Jane Austen, Mary Ann Evans, Margaret Oliphant and Beatrix Potter; The struggle of British female authors in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century

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Introduction

Joanne Rowling, the author of the famous Harry Potter novels, is one of the most well-read authors today, with novels that have sold millions of copies in 65 languages. However, her story of success had a very rocky start. Her manuscript of the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was declined by all twelve publishers she had sent it to. Finally, Bloomsbury published her manuscript with a first print run of only 500 copies. One of their suggestions was to sign her novel with two initials and her last name, J.K. Rowling, because they expected that boys would not want to read a fantasy novel written by a woman.[1]

The story of J.K. Rowling and the initial difficulties she faced to get published at the end of the twenty-first century, is similar to countless of other stories of women trying to get published in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. In this thesis I will discuss four women who faced difficulties to publish, and were trying to be taken serious after they published. Jane Austen, who is now perceived as one of the greatest authors of her time, had to pay a publisher to publish her works because they did not see a future for her works. She did not even see all her works published in her lifetime, with publications of *Northanger Abby* and *Persuasion* appearing only after she had passed away. Another example is Mary Ann Evans, better known as George Eliot. Evans saw it necessary to publish countless literary works, reviews and articles under her male pseudonym. The material she published under her own name when she started her writing career received barely any credit, but as George Eliot she was widely acknowledged and extremely popular. Even today, not everybody is aware that the great literary mind George Eliot was actually a great female mind. One less famous example of a female author during this century is Margaret Oliphant. She published more than fifty novels, several short stories and numerous articles. Despite the amount of works she published and the overall favourable criticism on her manuscripts and stories, she is not well known today. The last nineteenth-century female author I will discuss is Beatrix Potter, the writer and illustrator of the famous stories about Peter Rabbit. Before Frederick Warne and Co. published her books, she had several of her titles printed privately. Despite the popularity of her little books, she was never reviewed or discussed in any literary magazine, which is astounding considering the sales of her books and overall popularity.

Four women who all faced struggles in getting published and being taken seriously as an author. The road to getting published and appreciated was different for each of them. One of

[1] *Jo Rowling Interview on Oprah"*. *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. 2010-10-01. Event occurs at 1:50. Archived from *the original* on 19 December 2011. *Retrieved 28 January 2012*. McGinty, Stephen (16 June 2003). "The J.K. Rowling Story". *The Scotsman*. Retrieved 9 April 2006.

them had to write to provide an income for her entire family, and another married her publisher. The third was well educated – for a woman that is – because her father thought she was so ugly that she would never find a husband, and the fourth was deeply unlucky in love experiencing the death of several of her love interests. Eventually all of them had at least some of their novels published, but the journey towards their publications, and being taken seriously as female authors was never easy. In this master thesis I will discuss these four women and their writing careers in greater detail, in order to answer the following research questions: *What struggles did English female authors encounter in the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century and to what extent did their position change over time*?

The first chapter will provide general background information about the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century and the position of women in general, including female authors specifically. This chapter is followed by four chapters about the four female authors, Jane Austen, Mary Ann Evans, Margaret Oliphant and Beatrix Potter. Every chapter will begin with a brief account of their lives, their education and their relations. Next, the chapters will continue with general information about how these women became authors and discuss several of the novels they published, and how they were received. By looking at the reviews, and the income they received from the publication of the novels, the perception of female authors and their novels will become partially clear. On the basis of these findings, the final chapter will present a conclusion with regard to the research questions posited in this introduction.

Chapter 1. Britain, the Book and Women in the Nineteenth Century[2]

The nineteenth century was a period of profound change for the British in many aspects. Britain had five rulers during this century, starting with King George III who ruled from 1760 to 1820. He was succeeded by George IV, who only ruled for ten years, until his death in 1830. George IV is best known for his extravagant lifestyle; at the age of 35 he already weighed around 111 kilograms. After his death in 1830, he was succeeded by his brother William IV, who reigned for seven years, until his death in 1837. He did not have any legitimate children, so his niece Victoria took over the crown; she ruled Britain until her death in 1901. Victoria has become the national symbol of nineteenth-century Britain. During her reign, the country's territory increased enormously, becoming the largest empire on the globe. Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxony, with whom she had nine children. All her children had arranged marriages with members of other royal families in Europe. After her death in 1901 she was succeeded by Edward VII.[3]

Britain fought more than twenty wars during this century, mostly in other parts of the world. Examples are the Opium Wars against the Chinese (1839-1860) and the first (1880-1881) and second (1899-1902) Boer war in South Africa. The most important conflict occurred at the beginning of the century; the Napoleonic war started in 1803 and consisted of several major conflicts. As Britain was afraid of losing distribution markets on mainland Europe because of Napoleon, the British navy blocked the French coast in 1806, prompting Napoleon to issue the so-called 'Berlin Decree', a full embargo against British trade, which was exactly what the British were afraid of. In 1815, the war was finally ended with the Treaty of Paris, following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo.[4]

The Industrial Revolution, which had started around 1760 and lasted well into the nineteenth century, fundamentally changed the British lifestyle. It was a period of fast economic growth. A common perception of this period is that life drastically improved, but modern historians question that; the life of people did not necessarily improve, it just changed. Despite the various wars that were fought, many inventions were made, which certainly had a positive effect on the life of the citizens. Examples of these inventions are the vaccinations against small

[2] Figure 1: Silhouette of Book. Source: Flickr 'Silhouette Book', < https://www.flickr.com/photos/kanj365/11032337523> (10 April, 2017).
[3] *Royal Website,* 'Royal Encyclopedia', <https://www.royal.uk/royalencyclopedia> (16 May, 2016).
[4] I. Christie, *Wars and Revolutions Britain, 1760-1815* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 3-41.

pox, the introduction of canned food, and gas lighting. Also, many improvements were made to existing production processes, such as in the pottery industry. The Industrial Revolution certainly created the foundation for later improvements in the life of the British people.[5]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the country faced serious financial difficulties, which is not surprising in view of the lasting war effort. The financial difficulties were increased in the 1820s by a bank crisis, following a stock market crash and the so-called 'Panic of 1825'. The increase of the population, from 6.1 million in 1760 to 20.8 million in 1851, enlarged the financial problems even further, in spite of the fact that many British migrated to overseas parts of the empire. In view of the large increase in population, it is surprising that the quality of life did not decrease. The growth in population meant an increase in the consumption of food and a growing need for houses and jobs. Britain was able to sustain the quality of life of its citizens; the national income actually increased nearly two percent between 1830 and 1870.[6]

The book in nineteenth-century Britain

In the nineteenth century, the book, and everything related to it, experienced fundamental changes. It was the century of authors such as Charles Dickens, author of *A Christmas Carol*, Jane Austen, author of *Pride and Prejudice*, George Eliot, author of *The Mill on the Floss*, and James Matthew Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*. Their novels were serially published in periodicals and magazines from the beginning of the century onwards. Charles Dickens did not publish his first complete novel *The Pickwick Papers* until 1837, following its publication in instalments the previous years.[7]

The position of the author changed drastically in this period. Authors became celebrities with their own fan base. In general, now they also received money for their work, publishers offering them large sums of money if their works sold well. As a consequence, the volume of works sent to publishers increased vastly. The number of authors grew from 626 in 1841 to 6111 in 1881.[8] With this increase in writers, the amount of publications also expanded, from 14.550 publications in the beginning of the century to 60.812 publications towards the end of the

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[5] J. Mokyr, 'Accounting for the Industrial Revolution', in R. Floud and P. Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain: Volume 1: Industrialization 1700-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 2, 10, 11, 13, 14.

[6] Ibid., pp. 11, 16. M. Haupert, 'Panic of 1825', in D. Glasner and T. Cooley (eds.), *Business Cycles and Depressions: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 511-513. D. Finkelstein, 'Translocal Migration and Print Skills Transfer', in J. McElligott and E. Patten (eds.), *The Perils of Print Culture: Book, Print and Publishing History in Theory and Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 150-152.

[7] S. Eliot, From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', in S. Eliot and J. Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 291, 292. For a general survey, see S. Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919* (London: Bibliographical Society, 1994).

[8] P. Leary and A. Nash, 'Authorship', in D. McKitterick (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain Volume 6: 1830-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 173.

century.[9] Even though more writers were sending their material to publishers, and more material was being published than ever before, it was still difficult to get published. Especially new unpublished writers could struggle to find a publisher. Many writers also wrote anonymously, which had the advantage that publishers could not base their selection of materials on whether the author was female, poor or otherwise unpopular.[10]

Until 1850 the most common genre of published materials was religion, then other genres such as encyclopaedias, textbooks, guidebooks, journals and newspapers began to appear. The expansion of the number of newspapers and magazines also influenced novels; between 1861 and 1891 the percentage of published books went down from 46 percent published material, including newspapers, journals etc., to 41 percent. Publishers, moreover, began looking for new and innovative ways to present their books to a wider audience in order to increase production again. For example, new and more refined illustration techniques such as steel engraving and lithography were introduced.[11]

At the beginning of the century, novels were published separately in – mostly - three volumes, the so-called three-decker. The average price of a novel was about half a weekly income of a middle-class household (15 shilling). After 1815, the prices of books increased, until in 1861 the paper duty was finally abolished, which made it possible to produce cheaper books. At the beginning of the century, books were still published unbound; a book would arrive at the bookshop in a temporary binding of grey card board. With increased mass production, it became possible to industrialize the binding of books as well. As the traditional leather binding was expensive, publishers looked for new materials, the most important of which was linen over card board. [12]

Traditionally, the cheapest type of books were chapbooks, poorly printed traditional stories on folk heroes, with titles such as *Robin Hood*, *Guy of Warwick* or The *History of Jack the Giant Killer*, sold by itinerant hawkers all over the country. The target audience was the poor, although chapbooks were read in all layers of British society. This type of printed material almost completely disappeared in the nineteenth century, it being replaced by popular periodical print such as the *Penny Magazine* and the *Penny Encyclopaedia* published by Charles Knight in London. Such low-cost periodicals made educational reading available to the poorest classes. Middle-class

[9] Eliot, 'Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919', pp. 117, 147.
[10] Leary and Nash, 'Authorship', pp. 173, 175-177.
[11] Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', pp. 293, 295, 296, 299. Eliot, 'Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing 1800-1919', p. 105. J. Mollier and M. Cachin, 'A Continent of Texts: Europe 1800-1890', in Eliot and Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, pp. 306-310.
[12] A. Reithmayr, 'Beauty of Commerce: Publishers' Bindings, 1830-1910', *University of Rochester, River Campus Libraries* <rbscp.lib.rochester.edu/3380> (10 May, 2016).

readers who did not read popular periodical print, were served by cheap editions that came out after the first, expensive edition of a book had sold out.[13]

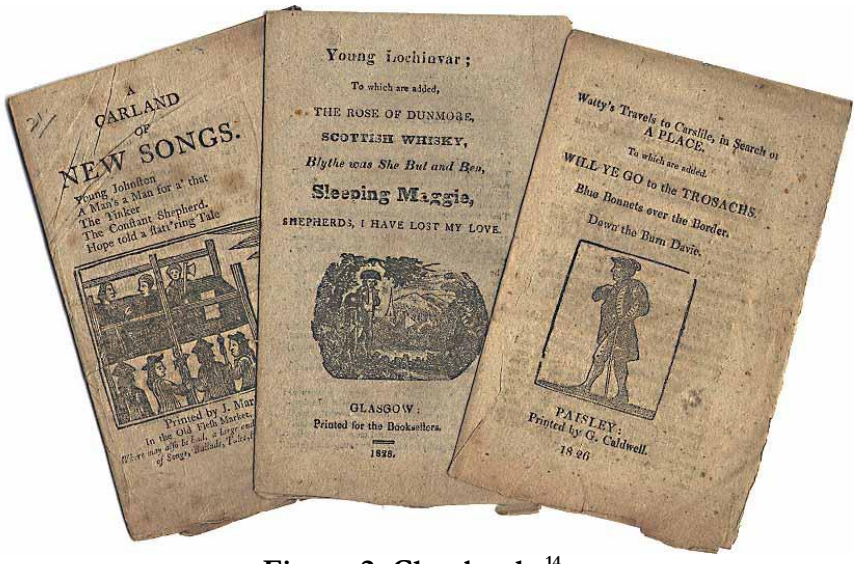

Figure 2: Chapbooks[14]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the reading of literature was still seen as an activity for the elite, not for the middle class, and certainly not for the workers. This gradually changed when the middle-class found other ways of accessing literature. One option was to borrow materials from libraries. In the 1850s, the first public libraries appeared where books could be borrowed, even for an hour. The lending system provided the opportunity to read many different books. Besides the public libraries, commercial circulating libraries set up by booksellers also became very popular.[15]

The literacy rate steadily grew; in 1800, around 45 percent of the adult female population and 60 percent of the male population could read, which increased to 94 percent of the male population and 93 percent of the female population in 1891. The difference between the male and female literacy was indeed very small. The increase of literacy was partially made possible by the fast development of the railway in Britain. Within thirty years, it was possible to transport large amounts of goods all over the country. Magazines and newspapers could now be conveyed

