held at the National Archives in France.[14] Analysing American companies would particularly further this research area as the trade of literature with Britain in the nineteenth century developed heavily at this time.

The contemporary publishing field has become a handful of conglomerates, which is a significant departure from the hundreds of independents that used to supply books. Many older independent firms have become imprints of larger houses such as Michael Brown (1897–1958), named for the founder, which became an imprint of Penguin in 1985, and as mentioned earlier the A. P. Watt literary agency was acquired by United Agents in 2012. Exploring how organisations adapted their business practices when organisations merge would also further research in this area, as it could identify the challenges these businesses face during mergers and how this affects the organisational field in general.

There is scope to expand research on the professional author, as the literary marketplace today can be lucrative with additional revenue streams available such as eBooks, which were not available to the Victorian author. In some cases authors are funding the process themselves to get their literature into the market, acting as

---

[14] Although the company was founded in Britain, Curtis Brown was born and raised in the United States and tracing how the difference between the cultures influences the organisation from this perspective could be an interesting study.

both producer and supplier publishing the work themselves. Self-publishing has become a route to market for many authors, aided by the emergence of online platforms such as Amazon, which is suited for writers to sell their titles directly to the marketplace, in some cases taking the literary agent and the publisher out of the process.[15] Exploring this as a business model, the practices used and how this affects the publishing industry in the future would be a beneficial study, as it could affect the construction of this creative industry in general. Furthermore, I have concentrated on the authorship, production and sale of fiction. However, the industry is comprised of academic and scholarly publishing and also consumer titles, which are commissioned by a client rather than a publisher, such as a corporate history published for a general market. This research could be broadened to encompass these other sectors and to draw comparisons of how different areas of the field use and become institutionalised according to the market they supply to.

The role of women in the production of literature in the Victorian era has been frequently debated, although the research regarding their significance and how gender constrained what choices women writers could make is predominately debated in feminist literary studies. My research has highlighted how women could sell their literature as a commodity, as demonstrated in Chapter 5 through the example of the Brontë sisters. This could be expanded to address specifically how women dealt with their writing as a business using the theories and approaches of business and management research. Furthermore, there has been little research dedicated to the emergence of women in the management of the contemporary

---

[15] Clark and Phillips, *Inside Book Publishing*, 43-45

industry, where there is more opportunity in comparison to their Victorian counterparts in decision making roles. There are women who are now Chief Executive Officers or Directors on the boards of the largest international houses, yet there is a lack of discussion regarding how they were able to break the 'glass ceiling'. There is scope to identify and explore how women in the twentieth century adapted and challenged business practices institutionalised from powerful men in the Victorian era.

References

Archives

Documentary sources are referenced throughout this thesis, and rather than cite them separately in the reference list, I have cited the item in the footnotes with an abbreviated reference to the archive in which they are held. Where possible I have used the citation for the archive provided by the holding organisation. Below are the full details of the archive collections cited:

- A. P. Watt and Son Records, 1861–1971 bulk (1880–1949), Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library (cited in the footnotes as A. P. Watt & Son [BC]).

- A. P. Watt Records #11036, Rare Book Literary and Historical Papers, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (cited in the footnotes as A. P. Watt [UNC]).

- Company No: 166272; J M Burghes and Company Ltd. Incorporated in 1920. Dissolved between 1920 and 1932, BT 31/25797/166272, National Archives, Kew (cited in footnotes as National Archives).

- Archive of the Publishers' Association LTD (cited in the footnotes as PA Archive).

- Routledge & Kegan Paul LTD Archives 1850–1984, UCL Special Collections held at the National Archives, Kew (cited in the footnotes as Routledge).

- Multiple collections cited from Special Collections, University of Reading (cited in footnotes as [item location, collection name, Reading]).

- Several collections were consulted at the British Library, the full reference is Archives and Manuscripts, British Library, London (cited in footnotes as [item location, collection name], BL).

- The Publishers' Association archive held at the Publishers' Association Head Office, London (cited in footnotes as PA Archive).

- Washington Irving papers, 1759–1898, bulk (1805–1866), Archives and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library (cited in the footnotes as Washington Irving papers).

Sources

Macmillan's Magazine. Nov. 1859 – April 1860 ed. Vol. 1, Cambridge, London: Macmillan and Co., 1859.

"1901 Census Records England and Wales." The National Archives, 2013.

A Second-Rate Author. "Mr Mudie's "Right of Selection"." *The Literary Gazette*, 17th November 1860, 426.

Abel, Richard L. "The Rise of Professionalism." *British Journal of Law and Society* 6, no. 1 (1979): 82–98.

"Advertisement." *Notes and Queries* 87 (1851): 527–28.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum*, 10th April 1841.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum*, 22nd June 1850, 651.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum*, 1852.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum* 26th March 1836, 232.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum*, 2nd February 1850, 142.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum*, 1883.

"Advertisement." *The Athenaeum*, 19th June 1858.

"Advertisement. " *The Athenaeum*, 10th March 1855.

"Advertisement – George Routledge's New List of Remainders." *The Athenaeum*, 3rd December 1842, 1048.

"Agent Provocateur." *The Sunday Express*, 1997.

Alexander, Christine. *Bronte, Charlotte (1816–1855)*. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford Unversity Press, 2004.

Altick, Richard D. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800–1900*. Second ed. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998. 1957.

———. *Victorian People and Ideas*. New York; London: W. W. Norton 1973.

Alvesson, Mats, and Kaj Sköldberg. *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. Second ed. London: SAGE, 2009.

"Another, London." *The Bookman*, October 1891, 28.

Ansell, Elaine. "Some Effects of the End of the Net Book Agreement." *New Library World* 99, no. 1144 (1998): 248–53.

"Article Xiv. A Catalogue of Books for This Month." *Works of the Learned*, February 1737, 158.

Aspinwall, Thomas. *The Aspinwall Papers*. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, edited by Thomas Aspinwall, George E. Ellis, William S. Bartlet and John Langdon. Sibley Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1871.

"The Associated Booksellers of Great Britain and Ireland". *The Bookseller*, 6th February 1895, 122–23.