[13] D. McKitterick, 'Introduction', in idem (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Volume 6: 1830-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 31. Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', p. 295.
[14] University of South Carolina, 'Chapbooks', < http://library.sc.edu/spcoll/britlit/cbooks/cbook1.html > (10 April, 2017).
[15] Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', pp. 297- 299.

and arrive at their destined location on the same day. As a result, reading became a leisure activity, enjoyed by more people every year.[16]

Authors could get published in three different ways. The first type was based on commission, which means that the author paid the production costs as well as a ten percent fee to the publisher. The second type was half-profits publishing, in which the publisher took the risk of paying for publication and would split the profits fifty/fifty with the author. The last type was based on the transfer of copyright by the author to the publisher for a given sum of money.[17]

Up to the eighteenth century, the rights of a work were owned by the publisher, not the author. In 1709 copyright was extended to the author, but the legislation remained very much disputed. A parliamentary commission described the Copyright Act of 1709 in 1878 as 'wholly destitute of any sort of arrangement, incomplete, often obscure, and even when it is intelligible upon long study, it is in many parts so ill-expressed that no one who does not give such as study can expect to understand it'.[18] The original Copyright Act stated that all material was under copyright until fourteen years after publication. If the author was still alive after this period, the copyright was extended for another fourteen years. In 1814, copyright was extended to 28 years, whether the author was dead or alive. In 1835, the author Tomas Noon Talfourd proposed to create an umbrella copyright law, which would extend copyright to sixty years after the death of the author. The bill was adjusted from sixty years to seven years after the death of the author. In 1842, a new law was passed to extend copyright from seven years after the death of the author, to 42 years, ensuring that publishers paid fees to the heirs of authors.[19]

Another issue was the protection of the rights of authors and publishers abroad. Cheap editions of the works of British authors were pirated abroad and shipped back to Britain to be sold at a lower price than the original. The International Copyright Act of 1838 granted foreign authors protection, so their works could not be printed abroad without permission, which was extended in subsequent years. Not many countries, however, signed the act straight away. Prussia was the first in 1846, followed by France in 1851 and Belgium in 1854. America was a different case. In the United States a law had been passed in 1790 which gave publishers the right to reprint foreign works without consequences. By 1820, eighty percent of foreign works printed were by British authors.[20]

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[16] Ibid., p. 293.
[17] Leary and Nash, 'Authorship', p. 177.
[18] Royal Copyright Commission, *Royal Commission on the Laws and Regulations, relating to Home, Colonial and Foreign Copyrights* (London: Royal Copyright Commission, 1878), n.pag.
[19] Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', pp. 293-294.
[20] C. Seville, 'Copyright', in McKitterick (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Volume 6: 1830-1914*, pp. 215, 216, 220, 223.

The technology of printing also changed drastically in the nineteenth century. At the end the eighteenth century the wooden hand press was still generally used until Lord Stanhope built a cast iron press that greatly reduced the strength that was required to use the press and consequently could print larger sheets in 1800. The capacity of this press was 480 sheets per hour, which was twice as much as with the old press. The German engineer Frederich Koenig and his partner Thomas Bensley successfully built a completely new cylinder press that was driven not by manpower but by steam in 1811. Three years later they sold their first press to *The Times* newspaper in London. In 1843, the press was further modernized; Richard Hoe's rotary printing press could print around half a million of copies in one day.[21]

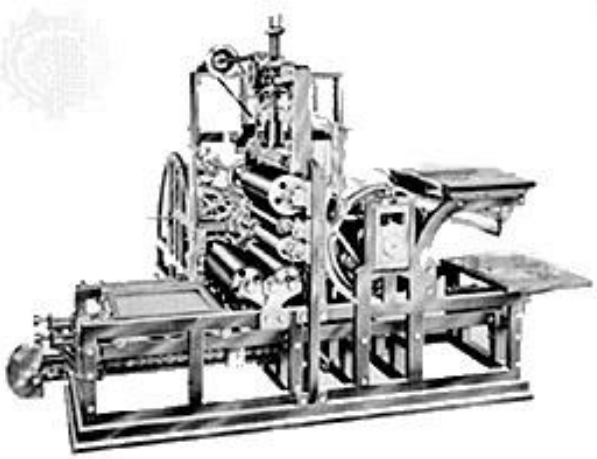

Figure 3: Cylinder press invented by Frederich Koenig and Thomas Bensley[22]

The position of women in British publishing

Women were still far removed from an equal position in society in the nineteenth century. They were not allowed to vote, to own property or do anything without the permission of their husband, father or brothers.

Middle-class women would often be educated, but not to the level of their husband or other male family members. Often a father would teach his daughters at home. Even of the relatively few women that were well educated, it was expected that they stayed at home. Still, over the course of the century, the percentage of women working in trade and industry increased, including in the publishing industry. In 1841, 6000 women worked in the printing industry; forty years later this number had increased to 53.000. The majority of women were engaged in bookbinding, as hiring women for this profession was cheaper than hiring men. In general, it can be said that women worked in low paid jobs. Higher paid positions were out of reach to them, as

[21] For a general survey, see B. Philip, *A History of Graphic Design* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998).
[22] Britannica, 'Friedrich Koenig', < https://www.britannica.com/biography/Friedrich-Koenig> (10 April, 2016).

they lacked the qualifications, and in the rare cases they did have the proper education they were not hired because they were women.[23]

In spite of the unequal position of women, there was an increase in the number of female authors. Among them are, to mention only the most famous, Jane Austen, Emily, Anne and Charlotte Bronte, Margaret Oliphant and in the twentieth century Virginia Woolf and Beatrix Potter. Although their position was better than a century before, female authors still faced many difficulties, for which reasons they would sometimes publish anonymously, write under a pseudonym or paid a publisher to publish their works. Female authors also faced the challenge of being taken seriously as writers by men.

As said, a fair number of female writers wrote under a pseudonym, such as George Elliot, and Charlotte and Emily Bronte. Magazines and periodicals, in which anonymous contributions were printed, were more convenient for women. Female authors sent their contribution without giving their name and sex and nobody would know that they were female. If their works were of sufficient quality they would get published. The novelist Geraldine Jewsbury (1812-1880) had almost two thousand anonymous book reviews published in the literary magazine *Athenaeum*, without the readers knowing her true identity.[24]

Several female authors were also active as translators, which had become an accepted profession for women. Translating texts from other languages also provided women with access to foreign ideas. However, the female translator still had to submit herself to the original version that was often written by a male author.[25]

Women did usually have the advantage that they did not have to write for a living, unlike the majority of their male counterparts. Beatrix Potter, Jane Austen, and George Eliot all had sufficient financial means so that they did not have to depend on an income from their writings. However, in some cases the female author was the sole provider of money. For these authors, male and female, the Royal Literary Fund had been created in 1790 by David Williams. It financially supported authors who could not survive with the income they received from writing. Between 1840 and 1880, 85 percent of the beneficiaries of the fund were unmarried, widowed or single female authors.[26]

[23] Leary and Nash, 'Authorship', pp. 172-213. S. Simon, *Gender in Translations: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 1-35
[24] Leary and Nash, 'Authorship', p. 186.
[25] Simon, 'Gender in Translations: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission', pp. 1-14.
[26] Leary and Nash, 'Authorship', p. 193.

Chapter 2. Jane Austen: Conduct Books for Women[27]

It was clear that in the nineteenth century women were struggling to be educated and have more rights, so most women did not even think about becoming authors which was considered such a male profession. So, the struggle for women that wanted to become authors, and taken seriously as authors, was difficult. Even authors that today are perceived as the best of their field faced countless difficulties before they were published, and even after they were published the problems continued.

Jane Austen is one of the most famous female authors of the nineteenth century. She was born on 16 December, 1775 and passed away on 18 July, 1817. Austen was the seventh child of George Austen and Cassandra Leigh, in a family with a total of eight children. Her father was a country clergyman, her mother a member of the aristocratic Leigh family. She was brought up in a financially stable environment, living most of her life in Steventon, Hampshire. Jane Austen moved to Bath in 1801, and again six years later to Southampton together with her mother and sisters, where she spent the remaining years of her life.[28]

The information about Austen's childhood is very limited. It is known that her health was poor, but despite her illnesses, she went to school along with her sisters. The Austen girls attended the Abbey School in Reading, a leading independent girl's school. There is no information about the rest of her education. In the time that Jane Austen was born it was uncommon for girls to attend school, so she was privileged to attend.[29]

Jane Austen never married, even though she came close to marriage on several occasions. Her first love was Tom Lefroy, the nephew of Isaac Peter Lefroy, a rector of the local church and one of the neighbours of the Austen family in Steventon. In Austen's letters, it becomes clear that the two of them liked each other. She expected a proposal, but Lefroy left for Ireland and didn't return until three years later. Even though she was still curious about him after his return, the couple did not get engaged. After her failed romantic involvement with Tom, she took an interest in Samuel Blackall, also known as the real-life Mr. Darcy. According to some sources,

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[27] Figure 4: Silhouette of Jane Austen. Source: Austen Blog, 'Silhouette of Jane Austen', < https://austenblog.com/2010/05/09/a-closer-look-at-images-of-jane-austen/ > (10 April, 2017).
[28] F. Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1914), pp. 11, 36, 38, 43, 44, 47.
[29] Ibid., p. 12. G.H. Tucker, *Jane Austen, the Woman* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), pp. 66, 67. *The Telegraph*, vol. (2009), n.pag., 'Mystery Jane Austen Suitor who Sparked Rift with Sister Named', <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/booknews/5382841/Mystery-Jane-Austen-suitor-who-sparked-rift-with-sister-named.html> (19 October, 2016).

Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra fought for the affection of Samuel. Neither Jane nor Cassandra ever became close enough with Samuel for a proposal, and he eventually married Susannah Lewis. In one of her letters to Cassandra, Jane wrote: 'I would wish Miss Lewis to be of a silent turn and rather ignorant', which was a rather unfriendly comment for her. Nothing happened in her love life until she fell in love with Francis Doyle towards the end of the eighteenth century, whom she had met on a vacation in Switzerland. Sadly, he passed away before their relationship could progress further. The account on whether Austen and Doyle actually met is dubious. According to George Holber Tucket, author of *Jane Austen, the Woman*, there are no accounts of the family ever taking a trip to Switzerland. Austen clearly was not lucky in her love life and unfortunately, this did not change in her last known affair; her beloved, a man whose name is still unknown today, passed away before their relationship could become more serious. A niece of Jane and Cassandra, Caroline Austen, wrote that her aunt Cassandra talked about this gentleman who had fallen in love with Jane, and that his death had shocked them all since he was considered a serious wedding candidate.[30]

Most of the information available about Austen was collected by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh. Some critics, for instance Margaret Oliphant, debated whether James Edward really new Jane as well is he made people believe. Together with two of his sisters, he documented everything he could find about Austen. In 1869, he published *A Memoir of Jane Austen,* which contained all the information he had gathered on his aunt. The book created a renewed interest in her novels. One significant part that is missing in this biography, however, is the correspondence between Jane and her sister Cassandra. Cassandra destroyed the majority of their correspondence because she was of opinion that the letters should only be seen by her. Nevertheless, a small part of the letters that Jane and Cassandra exchanged was preserved and came in the possession of Lord Edward Knatchbull Hugessen Brabourne, who published it as *Letters of Jane Austen*.[31]

From Sense and Sensibility *to* Persuasion*: Jane's Writing Career*

Jane Austen worked on her novels from 1795 to 1798 and again from 1809 until her death in 1817. She was still working on a new book when she passed away. The first book that was published was *Sense and Sensibility* in 1811, followed by *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813. She passed away before she could see all of her novels published; several of these were published for the first time

[30] Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, pp. 27, 29. For a general survey, see J. McMaster, *Jane Austen, Young Author* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2016).

[31] Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, p. 2. For a general survey, see J. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). J. Wilkes, *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain. The Critical Reception of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot* (Farnham: Ahsgate Publishing, 2010) p. 132.

after her death. Her books were published by several publishing houses because she struggled to get published. As a result, she accepted little money for her copyright or published on commission. Between 1811 and 1817 her novels were published by Richard Bentley[32] in serial volumes, and later in cheaper versions as part of the 'Standard Author Series' in 1833. He only paid 210 pounds for the copyright of five of her novels. Jane Austen was more popular after her death than when she was alive. Warre Cornish, the author of *Jane Austen*, described her fame after death as follows: '[…] Jane Austen, who had been neglected by her contemporaries, though she always had enthusiastic admirers, now came to her rights.'[33] During her life time few reviews about her works were written and of the fifty reviews that appeared until 1870, only six of these articles were completely about her. The increase in popularity of Austen grew even further because of the publication of James Edward Austen's *A Memoir of Jane Austen*. He described her as an author with a slow growth in popularity when she was still alive, but who eventually became successful.[34]

Jane Austen kept a detailed record of the revenues she received for her novels, income which she used to support her family. The Austen family did not have the financial means to live a luxurious life. Nevertheless, the income was sufficient enough for at least one servant and several annual trips, as well sending the girls to school. She received a total of £684 pounds for the four novels that were published during her lifetime, the equivalent of around £43.000 pounds in 2015. Considering her enormous popularity today this is not much compared to male authors. Charles Darwin for instance received £180 (around £17.000 in 2015), for the copyright of his famous book *The Origin of Species*. The income for the copyright transfer was similar to that what Austen received, but the difference was that this excluded his profit. Darwin also received 2/3 of the profit of his book, which amounted to £3000 (£272.000 today).[35]

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[32] Richard Bentley is also known from his collaboration with Henry Colburn, who published some material of Margaret Oliphant.

[33] Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, p. 53.

[34] S. Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-1890', in Eliot and Rose (eds.), *A Companion to the History of the Book*, pp. 291-302. Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, p. 53. For a general survey, see B.C. Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 1987). Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, pp. 136-140. J.A. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (London: Bloomsbury Academics, 2014), p. 35.

[35] Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, pp. 104-106. Measuring Worth, 'Purchasing Powers of British Pounds from 1270 to present', <https://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/> (19 October, 2016). Darwin Correspondence Project, 'Letter to Charles Lyell, 28 March 1859', <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/?docId=letters/DCP-LETT-2437.xml;query=john%20murray;brand=default> (1 January, 2017). Darwin Correspondence Project, 'Letter to John Murray, 31 March 1859', <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/?docId=letters/DCP-LETT-2441.xml;query=john%20murray;brand=default> (1 January, 2016). Darwin Correspondence Project, 'Letter from John Murray, 1 April 1859', <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/?docId=letters/DCP-LETT-2443.xml;query=john%20murray;brand=default> (1 January, 2016).

Sense and Sensibility

Sense and Sensibility was first written as an epistolary novel under the title *Elinor and Marianne*. Austen changed the book into the novel as we know it today in 1797. It took more than ten years before *Sense and Sensibility* was eventually published by the London publisher Thomas Egerton (fl. 1781-1837) of the 'Military Library'. The majority of his publications were military books in all languages, hence his nickname 'Thomas Egerton of the Military Library'. He was also the official bookseller of the Naval Board and may have had a circulating library. Egerton agreed with Austen on a commission of sales.[36] The book came out in 1811 in three volumes. The publication costs of the novel were around £160 and Jane's share of the profits amounted to £140. *Sense and Sensibility* was worth its money, and more, since the first edition sold out within two years after publication. Originally the author on the novel was given on the title-page as 'a lady'. It is unclear why Austen decided not to mention her own name at first.[37]

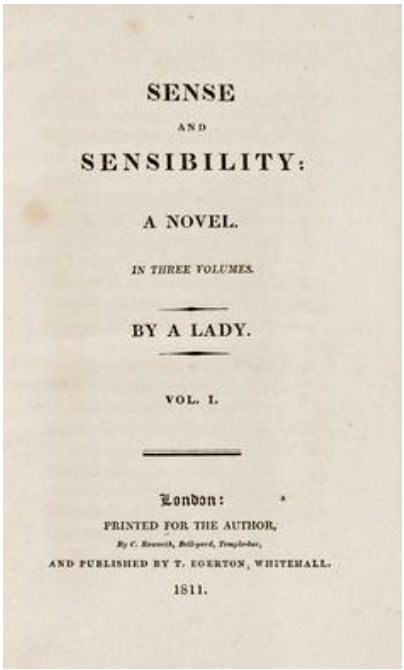
SENSE
AND
SENSIBILITY:
A NOVEL.
IN THREE VOLUMES.
BY A LADY.
VOL. I.
London:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,
AND PUBLISHED BY T. EGERTON, WHITEHALL.
1811.

Figure 5: Written by 'a lady'[38]

[36] See Chapter 1 for a definition of publishing based on commission.
[37] J. Heldman, 'How Wealthy Is Mr. Darcy- Really? Pounds and Dollars in the World of Pride and Prejudice', in *Jane Austen Society of North America*, vol. 12 (1990), pp. 38-49. J. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (London: Thomas Egerton, 1811). British Museum Website, 'Thomas Egerton', <www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=92661> (3 July, 2016). K. Sutherland, 'Jane Austen Dealings with John Murray and His Firm', *Review of English Studies*, 64:23 (2012), pp. 105-126. Wilkes, *Women Reviewing Women in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 2.
[38] Martine Jane Roberts, 'Sense and Sensibility', < https://martinejaneroberts.com/sense-sensibility/> (10 April, 2017).

Despite its popularity, Sense *and Sensibility* was only reviewed a couple of times. One of the first reviews was written for the issue of the *Critical Review* of February 1812 by an anonymous critic. In it, a summary of the story with a few side notes is given; the author recommends the novel to readers who want to try something new and continues to describe the balance that Austen created between the characters Elinor and Marianne. Overall, the review was positive, but it has to be said that the *Critical Review* was favourable in the majority of its reviews, so it is not surprising this was the case with Austen's first novel as well. There is no information about the specific viewpoints of the journal towards female authors.[39]

A second review appeared in the *British Critic* of May 1812, was also written by an unknown critic. An interesting part of the review is this passage at the end: 'We will, however, detain our female friends no longer than to assure them, that they may peruse these volumes not only with satisfaction but with real benefits, for they may learn from them, if they please, many sober and salutary maxims for the conduct of life.' The novel is perceived as 'female' and as a guide book for women on how they should behave, instead of being read for pleasure. The critic diminishes the real value of the novel by degrading it to a conduct book and was probably already biased before he started reading. But, the tone of the review can be explained, since the *British Critic* was an extremely conservative journal which valued religion very highly. [40]

Pride and Prejudice

Pride and Prejudice is Austen's most famous work and the first novel she wrote, even though it was her second novel to be published. The book was declined by the London publisher Thomas Cadell[41], who after receiving the manuscript sent it back without a note. Consequently, Jane Austen changed the manuscript drastically in 1811 and 1812. After that, she sent it Thomas Egerton, who had already published *Sense and Sensibility*. She sold the copyright to him for £110 pounds (ca. £8000 today). The book, entitled *First Impressions*, was published in three volumes in 1813 and cost 18 shillings. This was sixteen years after Austen had written the story and two years after the publication of *Sense and Sensibility*.[42]

An anonymous reviewer of the *Critical Review* of March 1813 reviewed Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The critic specially commends the large number of characters. Whereas most novels focus on only one or two characters, *Pride and Prejudice* had a much broader focus according to the

[39] Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage,* pp. 35-40.
[40] Ibid., p. 40. Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, pp. 138-142.
[41] Thomas Cadell (1742-1802) was a bookseller and publisher from London. He published Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755. The majority of the books he published were religious or history books.
[42] J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (London: Thomas Egerton, 1813). Austen-Leigh, *A Memoir of Jane Austen*, pp. 138-142. Measuring Worth, 'Purchasing Powers of British Pounds from 1270 to present', <https://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/> (1 January, 2017).

reviewer. He repeatedly makes a comparison between the characters Elizabeth Bennet and Beatrice and writes favourably on 'life lessons for women' in the book. According to him, a lesson can be learned from letting young girls have their own way and associating themselves with military officers. It is hard to imagine that Austen had the same feelings towards the interaction of her female characters with military men.[43]

Another review of *Pride and Prejudice* was by a critic in the *British Critic* of February 1813. The author briefly touches upon the positive review of her previous novel and is on the whole positive, adding that the novel can be read with satisfaction and amusement, unlike the previous review by the *British Critic* of *Sense and Sensibility*, in which that novel was described as a conduct book. This change can be explained by a change of editors around 1812.[44]

Besides the small number of reviews of *Pride and Prejudice*, several authors and critics discussed Jane's work briefly as well. The critic George Henry Lewes, who was the unofficial husband of Mary Ann Evans, wrote in the *Blackwood Magazine*[45] that he was jealous that he had not written the book himself. On the other hand, Charlotte Bronte, author of *Jane Eyre,* was not a fan of *Pride and Prejudice.* She wrote a letter to George Henry Lewes stating that Jane's books were shrewd and observant and not profound, 'a carefully-fenced, highly cultivated garden with neat borders and delicate flowers—but no glance of a bright vivid physiognomy—no open country—no fresh air—no blue hill—no bonny beck'. Bronte did not understand that Lewes liked the novel.[46]

Mansfield Park

Mansfield Park, the third novel written by Jane Austen, was published in 1814 by Thomas Egerton, the publisher who also published her previous two books. The second edition was published by John Murray in 1816. It is unknown what Austen generated from the publication of this novel.[47]

The firm of John Murray Publishing today is still located on Albermarle Street in London, where it has been since the company was founded in 1768 by John Murray. His successor, also named John, started the *Quarterly Review* in 1809. The main focus of the company was on fiction, reviews, and travel literature. Besides Jane Austen, who was probably there first female author, John Murray also published Lord Byron, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Darwin. In 1917

[43] Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage,* pp. 43-48.
[44] Ibid., pp. 41-43.
[45] *Blackwood Magazine* will be described in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.
[46] British Library Website, 'Eight letters of Charlotte Bronte to George Henry Lewes', <http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/eight-letters-from-charlotte-bront-to-george-henry-lewes-november-1847-october-1850> (17 September, 2016). Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The critical Heritage*, pp. 126-129.
[47] J. Austen, *Mansfield Park* (London: Thomas Egerton, 1814).

John Murray took over another London publisher, Smith, Elder and Co, which published the *Cornhill Magazine,* as well as several novels by George Eliot.[48]

There are no published reviews of *Mansfield Park*. However, as Austen's other works were now known to a wider readership, readers were inclined to read her latest books, even without reviews.[49]

Emma

Emma was Jane Austen's fourth book and was published in 1815 by John Murray.[50] The income she received for the publication of this novel is again unknown. Emma was, incidentally, Austen's favourite character.[51]

Emma was reviewed by the famous Scottish novelist Walter Scott in an article several pages long in *The Quarterly* in March 1816 after John Murray had approached him. Since Murray owned the magazine this was a smart way to gain more popularity for Austen's novels. The review was, however, printed anonymously. Scott wrote:

> We bestow no mean compliment upon the author of *Emma* when we say that, keeping close to common incident and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events.[52]

Walter Scott's impression of the novel is positive. Even though the story focuses on everyday life, he thinks that Jane made it an interesting read.

Several other magazines published short reviews. The review in the *Literary Panorama* of June 1816 consists of only a few sentences, ending with: 'To favour the lady, the gentlemen are rather unequal to what gentlemen should be.' In this review, the focus in once again on how women should behave and how men should be portrayed. This is in line with the review in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September 1816, where the novel is described as instructive for women.[53]

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48 E. Glasgow, 'Publishers in Victorian England', *Library Review*, 47:8 (1998), pp. 395-400. Sutherland, 'Jane Austen Dealings with John Murray and His Firm', pp. 105, 109, 110.
49 Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 73-76.
50 Interestingly, the title page mentions that the book was firstly published in 1816.
51 Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, p. 42. J. Austen, *Emma* (London: John Murray, 1815).
52 For a general survey, see G. Paston, *John Murray's: Records of a Literary circle 1843-1892* (London: John Murray, 1932).
53 Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 70, 72.

Jane Austen collected opinions of *Emma* as well as she did with *Mansfield Park*. The majority of responses are from her family and friends. For instance, she recorded that her mother thought it was more entertaining than *Mansfield Park* but not as interesting as *Pride and Prejudice*.[54]

Northanger Abby and Persuasion

Northanger Abby and *Persuasion* were published together in a four-volume edition. Jane Austen had written *Northanger Abby* in 1798, but the book was not published until 1818, a year after her death. The copyright of *Northanger Abby* was sold to Crosby and Company for ten pounds, but unfortunately, they did not want to publish it. Eventually, John Murray published the novel. The book was first titled *Susan,* but Austen later changed the title, and also the name of the main character Catherine.[55]

Jane Austen had started writing *Persuasion* in 1811 and completed it in 1817, a year before its publication. In a letter to Fanny Knight her niece of 23 March, 1817 she wrote that she had 'something ready for publication'.[56]

Northanger Abbey and *Persuasion* were both reviewed in *The British Critic* in March 1818 by an unknown critic. The review is positive, both with regards to the novels and to Jane Austen herself. The author writes that her previous works are admired and regrets having to mention that these last novels will be the last of Austen's work. He may well have been the same reviewer as the one who had reviewed *Pride and Prejudice*.[57]

The Struggles of a Female Author at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century

The position of women was still very unequal with regard to men at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But Jane Austen is not an example of the average woman in the nineteenth century. Her upbringing and education provided her with more opportunities than most other women had during this period. Her writings focused on her own social class and 'wealthy' upbringing, which also provided an insight into the major problem that most women dealt from that class, which was marriage. Even though it is not mentioned in the previous reviews, one of the criticisms on Austen's work was that she did not look at people of lower social classes who had many more stressing problems to deal with.