"The Athenaeum Club-House." *Fraser's Magazine for Town and County*, March 1830.

"Authors, Publishers, and Booksellers." *The Critic*, 1st June 1852.

Barber, Bernard. "Some Problems in the Sociology of the Professions." *Daedalus* 92, no. 4 (1963): 669–88.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Barnes, James J., and Patience P. Barnes. "Routledge, George (1812–1888)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

———. "Thomas Aspinwall: First Transatlantic Literary Agent." *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 78, no. 3 (1984): 321–32.

Battilana, Julie. "Agency and Institutions: The Enabling Role of Individuals' Social Position." *Organization* 13, no. 5 (2006): 653–76.

Battilana, Julie, and Thomas D'Aunno. "Institutional Work and the Paradox of Embedded Agency." In *Institutional Work: Actors and Agency in Institutional Studies of Organizations*, edited by Thomas B. Lawrence, Roy Suddaby and Bernard Leca. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Beckert, Jens. "Agency, Entrepreneurs, and Institutional Change. The Role of Strategic Choice and Institutionalized Practices in Organizations." *Organization Studies* 20, no. 5 (1999): 777–99.

Bell, Bill. "From Parnassus to Grub Street: Matthew Arnold and the House of Macmillan." In *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, edited by Elizabeth James. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Bell, Emma, and Scott Taylor. "Writing History into Management Research." *Management & Organizational History* 8, no. 2 (2013): 127–36.

Bennett, Arnold, and James Gordon Hepburn. *Letters of Arnold Bennett: Edited by James Hepburn*. 4 vols. Vol. 1, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.

"Besant and Rice." *The Saturday Review*, 23rd July 1887, 131–32.

Besant, Walter. *The Art of Fiction. A Lecture ... With Notes and Additions*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1884.

— — —. *Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant*. [S.l.]: Hutchinson, 1902.

— — —. "The First Society of British Authors (1843)." *The Contemporary Review*, July 1889, 10–27.

— — —. "The Maintenance of Literary Property." Paper presented at The Grievances Between Authors and Publishers: Being the Report of the Conferences of the Incorporated Society of Authors.

Willis's Rooms, London, March 1887.

— — —. *The Pen and the Book*. London: Thomas Burleigh, 1899.

Black, Barbara. *A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012.

Blagden, Cyprian. *The Stationers' Company: A History 1403–1959*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1977.

Blaikie, Norman W. H. *Designing Social Research* Second ed. Cambridge: Polity, 2009.

Bonham-Carter, Victor. *Authors by Profession. Vol.2, from the Copyright Act 1911 until the End of 1981*. London: Bodley Head, 1984.

— — —. *Authors by Profession: From the Introduction of Printing until the Copyright Act 1911*. Vol. 1, London: Society of Authors, 1978.

"The Bookman". London, 1892.

"The Bookselling Question: The Arbitration." *The Leader*, 22nd May 1852, 479–80.

"The Bookselling System." *The Examiner*, 17th April 1852, 250.

Booth, Charles, and Michael Rowlinson. "Management and Organizational History: Prospects." *Management & Organizational History* 1, no. 1 (2006): 5–30.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Tony Bennett. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* [La Distinction, Critique sociale du judgment]. New York, London: Routledge, 2010. 1984.

Brake, Laurel. "Writing, Cultural Production, and the Periodical Press in the Nineteenth Century." In *Writing and Victorianism*, edited by J. B. Bullen. Essex: Longmans, 1997.

Brake, Laurel, and Marysa Demoor. *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*. Gent: Academia Press; London: British Library, 2009.

Brannick, Teresa, and David Coghlan. "Reflexivity in Management and Business Research: What Do We Mean?". *Irish Journal of Management* (2006): 143–61.

Brennan, Zoe. *Brontë's Jane Eyre: A Reader's Guide*. London; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010.

Brewer, John. "Authors, Publishers and Literary Culture." In *The Book History Reader*, edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Brontë, Anne, Charlotte Brontë, and Emily Brontë. *Wuthering Heights and Agnes Grey, with a Preface and Memoir of Both Authors*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1870

Bullen, J. B., ed. *Writing and Victorianism*. London, New York: Longman 1997.

Burr, Vivien. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Burstein, Andrew. *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving*. New York: Basic Books, 2007.

Chartier, Roger. "The Practical Impact of Writing." In *The Book History Reader*, edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

"The Cheap Movement in Literature". *Book-lore*, November 1886, 10–12.

Clark, Giles N., and Angus Phillips. *Inside Book Publishing*. Fifth ed. London; New York: Routledge, 2014.

"Collection Record: Archives of Swan Sonnenschien & Co." University of Reading, http://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/sc-sonnenschein.aspx.

Collingwood, R. G., and Jan van der Dussen. *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926–1928*. Revised ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Collini, Stefan. "Arnold, Matthew (1822–1888)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Connors, Robert J. "Dreams and Play: Historical Method and Methodology." In *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*, edited by Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

Connors, Robert J., Lisa S. Ede, and Andrea A. Lunsford. *Selected Essays of Robert J. Connors*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.

Cooke, Bill. "Writing the Left out of Management Theory: The Historiography of the Management of Change." *Organization* 6, no. 1 (1999): 81–105.

Cowell, F. R. *The Athenaeum: Club and Social Life in London, 1824–1974*. London: Heinemann, 1975.

Cox, Harold. *The House of Longman: With a Record of Their Bicentenary Celebrations, 1724–1924*. [S.l.]: Longmans, 1924.

Craig, Carys. *Copyright, Communication and Culture: Towards a Relational Theory of Copyright Law*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011.

Cross, Nigel. *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Curwen, Henry. *A History of Booksellers, the Old and the New*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1874.

Czarniawska-Joerges, Barbara. "The Narrative in Social Science and Organization Studies." Chap. 2 in *Writing Management: Organization Theory as a Literary Genre*. 18. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Darnton, Robert. *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopèdie 1775–1800*. Cambridge; London The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979.