The inequality between men and women for Austen became most apparent when she wanted to publish her first novel *Sense and Sensibility*. She desired to become a professional author

[54] British Library Website, 'Opinions by Various People of Jane Austen's Work', <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/opinions-by-various-people-of-jane-austens-work> (19 October, 2016).
[55] Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, pp. 171, 172. J. Austen, *Northanger Abby* (London: John Murray, 1818).
[56] Warre Cornish, *Jane Austen*, p. 195. J. Austen, *Persuasion* (London: John Murray, 1818).
[57] Southam (comp.), *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 79-85.

which was a very uncommon profession for women. Austen struggled with the publication of all of her novels and received very little payment for them. Publishers at first did not want to take a risk with her 'feminine novels', and were afraid that they would not be sold as well as novels written by male authors. Her first novel was published on commission, and even though it sold out in two years she only received £140 for it. Even though the sale numbers proved that she was a popular author, her publisher Thomas Egerton did not pay Austen what she deserved. Her position changed slightly when she started to work with John Murray.

Few contemporary reviews of her books were written of her novels, even though they sold fairly well. The reviews that were published were on the whole positive, although in several reviews her novels are valued as conduct books for women, not as pieces of literature. The reason why women should read them according to some reviewers was because it provided them with information of the proper way to behave.

Today, Jane Austen is perceived as one of the most famous authors of the nineteenth century, but in the nineteenth century she had trouble getting published and was not nearly taken as seriously and was not as popular as she is now. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, female authors still had a long way to go before their work was taken as serious as that of their male counterparts.

Figure 6: Jane Austen[58]

[58] Pemberley, 'Jane Austen', < http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janeinfo.html> (10 April, 2017).

Chapter 3. George Eliot: 'No man ever before had the art of making himself more like a woman'[59]

The previous chapter ended with the statement that there still needed to change a lot for women before they were seen as equals to men. The story towards this equality continues in this chapter with George Eliot. George Eliot is probably the most famous male pseudonym for a female author. By this name Mary Ann Evans, who lived from 1819 to 1880, published numerous of books before her true identity became known around 1858. During the publication of her first novels, there were only a few people who were suspicious of the identity of George Eliot, among them Charles Dickens, author of *A Christmas Carol*. After reading her work he was convinced that Eliot was a woman; he thought that 'no man ever before had the art of making himself so like a woman since the world began.'[60]

Mary Ann Evans was born in Nuneaton, in the West-Midlands, on the 22nd of November, 1819. Her father Robert Evans was a carpenter, builder and estate manager of Arbury Hall in his home town. He had been married once before when he married Mary Ann's mother, Christiana Evans, with whom he had five children. Mary Ann Evans did not feel loved by her mother and had the feeling that she was of no importance to her family. Her troubled relation with her family continued to haunt her until she was an adult.[61]

From a young age, Mary Ann was considered an intelligent girl. As she was not regarded a physical beauty, her father decided to invest in her education, assuming that marriage would be unlikely. When Evans was five years old she attended Miss Latham's boarding school in Attleborough, close to Nuneaton, together with one of her sisters. She was unhappy there and wrote sad poems in her school notebook about betrayal and death. At the age of thirteen, she attended Mrs. Wallington's boarding school in her home town, where she was perceived as one of the most promising pupils. Both of these schools were renowned for producing sensible and serious women. Mary Ann, however, left school when she was sixteen years old, continuing her

[59] Figure 7: Silhouette of Mary Ann Evans. Source: National Portrait Gallery, 'George Eliot', < http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw01622/George-Eliot-Mary-Ann-Cross-ne-Evans > (10 April, 2017).
[60] L. Stephen, *George Eliot* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1913), p. 55.
[61] Ibid., pp. 1, 55. J.K. Szirotny, *George Eliot's Feminism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 2.

education by self-study. One of the places where she found new information was the library of Arbury Hall. Throughout her life, she continued to read books and study new subjects.[62]

Mary Ann Evans formed emotional attachments to several men who did not return her feelings. One of them was her London publisher John Chapman, who already had a wife and a mistress. Another example of her unilateral emotional attachments was her love for the sociologist Herbert Spencer, who worked on social aspects of the evolution theory; this affair too ended unsuccessfully. Eventually, she met the philosopher George Henry Lewes in 1854; the pair would never marry in church but they considered themselves married and Evans referred to him as her husband. They had met in 1851 and decided to live together three years later. Lewes at the time was still married to Agnes Jervis, a translator, whom he never divorced. Jervis herself had an affair with Thomas Hunt, a family friend. Lewes and Evans were very open about their relationship, which sparked a lot of controversy. Several of Mary Ann's brothers and sisters broke all contact with her because of her relationship with Lewes. Especially the loss of contact with Evans brother took a toll on her, given that she looked up to him since she was little. One of her novels, *Mill on the Floss,* is about the troublesome relationship between brother and sister, and is supposedly based on Mary Ann's own relationship with her brother.[63]

George Henry Lewes was the one who inspired Mary Ann Evans to start writing, instead of just translating other authors' novels. He is described as a man who had an eye for talent, especially that of his wife. Lewes took care of her correspondence with publishers and the reviews and shielded her from criticism; in some ways, he was her guard against the outside world. In the correspondence of Evans, it becomes clear how many of her relations were actually managed by George Henry. He acted as a gate-keeper between Mary Ann and her publisher William Blackwood and Sons, discussing honoraria and publishing dates. In this era married women were still depending on their husbands for financial and work related matters, so it is not surprising that Lewes handled everything around Evans's career. The pair lived happily together until the death of George Henry in 1878. After that, Evans worked on the publication of his unfinished works, *The Problems of Life and Mind.*[64]

She married again two years later, in 1880, this time officially, with John Cross, who was twenty years her junior. Cross suffered from depression and jumped from the balcony of their

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[62] Stephen, *George Eliot*, pp. 10, 12, 14, 15. V.A. Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life* (London: Macmillan Press, 1990), pp. 69, 70.

[63] Stephen, *George Eliot,* pp. 49, 193. Szirotny, *George Eliot's Feminism,* p. 18. Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, pp. 203, 220.

[64] Stephen, *George Eliot,* pp. 49, 193.

hotel during the honeymoon in Switzerland. He survived and the couple returned to England. Sadly, Mary Ann Evans passed away in December of the same year.[65]

From Scenes of Clerical Life *to* Romola*: General information about Mary Ann Evans' writing career*

Mary Ann Evans had no confidence that she would be able to be an author, but at the same time, she thought that she couldn't do anything else either.[66] Before she started writing books, Evans translated several works. She had entered this profession thanks to the daughter of an unidentified personal friend, who had started working on a translation of *Das Leben Jesus* by the German theologian David Friedrich Strauss but could not finish the work because she was getting married. Mary Ann Evans took over and worked on it continuously for two years. It was a struggle; she had moments of depression and often was feeling 'Strauss sick'. Eventually, the book was published in June of 1846, without mention of the name of the translator.[67] Evans enjoyed translating and did not see it as simply recreating the same text in a different language. She thought that German philosophy was more advanced than English philosophy and saw it as her duty to provide access to German texts. Translating provided her with the opportunity for editing, journalism, and reviewing, and it paved the way for other ways of literary recognition.[68] Even though Evans considered translating as something more than recreating a text, many people still disagreed with her work, although women were allowed to do translations since it was considered a non-creative activity, and translators followed the message of the often male author.

At the beginning of her writing career, Mary Ann Evans published her translations with John Chapman, the Edinburgh publisher with whom she lived for a short while. Chapman's publishing company was known to never refuse a book of an author who had published with him before. The company was also known for its innovative new ideas for marketing their fiction; for instance, it annually published the 'Christmas book', a special edition of a popular novel republished especially for Christmas, an issue of one of their magazines, or a book by one of their rising new authors, at a price of only one shilling.[69]

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[65] BBC History Website, 'George Elliot', <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/eliot_george.shtml> (16 September, 2016).
[66] Szirotny, *George Eliot's Feminism,* p. 5.
[67] Stephen, *George Eliot*, p. 32.
[68] L. Scholl, *Translation, Authorship, and the Victorian Professional Woman* (Cornwall: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), p. 7. Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, p. 158.
[69] J.A. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (London: The Athlone Press, 1976), p. 4.

The first text Mary Ann Evans wrote under her own name was a review for Chapman's *Westminster Review* of *The Progress of the Intellect* by Robert William Mackay in 1851.[70] During the same year, she became the unpaid assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*. From then on, every issue of the magazine contained an article on how to reform England and on foreign politics. Chapman announced the publication of two of Evans's works in the *Westminster Review*. However, one of them was never published because she was not paid by Chapman. He supported her as long as she kept translating and editing, but when she wanted to make the switch to journalism and writing novels he stopped his sponsorship.[71]

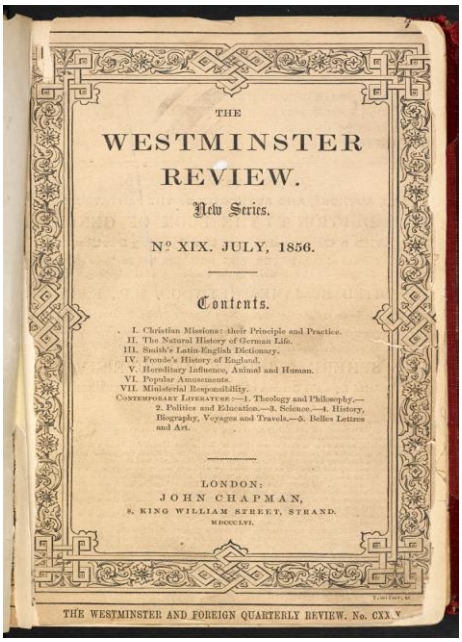
THE
WESTMINSTER
REVIEW.
New Series.
Nº XIX. JULY, 1856.
Contents.
I. Christian Missions: their Principle and Practice.
II. The Natural History of German Life.
III. Smith's Latin-English Dictionary.
IV. Froude's History of England.
V. Hereditary Influence, Animal and Human.
VI. Popular Amusements.
VII. Ministerial Responsibility.
Contemporary Literature:—1. Theology and Philosophy.—2. Politics and Education.—3. Science.—4. History, Biography, Voyages and Travels.—5. Belles Lettres and Art.
LONDON:
JOHN CHAPMAN,
8, KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND.
MDCCCLVI.
THE WESTMINSTER AND FOREIGN QUARTERLY REVIEW. No. CXX.V

Figure 8: Mary Ann Evans her contribution to the Westminster Review[72]

Eventually, Mary Ann Evans left Chapman in 1854 because of his poor management skills. During this period, she created the male alter ego George Eliot,[73] under which she started to publish her writings in literature and philosophy as well as her translations, just as she did under her own name.[74] As George Eliot she published several of her novels with William Blackwood and Sons; first in instalments in their *Blackwood Magazine*, later as books. Mary Ann showed her first stories to George Lewes in 1856, who sent them to *Blackwood Magazine*. People long assumed it was his work since his first name was George as well. Only a few people

[70] Stephen, *George Eliot*, p. 39.
[71] For a general survey, see Scholl, *Translation, Authorship and Victorian professional Woman*; Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, pp. 196, 197.
[72] British Library, 'George Eliot and the Westminster Review', < https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-natural-history-of-german-life-essay-by-george-eliot-from-the-westminster-review > (10 April, 2017).
[73] From here one I will refer to George Elliot as Mary Ann Evans.
[74] Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, p. 7.

questioned the true identity of the author George Eliot, and most definitely did not expect the author to be a woman.[75]

Scenes of Clerical Life

The first literary publication of Mary Ann Evans as George Eliot was *Scenes of Clerical Life,* which was serially published in *Blackwood Magazine* in 1857. It is unclear how much money she received for the novel, or how many copies were printed for the first print-run. Readers paid two shillings and six pence for each issue of the magazine. S*cenes of Clerical Life* consist of three separate stories, *The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton*, *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story* and *Janet's Repentance.* She started writing on 22 September and finished two months later in November 1856. George Henry Lewes sent the stories to Blackwood the following day, telling them that they were written by a 'friend'. John Blackwood said that the stories 'would do', and added some criticism, but accepted the stories without any further hesitation. Lewes informed Blackwood that his 'friend' was afraid of failure, and was therefore very happy that the stories would be published.[76] John Blackwood predicted a great career for Mary Ann Evans after reading *Scenes of the Clerical Life,* despite his comments on the story. In 1876, when Evans identity was already known, he wrote: 'the simple fact is, she is so great a giant that there is nothing for it but to accept her inspirations and leave criticism alone.'[77]