———. "Histoire Du Livre. Geschichte Des Buchwesens. An Agenda for Comparative History." *Publishing History* 22 (1987): 33.

———. "What Is the History of Books?". *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (1982): 65–83.

Davidson, Cathy N. "Towards a History of Books and Readers." *American Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (1988): 7–17.

Davies, Gill. *Book Commissioning and Acquisition*. Second ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

Davies, James A. *John Forster: A Literary Life*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983.

Deane, Bradley. *The Making of the Victorian Novelist: Anxieties of Authorship in the Mass Market*. Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory Outstanding Dissertations edited by William E. Cain Abingdon: Routledge, 2003.

Dearnley, James, and John Feather. "The Uk Bookselling Trade without Resale Price Maintenance: An Overview of Change 1995–2001." *Publishing Research Quarterly* 17, no. 4 (2002): 16–31

Decker, Stephanie. "The Silence of the Archives: Business History, Post-Colonialism and Archival Ethnography." *Management & Organizational History* 8, no. 2 (2013): 155–73.

Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Fourth ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2011.

Devereaux Jennings, P., Michael Lounsbury, and Manely Sharifian. "Entrepreneurial Agency and Institutions." In *The Routledge Companion to Entrepreneurship*, edited by Ted Baker and Friederike Welter. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015.

Dickens, Charles. "International Copyright." *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, 23rd July 1842, 59–60.

———. *The Letters of Charles Dickens*. Edited by His Sister-in-Law and His Eldest Daughter London: Chapman and Hall, 1880.

DiMaggio, Paul J. "Interest and Agency in Institutional Theory." In *Institutional Patterns and Organizations: Culture and Environment: Conference on Institutional Theory: Papers*, edited by Lynne G. Zucker. Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1988.

DiMaggio, Paul J., and Walter W. Powell. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48 (1983): 147–60.

———, eds. *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Disraeli, Benjamin *Benjamin Disraeli Letters 1860–1864*. Edited by J.A.W. Gunn Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

Duke, Nell K., and Marla H. Mallette. *Literacy Research Methodologies*. Second ed. New York; London: Guilford, 2011.

Dunkerley, David. *Occupations and Society* Abingdon: Routledge, 1975.

Easley, Alexis. *First Person Anonymous: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media, 1830–70*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Eliot, Simon. "The British Book Market 1800–1890." In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. Oxford Wiley-Blackwell 2009.

———. "The Business of Victorian Publishing." In *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*, edited by Deidre David. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

———. *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800–1919*. London: Bibliographical Society, 1994.

Evetts, Julia. "Professionalism: Value and Ideology." *Current Sociology Review* 0, no. 0 (2013): 1–19.

F.W. *The Bookman Christmas*, 1934.

———. "An Interview with Mr A. P. Watt." *The Bookman*, 1892, 20–22.

Feather, John. "The British Book Market 1600-1800." In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

———. "The Commerce of Letters: The Study of the Eighteenth-Century Book Trade." *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 17, no. 4 (1984): 405–24.

———. "Copyright and Literary Property." In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

———. *A History of British Publishing*. Second ed. London: Routledge, 2006.

———. "The Publishers and the Pirates. British Copyright Law in Theory and Practice, 1710–1775." *Publishing History* 22 (1987): 5.

———. *Publishing, Piracy and Politics: An Historical Study of Copyright in Britain*. London: Mansell, 1994.

Finkelstein, David. *Mudie, Charles Edward (1818–1890)*. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Finkelstein, David, and Alistair McCleery. *An Introduction to Book History*. Second ed. London, New York: Routledge, 2013.

Fitzgerald, Percy Hetherington. *The Garrick Club*. London: Stock, 1904.

Foreman-Peck, James, and Julia A. Smith. "Business and Social Mobility into the British Elite 1870–1914." *Journal of European Economic History* 33, no. 3 (2004): 485–518.

Forster, John *The Life of Charles Dickens* 2 vols. Vol. I., 1812–1847, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905.

Foucault, Michel. "What Is an Author?". In *The Book History Reader*, edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006.

Fowler Wright, S. *The Life of Sir Walter Scott: A Biography*. Wildside Press LLC, 2012. 1932.

Fraser, Hilary. "Periodicals and Reviewing." In *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature*, edited by Kate Flint. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Friedson, Eliot. "Theory and the Professions." *Indiana Law Journal* 64, no. 3 (1989): 423–32.

Fritschner, Linda. "Literary Agents and Literary Traditions: The Role of the Philistine." In *Paying the Piper: Causes and Consequences of Art Patronage*, edited by Judith Huggins Balfe. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

"Front Page." *The Athenaeum*, 1883, 1.

Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. 2 vols. Vol. 1, London: Smith Elder & Co., 1857.

Gaskell, Elizabeth Cleghorn. *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. 2 vols. Vol. 2, London: Smith Elder & Co., 1857.

Gergen, Kenneth J. "Knowledge as Socially Constructed." In *Social Construction: A Reader*, edited by Kenneth J. Gergen and Mary Gergen. London: Sage, 2003.

Gettman, Royal A. *A Victorian Author: A Study of the Bentley Papers*. Digital ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Gillies, Mary. "A. P. Watt, Literary Agent." *Publishing Research Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1993): 20–33.

Gillies, Mary Ann. *The Professiona Lliterary Agent in Britain, 1880–1920*. Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Gissing, George, and Bernard Bergonzi. *New Grub Street. Edited with an Introduction by Bernard Bergouzi*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968. 1968. 1891.

Goldstein, Jan. "Foucault among the Sociologists: The "Disciplines" and the History of the Professions." *History and Theory* 23, no. 2 (1984): 170–92.

"Gossip of the Week ". *The Literary Gazette*, 27th March 1858, 304–05.

Goyal, V. K. *Financial Accounting*. Second ed. New Dehli: Excel Books, 2007.

Granovetter, Mark S. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (1973): 1360–80.

Graves, Charles L. *Life and Letters of Alexander Macmillan*. London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1910.

"A Great Publishing House." *The Speaker*, 5th September 1891, 285.

Greco, Albert N., Jim Milliot, and Robert M. Wharton. *The Book Publishing Industry*. Third ed. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013.

Greenwood, Royston, Roy Suddaby, and C. R. Hinings. "Theorizing Change: The Role of the Professional Associations in the Transformation of Institutionalized Fields." *Academy of Management* 45, no. 1 (2002): 58–80.

Griest, Guinevere L. *Mudie's Circulating Library and the Victorian Novel*. Devon: David & Charles, 1970.

Gross, John. *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters: Aspects of English Literary Life since 1800*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969.

Guillebaud, C. W. "The Marshall-Macmillan Correspondence over the Net Book System." *The Economic Journal* 75, no. 299 (1965): 518–28.

Hamerton, Philip Gilbert, and Eugénie Gindriez Hamerton. *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834–1858, and a Memoir by His Wife 1858–1894*. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1897.

HarperCollins. "Have You Written a Great Book?" http://www.harpercollins.co.uk/Pages/Have-you-written-a-great-book.aspx.

Hatch, Mary Jo, and Dvora Yanow. "Organization Theory as an Interpretive Science." In *The Oxford Handbook of Organization Theory: Meta-Theoretical Perspectives*, edited by Haridimos Tsoukas and Christian Knudsen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Hay, Cecil. *The Club and the Drawing-Room Being Pictures of Modern Life: Social, Political, and Professional*. London: Robert Hardwicke, 1870.

Heinemann, William. "The Hardships of Publishing." *The Athenaeum* 3rd December 1892, 779–80.

———. *The Hardships of Publishing* Privately Printed, 1893.

———. "The Middleman as Viewed by a Publisher." *The Athenaeum*, Nov 11 1893.

Hepburn, James. *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.

———. "The Author's Empty Purse Revisited." *Sewanee Review* 117, no. 4 (2009): 628–40.

Heyck, Thomas William. *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*. London: Croom Helm, 1982.

Hill, Michael R. *Archival Strategies and Techniques*. Newbury Park, Calif.; London: Sage Publications, 1993.

Hinings, C. R. (Bob), Royston Greenwood, Trish Reay, and Roy Suddaby. "Dynamics of Change in Organizational Fields." In *Handbook of Organizational Change and Innovation*, edited by Marshall Scott Poole and Andrew H. Van de Ven. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hinks, John. "Introduction." In *Periodicals and Publishers*, edited by John Hinks. Newcastle; London: The Oak Knoll Press & The British Library 2009.

"Histories of Publishing Houses." *The Critic*, 24th March 1860.

Hoppen, K. Theodore. *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846–1886*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998.

Hosking, Dian Marie, and H. Peter Dachler. "The Primacy of Relations in Socially Constructing Organisational Realities". In *Management and Organization: Relational Alternatives to Individualism*, edited by Dian Marie Hosking, H. Peter Dachler and Kenneth J. Gergen. 29–50. Aldershot: Avebury, 1995.

Howsam, Leslie. "20b the History of the Book in Britain, 1801–1914." In *The Oxford Companion to the Book,* edited by Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. http://www.oxfordreference.com.idpproxy.reading.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-0021. .

———. "Trübner, Nicholas (1817–1884)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography,* edited Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hughes, Everett C. "The Professions." *Daedalus* 92, no. 4 (1963): 655–68.

Hughes, Thomas. *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1882.

Hulse, Elizabeth. "Yellowbacks." In *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Sally Mitchell. Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

J. S.C. "Obituary." *The Academy*, 1st February 1896, 95–96.

Jackson, J. A. "Introduction." In *Professions and Professionalization*, edited by J. A. Jackson. [S.l.]: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Jacobs, Edward. "Circulating Libraries." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature*, edited by David Scott Kastan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Jacques, Roy Stager. "History, Historiography and Organization Studies: The Challenge and the Potential." *Management & Organizational History* 1, no. 1 (2006/02/01 2006): 31–49.

James, Elizabeth. *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*. edited by Elizabeth James London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

"Jane Eyre: An Autobiography." *The Critic*, 30th October 1847, 277.

Jenkins, Alice, and Juliet John. "Introduction." In *Rereading Victorian Fiction*, edited by Alice Jenkins and Juliet John. Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000.

Jepperson, Ronald L. "Institutions, Institutional Effects, and Institutionalism". In *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*, edited by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Johnson, Samuel. *Johnson's Dictionary* Boston: Charles J. Hendee, 1836.

Johnson, Terence James. *Professions and Power*. London: Macmillan, 1972.

Johnstone, Judith, and Hilary Fraser. "The Professionalization of Women's Writing: Extending the Canon." In *Women and Literature in Britain 1800–1900*, edited by Joanne Shattock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Jones, Hugh, and Christopher Benson. *Publishing Law*. Fourth ed. London: Routledge, 2011.

Jones, Phillip. "A. P. Watt Acquired by U. A." *The Bookseller*, 30th November 2012.

Judd, Catherine A. "Male Pseudonyms and Female Authority." In *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*, edited by John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Kachka, Boris. "Book Publishing's Big Gamble." *The New York Times*, July 9, 2013.

Keating, Peter. *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel 1875–1914*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1989.

Keeran, Peggy, and Jennifer Bowers. *Literary Research and the British Eighteenth Century: Strategies and Sources*. London, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2013.

Kenyon, Karen Smith. *The Brontë Family: Passionate Literary Geniuses*. A Lerner Biography. Minneapolis: Lerner Publications Co., 2003.

Kieser, Alfred. "Why Organization Theory Needs Historical Analyses--and How This Should Be Performed." *Organization Science* 5, no. 4 (1994): 608–20.

Kingsford, R. J. L. *The Publishers Association 1896–1946*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Kipling, Rudyard. *The Jungle Book*. London: Macmillan 1895.

Kipling, Rudyard, and Thomas Pinney. *The Letters of Rudyard Kipling*. 6 vols. Vol. 1, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2004.

Kohler Riessman, Catherine. "Narrative Analysis." In *The Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, edited by Victor Jupp. London: Sage, 2006.

Kooistra, Lorraine Janzen. *Christina Rossetti and Illustration: A Publishing History*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002.