William Blackwood and Sons was a family publishing company and the main publisher outside of London. The company was founded in Edinburgh by William Blackwood in 1804. John Blackwood, son of William Blackwood, was a member of the Blackwood family business from 1839 until his death in 1879. Together with four of his brothers, John turned the company from William Blackwood Publishing to William Blackwood and Sons Publishing. He was in charge of finding suitable articles for the *Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine*, short *Blackwood Magazine* or *Maga.* After the death of his brother Alexander Blackwood in 1845, the editor of *Blackwood Magazine*, he took over the editing position for the magazine.[78]

William Blackwood and Sons was not known for the high honoraria they paid their authors, but they did form life-long friendships with many of them, including female authors such as Margaret Oliphant and Mary Ann Evans who regularly visited the family.[79] The company focused on the talent of an author, not on their gender. Many female authors made contributions

[75] A. Matheson, 'Introduction', in G. Eliot, *Scenes of Clerical Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1909), p. vii.
[76] Ibid., pp. 53-55.
[77] For a general survey of Blackwood, see M. Oliphant, *William Blackwood and His Sons* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1897). Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, pp. 39, 78.
[78] Stephen, *George Eliot*, pp. 53-55; Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, p. 74.
[79] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, pp. 2, 85.

to the *Blackwood magazine,* and in one issue, of November 1884, more women contributed then men. But one issue out of all the years that the journal was printed is of course not a lot.[80] The publication of female authors was also a way for *Blackwood Magazine* to increase their subscriptions and thus their distribution. But despite this, *Blackwood Magazine* never seems to have made an effort to specifically target female readers. First and foremost, in their strategy was a larger share of the market. As a publisher, Blackwood appears not to have made a distinction in gender amongst their readers either.[81]

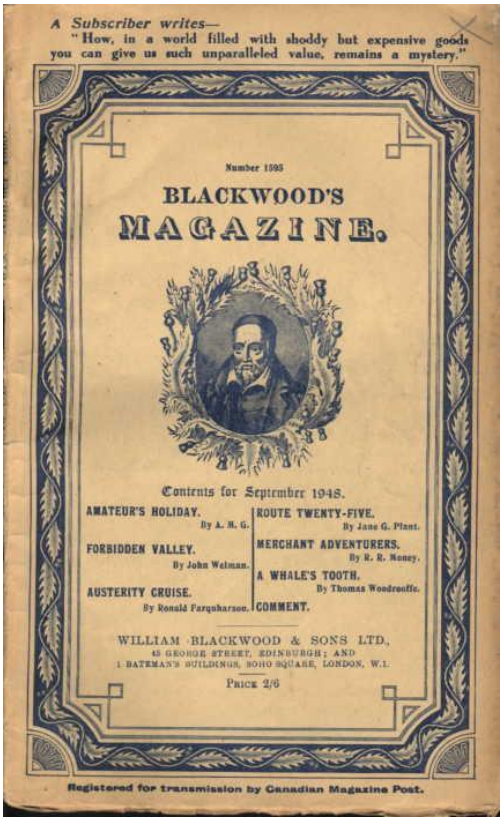

Figure 9: Blackwood Magazine or in short Maga[82]

Even though Blackwood published female authors and treated them well, women, in general, were not considered equal to men in the Blackwood family. The female members of the family took on the traditional roles of wife and mother. They did not pursue a role in the family business, unlike the female authors of Blackwood, who did not fulfil the traditional role of wife and mother. It is interesting that on the one hand women were taken seriously by the company as

[80] J. Oosterom, *The Whirligig of Time: Margaret Oliphant in her Later Years* (Leiden: University Press Leiden, 2004), p. 156.
[81] Ibid., p. 160.
[82] Magazine Data, 'Blackwood Magazine', < http://www.philsp.com/data/data056.html > (10 April, 2017).

authors, but that in their everyday lives, women were considered secondary by the Blackwood family.[83]

Scenes of Clerical Life was considered more successful among critics than among the public.[84] According to Annie Matheson, a Victorian poet and author of the introduction to the Oxford 1909 edition of *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 'the beginning is not satisfactory, but the middle and the end are masterly'. Her comments were a reaction to the criticism of Blackwood, who was not satisfied with *Janet's Repentance*, the first story of the three. It should be noted that Blackwood was still under the assumption that Evans was a man, like Matheson.[85]

Evans received several positive reviews. The unknown author of the review in *The Morning Chronicle* newspaper of 15 January, 1858, described George as a tragic writer, who does not provide his reader with the opportunity to feel comfortable. He continues with a description of the three stories, each a paragraph long, describing *Scenes of a Clerical Life* as a perfect representation of poverty. *The Morning Chronicle* often had various contributions from radical authors, some of whom even landed in jail. The newspaper seems positive towards women contributing articles, despite the fact that they still refer to Evans as male.[86]

Adam Bede

Mary Ann Evans started writing *Adam Bede* a month after she had finished the last story of *Scenes of Clerical Life*. *Adam Bede* was published by John Blackwood at the beginning of 1858 in three volumes, for 31 shillings and six pence, and can be considered equally popular as her previous book. Evans received £800 for a four-year copyright lease, today this would be around £72.000. The first three-decker edition sold 3250 copies, the second – in two volumes at a price of twelve shillings – sold 11.500 copies, and the third, in one volume, which was sold for six shillings, had a total sale of 4500 copies. The popularity of the novel is made clear by the fact that all the three editions were published in 1859. William Blackwood and Sons acknowledged the success and provided Evans with another check of £800 and after four years returned the copyright to her. Her success with *Adam Bede* and *Scenes of Clerical Life* ensured that she was offered £2000 for the first edition of 4000 copies of her next book, *Mill on the Floss,* which she hadn't written yet.[87]

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[83] Ibid., pp. 161, 162.
[84] Stephen, *George Eliot*, p. 82.
[85] Matheson, 'Introduction', p. xi.
[86] *The Morning Chronicle*, London, 15 January, 1858, no. 28414, n.pag. This newspaper can be found at the British Library Newspapers Database of the British Library, <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/bncn/start.do?prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=leiden>. In the search engine, the term of the novel or author should be entered, and then all the newspapers mentioning this title will be listed. This applies to all the references to newspapers in this chapter.
[87] Stephen, *George Eliot*, p. 82. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, pp. 39, 190.

The success of *Adam Bede* is also clear in the reviews; the novel was anonymously reviewed in *The Literary Examiner* of March 5, 1859. The review is quite long with several paragraphs covering half a page. It starts off by stating that *Adam Bede* is a proper sequel to Evans's previous work, *Scenes of Clerical Life*. It continues with an overview of the story and the lesson that the author wants to teach us: 'No one is thoroughly bad: no one is perfectly good.' Following a description of the story, the review describes the various characters and even provides some quotes from the book. In the final paragraph, the author described *Adam Bede* as:

> All but these portions of *Adam Bede*, however, we have read with unmixed pleasure. The story is told in simple and elegant language. Deep pathos, sparkling humour, and pleasant banter are in turn introduced with equal vigor. Characters true to the life are painted with genuine artistic skill. We follow the incidents with a growing interest, and close the book with an impression – and a wholesome one – which cannot easily be effaced.[88]

The Literary Examiner was considered a radical intellectual magazine. Even though during the time the review was written Evans was still thought to be a man, it is likely that the magazine would also have reviewed her work if she had published it under her own name.

Adam Bede was briefly reviewed by *The Morning Chronicle* on 12 April, 1859. The novel is positively described as 'being reviewed with the high commendation which it seems to us to deserve. The characters and plot of this work are eminently natural and probable.'[89] There is no further information in the newspapers about Evans's real identity at the time of *Adam Bede*'s publication.

The Mill on the Floss

The Mill on the Floss was published by William Blackwood and Sons at the beginning of April, 1860 in three volumes at a price of 31 shillings and 6 pence. It became just as popular as her previous novel. For the *Mill of the Floss,* Mary Ann Evans used her own personal experiences, finding material in her darkest memories. The income Evans received for the first edition of 4000 copies was £2000.[90]

Following the publication of *The Mill on the Floss* the gender of Evans became an issue for discussion. The long and detailed review in *The Literary Examiner* of the novel on 16 June, 1860

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[88] *The Literary Examiner*, London, 5 March, 1859, no. 2666, n.pag.
[89] *The Morning Chronicle*, London, 12 April, 1859, no. 1859, n.pag.
[90] Stephen, *George Eliot*, pp. 86, 91; Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, p. 39. Measuring Worth, 'Purchasing Powers of British Pounds from 1270 to present', <https://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/> (1 January, 2017).

was positive, stating that the novel was one of the cleverest books of the day. But it also pointed out the greatest fault of the book, 'that whatever may have been the intention of the writer, it represents life as a maze without a clue'. At the end, Mary Ann Evans's gender is debated and that is where it gets really interesting. According to the anonymous reviewer there is 'a suspicion that it contained touches by a male as well as by a female hand.' In actual fact, the reviewer was convinced that the novels from Evans were written by an unidentified female author.[91]

Romola

Romola was published by the London publisher George Smith of Smith Elder and Co. Evans received £7000 for the copyright, although at first she was offered £10.000. Because she wanted the book to be printed in twelve instead of sixteen parts, she received less money for it. George Smith was at the time regarded as the 'prince of publishers'. He had taken over the business from his father when he was only twenty-two. He was able to provide his writers with high honoraria for their work, which is the reason why he was able to snatch Mary Ann Evans away from Blackwood and Sons.[92]

Evans wanted *Romola* to be published first in the *Cornhill Magazine*, a leading literary magazine, which eventually happened. The novel was published in fourteen instalments, the first one appearing in July 1862 and the last one in August 1863. It was Evans's husband who suggested publishing the novel in parts, because he believed that readers would study her writing in that form more fully, instead of reading it all at once. Unfortunately, the novel was not written to be published in several parts; many people waited until all the parts were published and then bought the complete volume, which came out in 1864.[93]

Critics were enthusiastic about the book. Journalist Richard Holt Hutton, for instance, wrote in *The Spectator* in 1863 that *Romola* was the finest book he had ever read.[94] The reviews in the newspapers were very limited, probably because the book was published in fourteen instalments. The *Daily News* is one of the few newspapers which reviewed the novel, in August of 1863. By this time, it was a well known fact that George Eliot was indeed a woman although her true identity was still unclear. The tone of the review is once again positive; Evans is said to continue a firm grasp of her characters. So, despite her gender being known, critics still described Evans's novels in a positive manner. The only question remaining is if they would have been so positive if she had published her work under her own name from the beginning.[95]

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[91] *The Literary Examiner*, London, 16 June, 1860, no. 2733, n.pag.
[92] Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, pp. 3, 10.
[93] Stephen, *George Eliot*, pp. 124, 125; Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, p. 196.
[94] Stephen, *George Eliot* pp. 124, 125.
[95] *Daily News*, London, 3 August, 1863, no. 5377, n.pag.

The revelation of George Eliot's true identity

As we have seen, it was not uncommon for male and female authors to write under a pseudonym in the nineteenth century. This pseudonymity provided especially female authors with the opportunity to get published despite their gender or social position. Since the publication of Evans's first novel, many speculated about her identity, in some cases helped by imposters. At one moment Mary Ann Evans heard the rumour that a Mr. Joseph Liggins, the son of a baker in Attleborough, had written the novels and that he had given all his earnings to Blackwood. Liggins had a university education, but lived a poor life, for which reason people assumed he gave his profits away. A literary reviewer of *The Glasgow Herald* expressed his doubt about the identity of George Eliot in April 1860. Evans is described as the 'able author or authoresses'. Questions about her gender now became a new topic of discussion.[96] In the 'Literary and Artistic Gossip' section of *The Derby Mercury*, the writer's couple Mr. and Mrs. Howitt declared that they were not the author, but suspected that indeed Mary Ann Evans was George Eliot.[97]

The first person to actually discover George Eliot's true identity was Barbara Smith Bodichon, a personal friend of Evans. Apparently, she had compared the reviews written by Mary Ann Evans to the novels written by George Eliot and found a similarity that could not be disregarded. In one of her letters to Evans in 1857 she wrote: 'I have sent for *Adam Bede* believing a passage I read in a review that it must be written by somebody wise and tender as you.' It is impressive she identified Evans based on her writing style, without all the modern technologies we have for this today.[98]

Following the publication of *Scenes of Clerical Life* in 1858, William Blackwood and Sons had been informed of Evans's true identity. In their correspondence with George Henry Lewes it becomes clear when this had happened. At first, they address George Eliot as that, but in 1858 this changes to 'greetings to your wife George Eliot'.[99]

The struggles of a female author halfway through the nineteenth century

Mary Ann Evans's novels were popular and well received, which was good for the position of female authors during that time. But Mary Ann Evans did saw it necessary to portray herself as a male author in order to get published, instead of writing under her own name. By some, she was seen as a dangerous role-model for other women, because she was educated, clever and living

[96] *Glasgow Herald*, Glasgow, 18 April, 1860, no. 6323, n.pag.
[97] *The Derby Mercury*, Derby, 10 August, 1859, no. 3525, n.pag.
[98] G. Haight (ed.), *The George Eliot Letters. Volume 8: 1840-1870* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 202.
[99] Stephen, *George Eliot*, pp. 83-85. For a general survey, see Haight (ed.), *The George Eliot Letters. Volume 8 1840-1870*, pp. 23-46.