Lampel, Joseph, Jamal Shamsie, and Theresa K. Lant. "Toward a Deeper Understanding of Cultural Industries." In *The Business of Culture: Strategic Perspectives on Entertainment and Media*, edited by Joseph Lampel, Jamal Shamsie and Theresa K. Lant. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum; London: Eurospan [distributor], 2006.

Larson, Magali Sarfatti. *The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis*. Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1977.

Law, Graham. "Routledge, George (1812–88) English Publisher." In *The Oxford Companion to the Book* edited by Michael F. Suarez, S. J. Woudhuysen and H. R. Woudhuysen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

———. *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000.

Law, Graham, and Robert L. Patten. "The Serial Revolution." In *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: 1830–1914*, edited by David McKitterick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Lawrence, Thomas , Roy Suddaby, and Bernard Leca. "Institutional Work: Refocusing Institutional Studies of Organization." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (2011): 52–28.

Lawrence, Thomas B., Bernard Leca, and Tammar B. Zilber. "Institutional Work: Current Research, New Directions and Overlooked Issues." *Organization Studies* 34, no. 8 (2013): 1023–33.

Lawrence, Thomas B., and Masoud Shadnam. "Institutional Theory." In *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, edited by Wolfgang Donsbach. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Lawrence, Thomas B., and Roy Suddaby. "Institutions and Institutional Work." In *Handbook of Organization Studies*, edited by S. R. Clegg, C Hardy, T.B. Lawrence and W.R. Nord. 215–54. London: Sage, 2006.

Leary, Patrick, and Andrew Nash. "Authorship." In *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain 1830–1914*, edited by David McKitterick. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Lee, Sidney, George Smith, and Leslie Stephen. *George Smith, a Memoir*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. 1902.

Leicht, Kevin T., and Mary L. Fennell. "Institutionalism and the Professions." In *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, edited by Royston Greenwood, Christine Oliver, Kerstin Sahlin and Roy Suddaby. London: Sage, 2008.

"Literary Gossip and Table Talk." *The Illustrated Review*, December 1872, 385.

"Literary Intelligence: Gossip of the Literary World." *The Critic*, 15th June 1850, 312.

"The Literary Profession." *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, 6th August 1842, 225–26.

"The Literary Profession." *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal*, 6th August 1842, 2.

Lycett, Andrew. *Wilkie Collins: A Life of Sensation*. London: Windmill Books, 2014.

Macdonald, Keith M. *The Sociology of the Professions*. London: Sage, 1995.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

"Macmillan's Magazine." *Examiner*, 5th November 1859, 708.

Macmillan, Frederick. "A Remedy for Underselling." *The Bookseller*, 6th March 1860, 244.

Macmillan, Frederick Sir, and Edward Bell. *The Net Book Agreement 1899 and the Book War 1906–1908: Two Chapters in the History of the Book Trade: Including a Narrative of the Dispute between the Times Book Club and the Publishers' Association by Edward Bell*. Glasgow: printed for the author by Robert Maclehose & Co., 1924.

Macmillan, George A., ed. *Letters of Alexander Macmillan: Edited with Introduction by His Son George A. Macmillan*: Printed for Private Circulation, 1908.

Major, Lee Elliot. "Athenaeum Opens Its Doors to Women Members." *The Guardian*, Thursday 3rd January 2002.

Malatesta, Maria. *Professional Men, Professional Women: The European Professions from the 19th Century to Today*. London: SAGE, 2011.

Malchow, Howard LeRoy. *Gentlemen Capitalists: The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessmen*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Mays, Kelly J. "The Publishing World." In *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* edited by Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2005.

McDonald, Peter D. *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

McKenzie, D. F. "The Sociology of a Text: Orality, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand." In *The Book History Reader*, edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1984.

"Memoir of Daniel Macmillan." *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 2nd September 1882, 320–21.

Meyer, John W., and Brian Rowan. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *The American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (1977): 340–63.

Millerson, Geoffrey. *The Qualifying Associations. A Study in Professionalization*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964.

Millgate, Michael. "Thomas Hardy and the House of Macmillan." In *Macmillan: A Publishing Tradition*, edited by Elizabeth James. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

Milne-Smith, Amy. "Club Talk: Gossip, Masculinity and Oral Communities in Late Nineteenth-Century London." *Gender & History* 21, no. 1 (2009): 86–106.

———. "A Flight to Domesticity? Making a Home in the Gentlemen's Clubs of London, 1880–1914." *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 4 (2006): 796–818.

———. *London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late-Victorian Britain*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Mitford John. (ed), "H. G. Bohn's Catalogue for 1841." *The Gentlemen's Magazine: and historical review*, February 1841, 187.

Mollier, Jean-Yves, and Marie-Francoise Cachin. "A Continent of Texts: Europe 1800–1890." In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Monette, Duane R., Thomas J. Sullivan, and Cornell R. DeJong. *Applied Social Research: A Tool for the Human Services*. Ninth ed. Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 2014.

"The Monthly Catalogue: Being a General Register of Books, Sermons, Plays, Poetry and Pamphlets, Printed and Published in London, or the Universities in the Years 1727 and 1728." London John Wilford, 1729.

"Monthly Report of the Wholesale Book Trade." *The Bookman*, May 1894, 41.

Morgan, Charles. *The House of Macmillan, 1839–1943*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1943.

Morrison, Elizabeth. "Serial Fiction in Australian Colonial Newspapers." In *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing & Reading Practices*, edited by John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Morse, David. *High Victorian Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993.

"Mr. A. Macmillan." *The Athenaeum*, 1st February 1896, 150.

"Mr. Mudie's Monopoly." *The Literary Gazette*, 29th September 1860, 252–53.

"Mr. Nicholas Trübner ". *The Athenaeum*, 5th April 1884.

"Mrs. W. K. Clifford." *The Bookman*, 1892, 22.

"Mudie's Library." *Saturday Review*, 1860, 550.

Mudie, C.E. "Mr. Mudie's Library." *The Athenaeum*, 6th October 1860, 451.

Mumby, Frank Arthur. *House of Routledge, 1834–1934: With a History of Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Other Associated Firms* London: Routledge, 1934.

Mumby, Frank Arthur, and Ian Norrie. *Publishing and Bookselling*. Fifth ed. London: Jonathan Cape, 1974. 1930.

Murray, Simone. "Publishing Studies: Critically Mapping Research in Search of a Discipline." *Publishing Research Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2006): 3–25.

Muzio, Daniel, David M. Brock, and Roy Suddaby. "Professions and Institutional Change: Towards an Institutionalist Sociology of the Professions." *Journal of Management Studies* 50, no. 5 (2013): 699–721.

Muzio, Daniel, and John Flood. "Entrepreneurship, Managerialism and Professionalism in Action: The Case of the Legal Profession in England and Wales". In *Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship in Professional Services*, edited by Markus Reihlen and Andreas Werr. Cheltenham Edward Elgar, 2012.

Muzio, Daniel, and Ian Kirkpatrick. "Introduction: Professions and Organizations – a Conceptual Framework". *Current Sociology* 59, no. 4 (2011): 389–405.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Nayder, Lillian. *Unequal Partners: Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Victorian Authorship*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Neilsen, Lorri. "Literacy." In *The Oxford Companion to the Book,* edited by Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. http://www.oxfordreference.com.idpproxy.reading.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780198606536.001.0001/acref-9780198606536-e-2874.

"The Net System." *The Bookman*, March 1892, 210.

"The Net System." *The Bookman*, February 1892, 176.

Newman, Rebecca Edwards. "Genre, Criticism, and the Early Victorian Novel." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel*, edited by Lisa Rodensky. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Nichols, John. *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*. 6 vols. Vol. 3, London: Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1812.

North, Edward. "Net Prices." *The Athenaeum*, 23rd January 1892, 114.

Novak, Maximillan E. *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

O'Day, Rosemary. *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450–1800* Harlow: Longman, 2000.

———. *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450–1800: Servants of the Commonwealth*. Second ed. Abingdon: Routledge, 2014.

O'Gorman, Francis, ed. *The Victorian Novel*. edited by Michael O'Neill, Blackwell Guides to Criticism. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers LTD, 2002.

"On Cheap Books in General, and Mr. Charles Knight's Cheap Books in Particular." *Hunt's London Journal*, 17th August 1844, 87–89.

"Our Weekly Gossip." *The Athenaeum*, 3rd August 1867, 149–51.

"Our Weekly Gossip." *The Athenaeum*, 5th May 1855, 523.

Owen, Lynette. *Selling Rights*. 7th ed. London: Routledge, 2014.

Parsons, Talcott. "The Professions and Social Structure." *Social Forces* 17, no. 4 (1939): 457–67.

Patten, Robert L. *Bogue, David (1807/8–1856)*. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Pearson Education. "Longman." Pearson, http://www.pearsoned.co.uk/Imprints/Longman/.

Peterson, Linda H. *Becoming a Woman of Letters: Victorian Myths of Authorship, Facts of the Market*. Princeton, N.J.; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2009.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford Oxford University Press, 2016.

"Poetry of the Million." *The Athenaeum*, 4th July 1846, 682.

Ponzoni, Elena, and Kees Boersma. "Writing History for Business: The Development of Business History between 'Old' and 'New' Production of Knowledge." *Management & Organizational History* 6, no. 2 (2011): 123–43.

"Post Office London Directory, 1880 [Part 2: Commercial & Professional Directory]." 782. London: Kelly's Directories LTD, 1880.

"Post Office London Directory, 1915 [Part 3: Commercial & Professional Directory]." London: Kelly's Directories LTD, 1915.

Powell, Walter W., and Jeanette Anastasia Colyvas. "The New Institutionalism." In *The International Encyclopedia of Organization Studies*, edited by Stewart Clegg and James R. Bailey. Sage Publication Inc., 2008.

"Proposed Establishment of a Publishers' Association." *The Publishers' Circular*, 23rd November 1895.

The Oxford Compact English Dictionary. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

"The Publishers' Association: Election of Council and Officers." *The Publishers' Circular*, 14th March 1896.

Raven, James. "The Book as a Commodity." In *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain 1695–1830*, edited by Michael F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

———. "The Industrial Revolution of the Book." In *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Leslie Howsam. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

"Reminiscences of the Old Chapter Coffee-House, Paternoster Row, London." *The Leisure Hour*, 30th June 1859, 409–12.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

"The Rights of Authors." *The Examiner*, 20th March 1875, 321–22.

Rohan, Liz. "Reseeing and Redoing: Making Historical Research at the Turn of the Millennium." In *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies*, edited by Lee Nickoson and Mary P Sheridan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012.

Rose, Mark. *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright*. Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1993.

Rossetti, Christina Georgina. "Death's Chill Between." *The Athenaeum*, 14th October 1848, 1032.

Rowlinson, Michael, and John S. Hassard. "Historical Neo-Institutionalism or Neo-Institutionalist History? Historical Research in Management and Organization Studies." *Management & Organizational History* 8, no. 2 (2013): 111–26.

Rowlinson, Michael, John S. Hassard, and Stephanie Decker. "Theorizing Organizational History: Organization Theory and Historical Theory ". *Academy of Management Review* 39, no. 3 (2014): 250–74.

Rubery, Matthew. "Journalism." In *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*, edited by Francis O'Gorman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Rubin, Joan Shelley. "What Is the History of the History of Books?". *Journal of American History* 90, no. 2 (2003): 555–75.

Rubinstein, Hilary. "A. P. Watt: The First Hundred Years." *The Bookseller*, 3rd May 1975.

Russell, George William Erskine. *Letters of Matthew Arnold 1848–1888*. New York, London: Macmillan and Co., 1895.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Saks, Mike. "Inequalities, Marginality and the Professions." *Current Sociology* (2015): 1–19.

Salmon, Richard. *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Sanders, Valerie. "Women, Fiction and the Marketplace." In *Women and Literature in Britain 1800–1900*, edited by Joanne Shattock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Scott, Sir Walter. *Autobiography of Sir Walter Scott, Bart*. Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1831.