together with a man who was still married. Whatever the case, she can certainly be seen as an inspiration for countless other female authors, and for women in general, then and now. Lesa Scholl, author of *Translation, Authorship and the Victorian Professional Woman*, has described the influence Evans had on the position of the female author as follows: 'Eliot overturns the expectations of what men and women should write, addressing the limitations that would be placed on her as a female writer, and also mocks the convention of anonymity.'[100] It was expected that female authors would write 'female novels'. Mary Ann Evans did the contrary, stating that women could write novels on a high and intelligent level and that these novels did not necessarily need to be 'female'. This view is in contrast with the perception of the novels of Jane Austen, which were often used as conduct books for young women on how to behave, and can therefore be considered feminine novels.[101] In Evans's novels a pattern can be seen which is related to the development of feminism; her first three novels are submissive, while her later work is more rebellious. But also, some of the general story lines in her books are about the position of women. For instance, in her short story 'Janet's Repentance' in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, she portrays the still common violence towards women.[102]

Mary Ann Evans mocked the way English women were brought up, as persons who were expected to live for others. Intellect was seen as manly. She was a strong supporter of education for women that was equal to that for men. If women were educated in the same way as their male counter parts, the expectations of them would be higher and women would have a bigger impact. As she once wrote: 'patriarchy is depriving women of education, vocation, and companionable marriage'.[103] But she also experienced the downside of being educated. Herbert Spencer, for instance, regarded her intellect as 'masculine'. That kind of perception is exactly what created so many obstacles for women to be taken seriously as authors and intellectuals.[104]

Mary Ann Evans saw it necessary to change herself into George Eliot when she started writing her first novels. As such she faced few difficulties getting her material published or reviewed. However, the opinion of her books and her own popularity were for a long time based on her as a male author. It is uncertain if her books would have been published so easily if she would have used her own name. Once her true identity became clear, her books were still published, reviewed, and read enthusiastically. She does not appear to have been taken less serious just because she was a woman. In the reviews that were published after her 'coming out'

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[100] Scholl, *Translation, Authorship and Victorian Professional Woman*, pp. 84, 90, 94, 103, 152. Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, p. 167.
[101] Scholl, *Translation, Authorship and Victorian Professional Woman*, pp. 84, 90, 94, 103, 152.
[102] Szirotny, *George Eliot's Feminism,* pp. 36, 40.
[103] Szirotny, *George Eliot's Feminism*, p. 57; Dodd, *George Eliot: An Intellectual Life*, p. 3.
[104] Ibidem.

as a female author, no clear changes the appreciation of her novels can be found, nor were her novels seen as conduct books, or as 'feminine' literature, as was often expected of female authors. Therefore, it can be said that some improvement had occurred in the position of female authors since Jane Austen, even though there still was a long way to go before women were really taken serious.

Figure 10: Mary Ann Evans[105]

[105] BBC History, 'Mary Ann Evans', < http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/eliot_george.shtml> (10 April, 2017).

Chapter 4. Margaret Oliphant: The Great Unrepresented[106]

Gradually female authors were more respected throughout the nineteenth century. However, they still faced countless struggles, of which the case of author Margaret Oliphant was no exception. In the Victorian era, Margaret Oliphant was considered one of the most famous contemporary female authors, critics, and biographers. She was born on 4 April, 1828, in Wallyford, Scotland, as the youngest child of Francis and Margaret Wilson, with two brothers above her, Willie and Frank. Already at an early age, she considered books to be the most precious things that existed. Yet, in spite of her love of books and later career as an author, it remains unclear whether she ever attended school, even though in Scotland education was highly valued. Possibly she received some form of education at home.[107]

Her first serious relationship was with a man who is only known by his initials J.H. He moved temporarily to the US for his career, so their relation existed mostly through correspondence. It did not last; rumours have it that Oliphant was too smart for J.H. She argued about this with him in her letters, after which he stopped writing to her. Possibly J.H. did not want to engage in a relationship with a woman who was smarter than him.[108]

After this affair, Margaret Oliphant went to London to look after her alcoholic brother Willie Oliphant, who lived there together with some of their cousins. One of them, Frank Oliphant, was especially fond of Margaret and asked her to marry him in 1851. Margaret, who had not been aware of his affection towards here, refused. Only six months later she changed her mind and accepted. The couple had six children, three of whom died prematurely. As if this was not enough, Frank Oliphant passed away from tuberculosis in Rome, only seven years after their marriage.[109]

Margaret and Frank Oliphant were financially disorganized, and her husband's passing left her in debt. Even though Margaret wanted a break from her writing, she had no choice but to continue working. Her grief increased even further when her oldest daughter Maggie died from a

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[106] Figure 11: Silhouette of Margaret Oliphant. Source: National Portrait Gallery London, 'Margaret Oliphant', < http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait.php?LinkID=mp05638&rNo=0&role=sit > (10 April, 2017).
[107] M. Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography* (London: MacMillan, 1986), pp. 1-2, 4.
[108] Ibid., p. 7.
[109] Ibid., pp. 10, 14, 18, 28.

fever on her eleventh birthday. Oliphant now only had two sons left, Francis and Ceryl. She provided for them until they were well in their twenties, as she did for her brother Frank and his children after his wife had suddenly died. Thankfully, William Blackwood, from Blackwood and Sons Publishing, was always willing to provide Oliphant with a loan when necessary, even when they did not publish her work.[110]

As if life couldn't be any crueller, her two remaining sons also passed away of illnesses in the following four years. She herself died on 25 June, 1897 and was buried in the cemetery of Eton, next to two of her sons.[111]

From Christian Melville *to* Queen Victoria*: Margaret's Writing Career*

In her life, Margaret Oliphant wrote 91 novels, eight collections of stories, and 25 non-fiction works, as well as hundreds of articles and reviews. She received her first book contract in 1849, at the age of 21. The quality of this enormous output varies; some material was considered brilliant by critics, while other articles and novels were not written well enough to be published. Still, she always maintained a good relation with William Blackwood and Sons, which published many of her reviews and novels. Oliphant never paid to get published, unlike some other female authors, since she needed the money from her writings to provide for her family.[112]

Margaret Oliphant was a great contributor to the *Blackwood Magazine*. Besides these contributions, she published many novels and non-fiction works with William Blackwood and Sons. Her connection with Major William Blackwood, head of the firm, was a lucky coincidence. In her diary, she recorded the exact moment they met and how this changed her life: 'For in one expedition we made, Major Blackwood, of the publishing firm and brother of the editor of the "Magazine", was of the party; and my long connection with this family thus began.'[113] This relation between Margaret Oliphant and the other members of the Blackwood family gave her the confidence to send them the manuscript of her novel *Katie Stewart, a True Story,* which they gladly published.[114]

Besides creative writing of her own, Margaret Oliphant also busied herself with translating novels, as did many other female authors of the time, among whom, as we have seen, Mary Ann Evans. This can be explained by the fact that, because the male author of a book was still the norm, translating was not seen as a threatening activity for female authors; after all, they

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[110] Ibid., pp. 39, 46, 126.
[111] Ibid., pp. 149, 184.
[112] Ibid., pp. 9, 51.
[113] M. Oliphant, *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, ed. E. Jay (Calgary: Broadview Press, 2001), p. 35.
[114] J. Oosterom, *The Whirligig of Time Margaret Oliphant in her later years* (Leiden: University Leiden, 2004), p. 151. Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, p. 10.

were still regarded as inferior to male authors. Oliphant, however, did see translating as something valuable, just like Mary Ann Evans. In her autobiography, she described her translation of Charles Forbes Montalembert's *Monks of the West* as follows:

> I was working at a translation of Montalembert's *Monks of the West* which was blessed work for me at that agitated and troubled time. It soothed me and brought me back to the full use of my strength. Mr. Blackwood, who was almost always liberal, gave me sixty pounds for each volume and it was a godsend.[115]

Not only did the translation provide the opportunity for Margaret Oliphant to work on something she liked doing; she also earned a considerable income from it.[116]

There are several sources that use a classification system for Oliphant's works, to distinguish which ones are 'good or at least interesting', or 'notable'. When comparing two of these sources, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, and the website *The Margaret Oliphant Fiction Collection*, an interesting pattern becomes clear. Both authorities do not agree on the 'good' novels, but they do have the majority of the novels they perceive as interesting in common. Looking at both of the lists, it seems that Oliphant wrote well and interesting work for a certain amount of time, which then was followed by several less popular, mediocre novels and short stories. The quality of her works also did not go unnoticed by her publisher. William Blackwood and Sons did not publish a single thing that Margaret Oliphant sent to them when she was abroad in Italy with her sick husband in 1858 and 1859. But several years later, from 1862 until 1865, they were again involved in some of her best works. Interestingly, this was also the time when her eldest daughter Maggie passed away and Margaret had to take care of her three remaining under aged children.[117]

Another period during which Margaret Oliphant wrote a number of 'appreciated' novels was from 1882 until 1886. This period of her life, Oliphant was left with only her two sons and the children of her brother Frank, of whom she took care of as well; so it was a very busy time. Once her children were grown up and no longer depending on her, Margaret Oliphant had more time to spend on her writing, but this did not noticeable change the quality of her work compared to when she was busier.[118]

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[115] Oliphant, *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, pp. 88, 89.
[116] Ibidem.
[117] Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, pp. 31, 203-204.
[118] Ibid, pp. 204, 205. *The Margaret Oliphant Fiction Collection Website*, 'Novels', <http://www.oliphantfiction.com/x0100_fiction_list.php?listtype=n> (25 September, 2016).

In view of the massive amount of material that Oliphant has written it is not surprising that not all is of the best quality. With a family that was financially dependent on her, she could not spend years on a single novel. Despite earning £400 pounds for a serialized novel and as much as £750 pounds when it was issued as a three-decker, she still spent more than she earned, which is not surprising in view of her being the sole provider of a large extended family.[119]

Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland, of Sunnyside

The first novel of Oliphant, *Passages in the Life of Mrs. Margaret Maitland, of Sunnyside*, was published in 1849 by Henry Colburn, a London publisher who had previously brought out a new edition of *The Wild Irish Girl* by Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan). Colburn earned a generous annual income, estimated at £35.000. In 1829 Colburn started collaborating with the printer Richard Bentley, which caused much friction between the two.[120] Oliphant's brother Willie sent her manuscript to this London publisher without her knowing, and eventually signed a contract with Colburn in August 1849, when she was just 21 years old. The novel was published based on the half-profit system.[121] The book was quite popular, and when a third edition was necessary, Colburn gave her a £150 profit.[122]

Even though the novel was popular, *Margaret Maitland* was only reviewed once by *The Athenaeum*, a literary magazine that was published in London for almost a century, from 1828 to 1921. The founders of the magazine expected that the people would stop buying books, and therefore decided to create a review magazine. One of the most famous contributors was Geraldine Jewsbury, who reviewed, like most of her female colleagues, anonymously.[123] The review of Margaret's novel was on the whole positive, although brief: 'It has given us much pleasure of a quiet and wholesome kind. Its imaginary writer is, of her single self, sufficient to sweeten the tempers of all whom have maintained a traditional antipathy to the genus spinster.'[124]

Katie Stewart, a True Story

Twenty-three-year-old Margaret Oliphant published her novel, *Katie Stewart, a True Story*, in the *Blackwood Edinburgh Magazine* in instalments from July until November 1852. It was the first of many collaborations between Oliphant and Blackwood and Sons. The story is based on

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[119] Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, p. 26. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'Margaret Oliphant', <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/article/20712?docPos=1> (6 October, 2016).
[120] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'Henry Colburn', <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/view/article/5836> (5 October, 2016).
[121] See Chapter 1 for an explanation of the half-profit publication system.
[122] Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, pp. 8, 9.
[123] Oliphant, *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, pp. 26, 28, 29.
[124] Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, p. 9. Sutherland, *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, p. 12.

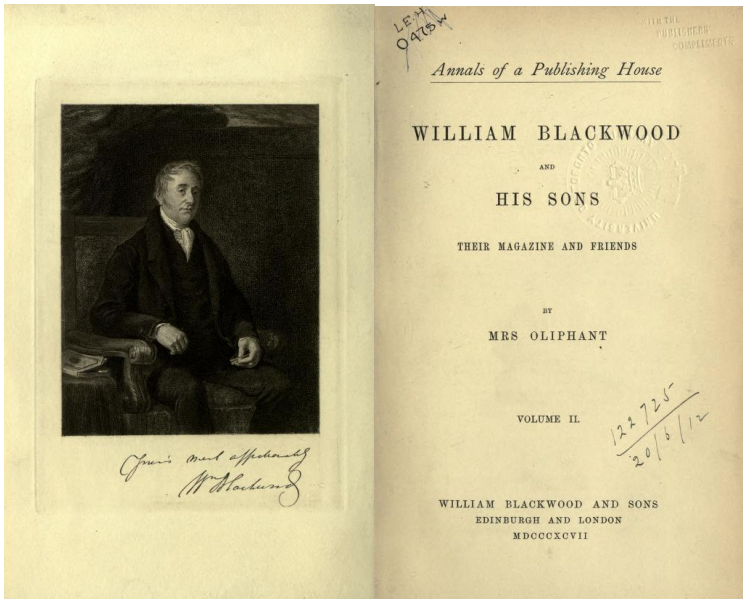
Margaret's great-great aunt, who lived nearby Kellie Castle in Scotland, and had experienced many adventures there.[125] It is not known how much Oliphant earned from the novel.