Scott, W. Richard. "The Adolescence of Institutional Theory." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1987): 493–511.

———. "Approaching Adulthood: The Maturing of Institutional Theory." *Theory and Society* 37, no. 5 (2008): 427–42.

———. "Lords of the Dance: Professionals as Institutional Agents." *Organization Studies* 29, no. 2 (2008): 219–38.

Seville, Catherine. *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Shattock, Joanne. "Introduction." In *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature 1830–1914*, edited by Joanne Shattock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Shore, W. "The Crisis in the Book Market." *Fortnightly Review*, December 1904, 1088–95.

Shorter, Clement. *The Brontës: Life and Letters*. 2 vols. Vol. 1, London: Hodder & Stoughton 1908.

Simpson, David. "Literary Criticism and the Return to "History"." *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 4 (1988): 721–47.

Skeet, Charles J. "Mudie's "Select" Library." *The Literary Gazette*, 24th November 1860, 452.

Slater, Michael. *Dickens, Charles John Huffman (1812-1870)*. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Smith, George, and Sidney Lee. *George Smith: A Memoir with Some Pages of Autobiography*. London: For Private Circulation, 1902.

Smith, Margaret, ed. *The Letters of Charlotte Bronte: 1829–1847*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Smith, Simon Nowell. *Letters to Macmillan. Selected and Edited by Simon Nowell-Smith. [with Plates.].* London: Macmillan; New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967.

"The Society of Authors." http://www.societyofauthors.org/.

Spector, Bert. "Using History Ahistorically: Presentism and the Tranquility Fallacy." *Management & Organizational History* 9, no. 3 (2014/07/03 2014): 305–13.

Spiers, John. *Gissing and the City: Cultural Crisis and the Making of Books in Late Victorian England*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Squires, Claire. *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

———. "Mary Ann Gillies, the Professional Literary Agent in Britain (Review)." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 78, no. 1 (2009).

Srebrnik, Patricia "Strahan, Alexander Stuart (1833–1918)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Srebrnik, Patricia Thomas. *Alexander Strahan, Victorian Publisher*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1986.

Stape, J. H. "Enter the Literary Agent." *English Literature in Transition* 51, no. 4 (2008): 452–55.

Steinbach, Susie. *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture, and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. London; New York: Routledge, 2012.

Stevenson, Iain. *Book Makers: British Publishing in the Twentieth Century*. London: The British Library 2010.

Stokes, Simon L. L. M. *Art and Copyright*. Second ed. Oxford: Hart, 2012.

Strachan, John. "Satirical Print Culture." In *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*, edited by Francis O'Gorman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Sturrock, June. "Literary Women of the 1850s and Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Dynevor Terrace*." In *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*, edited by Nicola Diane Thompson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Suarez, Michael F., and H. R. Woudhuysen. "Introduction." In *The Book: A Global History*, edited by Michael Felix Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Suarez, Michael Felix. "Historiographical Problems and Possibilities in Book History and National Histories of the Book." *Studies in Bibliography* 56 (2003): 140–70.

Suddaby, Roy. "Challenges for Institutional Theory." *Journal of Management Inquiry* 19, no. 1 (2010): 14–20.

Suddaby, Roy, William M. Foster, and Albert J. Mills. "Historical Institutionalism". In *Organizations in Time: History, Theory, Methods* edited by Marcelo Bucheli and R. Daniel Wadhwani. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Suddaby, Roy, William M. Foster, and Chris Quinn Trank. "Rhetorical History as a Source of Competitive Advantage." In *The Globalization of Strategy Research* edited by Joel A. C. Baum and Joseph Lampel. Advances in Strategic Management Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing 2010.

Sutherland, J. A. *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 1976.

Sutherland, John. "Publishing History: A Hole at the Centre of Literary Sociology." *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 3 (1988): 574–89.

———. "The Victorian Novelists: Who Were They?". In *The Book History Reader*, edited by David Finklestein and Alistair McCleery. Abingdon: Routledge, 2006.

The Booksellers Association. "About Us." http://www.booksellers.org.uk/aboutus.

The Publishers Association. "Market Research and Statistics." London: The Publishers Association 2014.

"Thomas Norton Longman, Esq.". *The Gentlemen's Magazine*, November 1842.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Thompson, John B. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century*. Second ed. Cambridge: Polity, 2012.

Thompson, Nicola Diane. *Victorian Women Writers and the Woman Question*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Timbs, John. *Club Life of London with Anecdotes of the Clubs, Coffee-Houses and Taverns of the Metropolis*. 2 vols. Vol. 1, London: Richard Bentley, 1866.

Trollope, Anthony. *Autobiography*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company 1922.

———. *Thackeray*. English Men of Letters, edited by John Morley. New York; London Harper & Brothers Publishers 1901.

Tuer, Andrew W. "The Incorporated Society of Authors." *The Athenaeum*, 11th October 1884, 465.

Üsdiken, Behlül, and Alfred Kieser. "Introduction: History in Organisation Studies." *Business History* 46, no. 3 (2007): 321–30.

Dictionary of Literary Biography: Vol 106 British literary publishing houses, 1820–1880. London: Gale 1991.

Van Arsdel, Rosemary T. "Macmillan Family (*Per. C.* 1840–1986)." In *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Ventresca, Marc J., and John W. Mohr. "Archival Research Methods." In *Blackwell Companion to Organizations*, edited by Joel A. C. Baum. 805–28. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002.

Wald, James. "Periodicals and Periodicity." In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Waller, Philip. *Writers, Readers and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1879–1918*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Warwick, Alexandra, and Martin Willis. "Introduction: Defining Victorian." In *The Victorian Literature Handbook*, edited by Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis. London, New York: Continuum 2008.

Watson, Tony J. "The Emergent Manager and Processes of Management Pre-Learning." *Management Learning* 32, no. 2 (2001): 221–35.

Watt, A. P. *Letters to A. P. Watt*. London: A.P. Watt & Son, 1896.

Watt, A. P. "Advertisement." London: The Athenaeum, 1896.

Weedon, Alexis. *Bohn, Henry George (1796–1884)*. Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

———. "The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880–1920 (Review)." *Victorian Studies* 50, no. 4 (2008): 720–21.

———. *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.
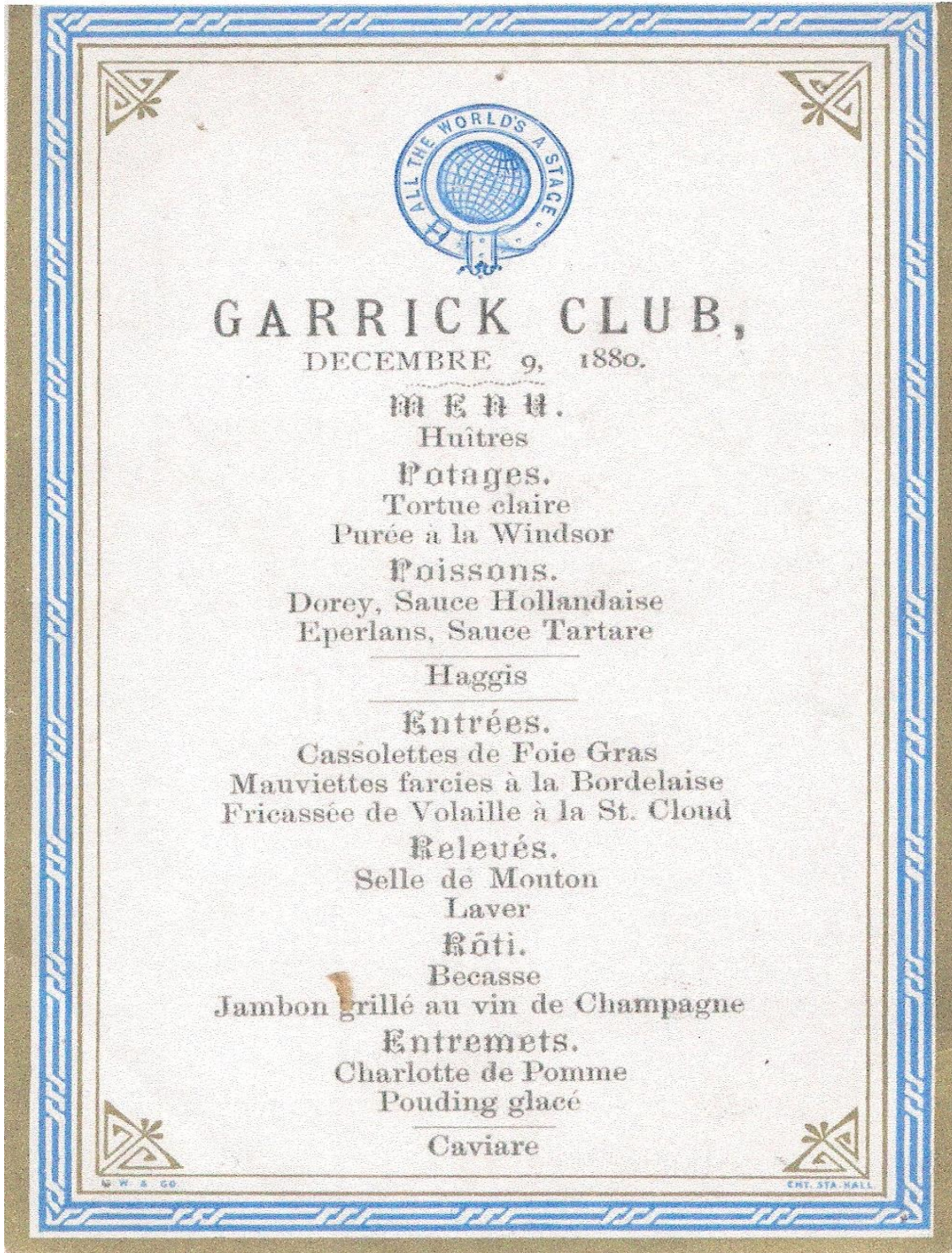
Whitaker, Joseph. "Editorial Article." *The Bookseller*, 6th March 1890.

Wilkes, Joanne. *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth Century Britain: The Critical Reception of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot*. Farnham Ashgate 2010.

Woll, Thomas. *Publishing for Profit: Successful Bottom-Line Management for Book Publishers*. London: Kogan Page, 1999.

Woodmansee, Martha, and Peter Jaszi. *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*. Durham; London: Duke University Press, 1994.

Worth, George J. *Macmillan's Magazine: 1859–1907; "No Flippancy or Abuse Allowed"*. The Nineteenth Century. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

Wroot, Herbert E. "A Pioneer in Cheap Literature." *The Bookman*, March 1897, 169–75.

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Appendix A

Facsimile of Menu Card 9th December 1880
Reproduced with Permission from the Garrick Club Archive

Side 1

GARRICK CLUB,
DECEMBRE 9, 1880.

MENU.
Huîtres

Potages.
Tortue claire
Purée a la Windsor

Poissons.
Dorey, Sauce Hollandaise
Eperlans, Sauce Tartare

Haggis

Entrées.
Cassolettes de Foie Gras
Mauviettes farcies à la Bordelaise
Fricassée de Volaille à la St. Cloud

Relevés.
Selle de Mouton
Laver

Rôti.
Becasse
Jambon grillé au vin de Champagne

Entremets.
Charlotte de Pomme
Pouding glacé

Caviare

Side 2

Appendix B

Facsimile of Menu Card as published in
Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography[1]

436　　　　　　　*MEMOIR.*

of his valuable collections of jewels, rare tissues, old laces, and Japanese bronzes. We often had the pleasure of meeting at this friendly house Mr. Thiselton Dyer, now Director

of Kew Gardens, and his wife, the daughter of Sir John Hooker — a most charming person, who reminded both of us of the lovely women immortalized by Reynolds.

---

[1] Hamerton and Hamerton, *Philip Gilbert Hamerton: An Autobiography 1834-1858, And A Memoir By His Wife 1858-1894*. P. 436