The story was an immediate success and was briefly mentioned in several newspapers. *The Examiner* listed it as a Christmas tip for young and old, without mentioning the name of the author. On the title-page that space was left blank.[126] *The Manchester Times* published only a small extract from the novel, together with selections from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by the American novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, summarizing reviews by literary magazines.[127]

Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons

One of Margaret Oliphant most popular works was *Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his Sons*, published in three volumes in 1897. There is no information what Oliphant received for writing this chronicle, for which she had been personally asked by the Blackwood family.

The history of William Blackwood and Sons was reviewed by the *Glasgow Herald* in a one-page long article, which is as appreciative of it as Blackwood and Sons were themselves. One of the elements the reviewer appreciated was that it did not end with the death of William Blackwood, but continued with his successors, his sons William and John.[128]



Annals of a Publishing House

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD
AND
HIS SONS

THEIR MAGAZINE AND FRIENDS

BY
MRS OLIPHANT

VOLUME II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCXCVII

Figure 12: Annals of a Publishing House: William Blackwood and his sons[129]

[125] Ibid., pp. 15, 202. The Margaret Oliphant Fiction Collection Website, 'Katie Stewart, a True Story', <http://www.oliphantfiction.com/x0200_single_title.php?titlecode=katies> (23 September, 2016).
[126] *The Examiner*, 25 December, 1852, no. 2343, n.pag. British Library Newspapers Database (British Library), <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/bncn/start.do?prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=leiden>.
[127] *The Manchester Times*, 17 November, 1852, no. 422, n.pag.
[128] *The Glasgow Herald*, 9 October, 1897, no. 242, n.pag.
[129] Internet Archive, 'William Blackwood Publishing House', < https://archive.org/details/annalsofpublishi02olipuoft> (10 April, 2017).

The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant

Two years after Margaret's death in 1897 *The Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. M.O.W. Oliphant* came out, arranged and edited by Annie Louisa Walker, on the title-page referred to by her husband's name as Mrs. Harry Coghill.[130] The book was again published by Blackwood and Sons. Within one year, it went through three editions and has since regularly been reprinted.[131]

Margaret Oliphant herself had meticulously documented her own life, preserving her diaries, letters, and notes. A first part was collected by Oliphant for her children between 1860 and 1894. By then, however, all her children had passed away. A second part consists of her letters written between 1850 and 1897. Unfortunately, not all of these papers were preserved intact. They are currently housed in the National Library of Scotland.[132]

The Sewanee Review published an eight-page review of her autobiography in 1900. The majority of the review is dedicated to a summary of the text. The critic mentions that in her public life Oliphant seemed almost shy, while in her autobiography she leaves little unspoken. With the combination of letters and her own recordings for her children, the reader receives a very clear picture of the kind of woman, author, and mother Margaret Oliphant was. *The Sewanee Review* was a literary magazine that printed reviews of leading books and papers, whether written by men or women.[133]

The Struggles of a Female Author towards the End of the Nineteenth Century

As said, Margaret Oliphant had a close connection with William Blackwood and his sons. But even a female author with a good relationship with a respected publishing house faced struggles in the nineteenth century, simply because she was a woman. Oliphant never thought that she was discriminated by her publisher; if male and female authors were paid unequal honoraria, this was often not based on gender but on quality, according to Tredrey, the author of a more recent history of *The House of Blackwood 1804-1954*. However, looking at the way they treated the female members of their family, it seems very unlikely that the Blackwoods did not discriminate based on gender, even though Oliphant and Tredrey thought differently. Female authors were not in the luxurious position where they could negotiate over their fee, unlike for instance Evans, who had a lot more leverage in this area since she published as a male authors.[134]

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[130] Annie Louisa Walker was Margaret's second cousin and close friend. Annie herself wrote poetry and several novels.
[131] Oliphant, *The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant*, 'Introduction', p. xviii.
[132] Ibid., pp. xix, xx.
[133] Anon., 'Mrs. Oliphant', *The Sewanee Review*, 8:1 (1900), pp. 64-72.
[134] See Tredrey, *The House of Blackwood 1804-1954*, pp. 11-56.

But even if it was true that Margaret experienced little discrimination related to her work, she was not oblivious to the inequality women were faced with, and of the position of men in this debate. In some of her fictional works she describes men without much flattery, out of an awareness that the majority of men treated women with arrogance. She did not see women as inferior to men; however, she did think that men and women were different. Some of the issues she describes in her works are the loss of social class by women when they were employed, such as in her novel *Kirsteen* published in 1890, or the expectation women were faced with that they would obey their father or husband, even though they knew that they were in the wrong, such as in *Madonna Mary*, 1867.[135]

At the beginning of Oliphant's writing career, the debate about women's suffrage was slowly gaining pace in Britain. In her article 'The Great Unrepresented', that appeared in *Blackwood Magazine* in 1866, she stated that she agreed that women should be allowed to vote, even though she does not want to vote herself. Gradually, her view towards women's voting rights changed, however; in 1880 she wrote: 'I think it is highly absurd that I should not have a vote, if I want one.' She was also in favour of the Marriage Women's Property Act (1882), which allowed women to keep custody of their children, to attend a university and to become doctors.[136]

Unlike Jane Austen and Mary Ann Evans, Margaret Oliphant was not afraid to criticize the unequal position of men and women. In several of her novels, the position of women as inferior to their husband and father is a major theme. Nor did she keep quiet about this issue in her public statements. In doing so, she certainly paved the way for future female authors, critics and most important, for all women.

Figure 13: Margaret Oliphant[137]

[135] Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, pp. 58, 107. *The Margaret Oliphant Fiction Collection Website*, 'Themes', <http://www.oliphantfiction.com/x0300_series_and_themes.php?categcode=wmissues&cattype=Theme&descrip=Women%27s%20issues%20/%20women%27s%20rights> (6 October, 2016).

[136] Williams, *Margaret Oliphant: A Critical Biography*, pp. 107, 108.

[137] [137] National Portrait Gallery London, 'Margaret Oliphant', < http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait.php?LinkID=mp05638&rNo=0&role=sit > (10 April, 2017).

Chapter 5. Beatrix Potter: 'It brought tears to their eyes and a smile on their face'[138]

Several women had already started paving the way for other future female authors, before Beatrix Potter started publishing her works. But the journey towards getting her "little books" published is also one with a lot of difficulties. Beatrix Potter was born in 1866 as the first child of Rupert Potter and Helen Potter. Six years later her brother Walter Bertram was born. Both of her parents came from wealthy families active in the Lancashire cotton industry. Her father was a photographer and barrister, even though he never practiced the law, her mother transcribed books into Braille for the Blind Association in London. Transcribing did interest Potter as well and she often helped her mother with this task, but gradually she wanted more space for her own creative ideas and curiosity. Her curiosity was already present when she and her brother were still children. Margaret Lane, the author of *The Tales of Beatrix Potter*, describes one incident in their collection making: 'They even on one occasion, having obtained a dead fox from heaven knows where, skinned and boiled it successfully in secret and articulated the skeleton. And everything they brought home, they drew and painted.'[139] So even at a young age, Beatrix Potter painted animals, plants, and insects. It is therefore not surprising that she would later become famous for her stories about animals, such as Peter Rabbit and Jemima Puddle-Duck.[140]

In her teen years, Beatrix Potter was very lonely and shy. When her brother Walter was old enough he went away to boarding school with Potter staying behind to be home schooled. She did not have friends nor the opportunity to make them, as her shyness prevented her from attending social events. Beatrix Potter's first governess, Miss Margaret Hamond, taught her about history, geography etc. When she turned fifteen, Miss Hamond told Potter's parents that she could no longer teach her, as she had taught her everything she knew. Two years later, Potter had German lessons from another house teacher, Annie Carter. Their pupil-teacher relationship would develop into a lifelong friendship. At the age of nineteen, Carter got married to Edwin Moore. Beatrix Potter often visited the Moore family and gradually became less shy, attending more social occasions because of Carter. At the time, Potter often went to the Natural History

[138] Figure 14: Silhouette of Beatrix Potter. Source: Biography, 'Beatrix Potter', <http://www.biography.com/people/beatrix-potter-9445208> (10 April, 2017).
[139] M. Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter* (London/New-York: Frederick Warne and Co., 2001), pp. 14-16.
[140] Ibid., pp. 14-16, 33.

Museum in London to sketch. In the museum, she developed an interest in fungi, but her interest in the subject was not taken seriously for a long time. She wrote a paper about moulds, which was read by her uncle to the Linnaean Society of London. Even though she did not pursue her interest in fungi more widely, she was quite passionate about it.[141]

In these years, at the end of her teens, Beatrix Potter started writing and illustrating her own stories. For the publication of these stories, she corresponded with Norman Warne of the publishing firm Frederick Warne and Co., with whom she became quite close. Norman Warne was born in 1868 as the third son of the publisher Frederick Warne. When his father retired in 1894 he left the business to his sons Harold, Fruing and Norman. Warne's brothers were both married and had families, while he still lived with his mother and sister Milly, with whom Potter became good friends as well. Norman Warne proposed to Beatrix Potter by letter in the summer of 1905, and she accepted. Both Warne and Potter were close to forty years of age at that time. Potter's parents were against the engagement, preferring her to be married to a man from a more respectable family. Sadly, Norman Warne fell seriously ill in the summer of 1905 and died on 25 August, 1905, struck by an acute form of leukaemia. Beatrix Potter arrived two days after his death and was too late to say goodbye. Because Warne's family was not aware of the engagement they did not postpone the funeral until Potter arrived. It is not known if the loss of Warne was the cause of Potter's later creative breakdown.[142]

In the summer that Norman Warne died, Beatrix Potter bought a small country estate in Sawrey in the Lake District. Instead of using the house as a holiday home, which she first intended, she decided to live there as often as possible. In her periods of absence, she hired the solicitor Heelis and Son to manage the farms on the estate. William Heelis and Beatrix Potter worked together on several occasions and became close. He proposed to her in 1912 and she accepted. Her parents were against this marriage as well, because Heelis was just a common solicitor. But she didn't listen and the couple married in October 1913. It seems that Beatrix Potter did not want to risk losing the man she loved again. After her marriage, she took up farming in Sawrey. The couple had no children of their own.[143] She passed away in 1943 and her ashes were spread out on the edges of Jemima's wood, from *The Tale of Jemima Puddle-Duck*.[144]

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[141] L. Linder, *A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter* (London/New York: Frederick Warne and Co., 1971), pp. 93-94. M. Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter* (London/New-York: Frederick Warne and Co., 1978), pp. 34, 39, 43, 46-48. Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 28, 47.
[142] Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 9, 121, 136. Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 83-85.
[143] Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 86-87. Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 141, 184, 192.
[144] Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 158, 203, 206.

From Christmas Cards to The Tailor of Gloucester*: Beatrix's Writing Career*

Beatrix Potter's first publications were Christmas cards, which were printed at Hildesheimer and Faulkner. She received a check for £6 in a letter, in which she was mistaken for a man. Soon, Potter decided to leave the firm because they differed too much in taste. After that, she focused on getting her stories published, which she had started writing and illustrating in her teens. All the books Beatrix wrote were published in thirteen consecutive years.[145]

Beatrix Potter has become best known for the letters she wrote and drawings she made for the children of Annie Moore. The first letter she sent was to Noel. In September of 1893 he had fallen ill, so Potter sent him a letter about Peter Rabbit and his adventures to cheer him up. She started her letter with: 'My dear Noel, I don't know what to write to you, so I shall tell you a story about four little rabbits.' The letter to Noel was loved by all the children in the Moore family, so Beatrix began sending them similar letters with stories and drawings, now introducing Squirrel Nutkin and Pig Robinson. Annie Moore confided to her how popular the letters were among her children, which probably inspired Potter to turn her letters into books. Later Beatrix Potter sent the Moore children miniature letters, folded as envelopes and with a small stamp in the corner. These miniature letters describe the animals in her books more extensively in a story like manner, with details of their everyday life.[146]

Beatrix Potter's life changed when her books were published. She was no longer lonely and had become less shy. And, for the first time in her life, she was no longer financially dependent on her parents. In one of her letters to Norman Warne, she wrote: 'It is pleasant to feel I could earn my own living.'[147]

Reviews of her books were few. According to the database of British newspapers from the nineteenth and twentieth century in the British Library, none of her books were reviewed in the newspapers, even though they were extremely popular.[148]

The Tale of Peter Rabbit

The Tale of Peter Rabbit is based on a real rabbit that Beatrix Potter once owned, about which she had already written several unpublished stories before. Her book, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, which was first published in 1901 by a private printing press, was based on the letters she sent to Noel Moore. The book followed the correspondence in a slightly expanded form.

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[145] Ibid., p. 61.
[146] Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 60, 67, 70.
[147] Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, p. 116.
[148] *The British Library Website*, 'British Library Newspapers', <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/bncn/start.do?prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=leiden> (1 July, 2016).

Canon Rawnsley, a family friend, and poet, offered to help Potter find a publisher for it, as did Sir Robert Hunter, a solicitor. He knew several editors and publishers, but nobody showed any interest, so Beatrix Potter decided to publish it herself. The London printer Strangeways and Sons, which was known for producing private editions, was recommended by one of her friends. Potter had 250 copies printed in December 1901. The book was sold for ½d. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, bought one of them. The following year she had another 200 copies printed that were slightly better bound. In 1901, Canon Rawnsley wrote to Frederick Warne and Co. again in order to see if they might now be interested in publishing the book, after having made several alterations to the narrative. Frederick Warne and Co. replied that they liked the original version of Beatrix Potter better, and started the negotiations for publication. The text was declined six times before Frederick Warne and Co. finally decided to publish it. It is unknown how much she was paid for it.[149]

Potter had to make many changes to *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* before publication. The publisher thought it was necessary to print the illustrations in colour and to limit the number of illustrations to 32 instead of the 42 she had made. After much deliberation, the book was finally published on 2 October, 1902 by Frederick Warne and Co. Unfortunately, the publisher had not copyrighted the book, so in 1904 a pirated edition by Henry Altemus and Co. appeared in the United States. The format was exactly the same as that of the edition of Frederick Warne and Co. After their mistake of not copyrighting *The Tale of Peter Rabbit,* Frederick Warne and Co. held the patent for everything related to Beatrix's writing. Together, moreover, they created additional material such as a Peter Rabbit doll and Benjamin Bunny wallpaper. [150]

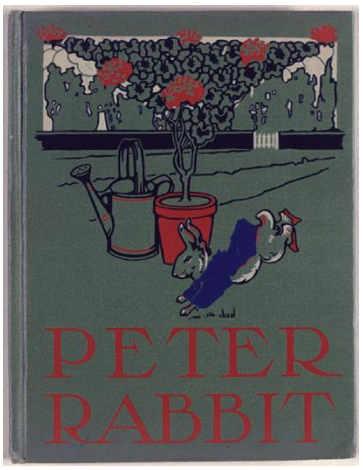

Figure 14: The pirated version of Peter Rabbit[151]

[149] Linder, *A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 94-96. Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 49, 60-61, 96-99.
[150] Linder, *A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 110-111.
[151] Victor and Albert Museum, 'Beatrix Potter: The Tale of Peter Rabbit', < http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/b/beatrix-potter-peter-rabbit/ > (10 April, 2017).

The Tailor of Gloucester

When Beatrix Potter visited a remote cousin in Gloucestershire in 1894, she heard a story about a tailor. On a Saturday, the tailor had left an outline for a coat in his shop and when he returned on Monday, the coat miraculously was almost finished. The week after that, the tailor had to make a coat for a major in a single weekend. He feared that he would not be able to finish his work in time, but to his surprise and relief, the coat was again finished when the tailor came back to his shop the next day. How this was possible he had no idea. This story was based on an existing tailor, Mr. Prichard, whose employees worked on his coats at night to help him finish them in time. The tailor died in 1934 and was buried under a tombstone with the inscription *The Tailor of Gloucester*.[152]

Potter rewrote the story for Freda Moore, in which instead of the tailor's employees, the fairies finished the coat. In an accompanying letter to Moore she wrote: 'Because you are fond of fairy-tales and have been ill, I made you a story all for yourself – a new one that nobody has read before.'[153] Beatrix Potter thought that Frederick Warne and Co. would not want to publish another of her stories so soon after *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, so again she had the book printed privately in December 1902 by Strangeways and Sons, entitled *The Tailor of Gloucester*. This time 500 copies were printed, of which she sent one to Norman Warne. Warne liked it so much that he proposed to publish it as well. Beatrix Potter used the privately printed edition as the first draft for her book at Frederick Warne and Co. *The Tailor of Gloucester* was eventually published by them in 1903. Again, it is unknown what she received for it.[154]

Beatrix Potter provided the 'real' tailor with a copy of the story, who sent it to the tailoring trade magazine *The Tailor and Cutter*. They published a very positive review in which it was said that they were not ashamed to admit that the story brought tears to their eyes as well as a smile on their face.[155]

Some Other Books

The Tale of the Squirrel Nutkins, Potter's next story, was an instant success. In the story, a squirrel called Nutkins escapes from an owl, Old Brown. Beatrix Potter had sent the story to Norah Moore before she decided to turn it into a book. It was published in the summer of 1903 by

[152] For a general survey, see B. Potter, *The Tailor of Gloucester* (London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1903).
[153] B. Potter, 'Peter Rabbit and other Stories', <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/148/peter-rabbit-and-other-stories/4899/the-tailor-of-gloucester/> (1 December, 2016).
[154] Linder, *A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter*, pp. 114, 116.
[155] Ibid., p. 105.

Frederick Warne and Co., selling several thousand copies in three editions in that same year. Again, it is unclear how much Beatrix Potter earned for her work.[156]

The Tale of Benjamin Bunny, published at the end of 1904 by Frederick Warne and Co., was a sequel to *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. In it, Peter and his cousin Benjamin return to the garden of Mr. McGregor. The reviews for *The Tale of Benjamin Bunny* were mixed. *The Times Literary Supplement* wrote:

> Among the little books that have become as much a manifestation of autumn as falling leaves, one looks first for whatever Miss Beatrix Potter gives in her new book although there is no diminution in the charm and drollery of the drawings, Miss Potter's fancy is not what it was. The story is inconclusive. Next year we think she must call in a literary assistant. We have no hesitation in calling her pencil perfect.[157]

The words used to describe her books, such a 'drollery', are diminutives unlikely to have been used for the work of a male author. The final sentence of the review is interesting; it seems as if the critic wanted after all wanted to say something positive about the book. *The Times Literary Supplement* mostly reviewed novels, and children's books were probably not their general type of literature. The magazine published regular contributions by female authors, including Virginia Woolf; therefore, it is unlikely it was biased towards women.[158]

After Beatrix Potter's death, there was still a lot of material that remained unpublished. In 1952 Stephanie Duke, a first cousin once removed, found a bundle of material written by Beatrix Potter in the attic of her old farm house. The manuscript, which seemed to be a diary, was written in code. It took Leslie Linder, who worked on deciphering the code for five years, another five years to actually decipher all other material, which consists of 200.000 words. However, once finished, people wondered why she wrote this text in code after all, since the content was not very shocking.[159]

The Struggles of a Female Author at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century

Beatrix Potter struggled as a female author, but not nearly as much as Jane Austen or George Eliot had done. She focused on writing stories for children, which was a less male dominated

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156 Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*, p. 115. For a general survey, see L. Lear, *Beatrix Potter: A life in Nature* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2007).
157 Lear, *A Life in Nature*, p. 95.
158 J. Taylor, *Beatrix Potter: Artist, Storyteller and Countrywoman* (New York/London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1996), pp. 18-39. Lane, *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, p. 131.
159 Lane, *The Tale of Beatrix Potter*, p. 48.

genre to start with, unlike the genres Evans and Oliphant ventured. Another factor that separates Beatrix Potter from her predecessors is that, after a rather difficult start, Frederick Warne and Co. published almost all of her works. The firm even published several biographies of her, Leslie Linder's *A History of the Writings of Beatrix Potter,* Margaret Lane's *The Tale of Beatrix Potter* and *The Magic Years of Beatrix Potter*, and Taylor Judy's *Beatrix Potter: Artist, Storyteller and Countrywoman.* Despite having a publisher willing to publish all her work it is unclear how much she earned from her novels; she earned enough to buy a farm, but her exact income remains unknown. Like Oliphant she could earn her own living.

It is interesting though that despite Beatrix's popularity her books have hardly been reviewed. In the *British Library Newspaper Database*, which includes newspapers and magazines such as *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Daily News*, and *The Penny,* none of her works are discussed. Beatrix will not have minded. She did not need the consent of the press for her publications or to depend on the reviews for the popularity of her books. Yet, the question does arise whether Potter was really taken seriously as an author, since she was writing 'little books'.[160]

Beatrix Potter may have had fewer struggles, but as a female author of children's books she faced difficulties in a different field. She was fortunate that she was educated at a young age and determined to continue her education throughout her life. Potter had a passion for knowledge as is shown by her interest in fungi, on which she wrote a paper. The paper was read to the Linnaean Society of London by her uncle because women were not invited; her paper was not respected at all. The question once again rises whether that was because her paper was incorrect despite all the intelligent research she had conducted on it, or because she was a woman.

Figure 15: Beatrix Potter[161]

[160] The British Library Website, 'British Library Newspapers', <http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/bncn/start.do?prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=leiden> (18 July, 2016).
[161] Biography, 'Beatrix Potter', <http://www.biography.com/people/beatrix-potter-9445208> (10 April, 2017).

Conclusion

In the nineteenth and twentieth century women and men had unequal rights. Women were not allowed to vote, to earn their own income and to have an education. And the women that did have jobs and attended school were in most cases not seen as "feminine". Female authors had even more struggles; getting published and once they were published being taken seriously as a professional writer was difficult.

First of all, the four women discussed before, Jane Austen, Mary Ann Evans, Margaret Oliphant and George Eliot, did not always share the same difficulties in becoming respected authors, despite living in the same time period. Their respective difficulties already started when they were still young, and had to do with their education. Jane Austen and Mary Ann Evans both attended several schools and had a proper education, for women at least. Beatrix Potter was home-schooled; but was considered very intelligent; she even wrote a paper about fungi that is still well-read today. There is no information about the education Margaret Oliphant received. However, from the novels and articles the four women wrote it is clear that all of them had enjoyed some form of education, unlike most other women in Britain during that time. Being educated and intelligent created varying problems for these female authors. Evans was considered a very intelligent person, but because of her gender, she was either not respected, or perceived as manly because she was an intellectual. Women could not be feminine and clever at the same time in this century; their research was not well-read simply because it was conducted by women. Oliphant was briefly engaged, but according to rumours, her fiancée was threatened by her intelligence.

One of the things that stand out with regard to the position of women writers in the nineteenth century is that they were taken seriously as translators. Translating was seen as the act of recreating the text of a male author and translation was therefore an acceptable profession for women. Evans and Oliphant both engaged in translation before they started their literary writing career. Potter helped her mother transcribe novels into Braille, but she soon realized she wanted more space for her creative passion. For three of the four women, then, another difficulty was reaching the stage where they could produce their own literary content rather than translate existing content originally created by men.

After Austen, Evans, Oliphant and Potter had started writing novels; one of the largest problems they were faced with was finding a publisher. In the nineteenth century the number of publishers increased, but it was still a struggle to get published. Austen en Potter decided to publish their first works privately, as they could not find a publisher willing to print their material.

Once Austen did find a publisher, she received only a small financial compensation for her novels. In fact, two of her novels were only published after she had passed away. Potter found a publisher relatively quickly after the publication of her first novel, but it is unknown how much she earned from her novels. Evans' first novel was published by Blackwood and Sons, the Edinburgh publisher her husband had first sent the manuscript to; they thought she was a male author. If she would not have written under this name it is doubtful if she would have been as successful in her time. Only after Blackwood had published several of her novels, did they discover her true identity, but this did not cause any problems for the publication of her future novels. Oliphant also published her works with Blackwood and Sons, but much of her material remained unpublished when she was still alive.

Income was yet another issue. Where most male authors wrote for a living, this was not the case for women writers. Oliphant is the only author who was dependent on her writings for an income. She needed the money to provide for her own family and cousins and if some of her material was turned down she had trouble making ends meet. Austen, Evans and Potter, on the other hand, all had a family with enough financial means to fall back on. In view of the earnings from their writing, Evans can be considered the most successful author. She earned a very generous income, and even received an advance for her future novels. Even in today's terms her income can be considered generous. It is typical that the author who wrote under a male pseudonym had the highest income, especially since all four others are equally respected today.

The genre in which an author published could also create problems. Austen published novels that some people used as conduct books for women. Among the themes of her novels are marriage and social standing in upper class society. It is a genre which is very different from that of Evans and Oliphant, who wrote stories that were realistic about famers, about families and ordinary people. Evans was particularly appreciated for her psychological insight in her characters. Potter is a completely different case as she wrote and illustrated children's books. In view of these genres, one might expect that Austen and Potter were taken less seriously as literary authors, since the genre they wrote in was less male-dominated. Especially Potter was considered a lesser author, since she "wrote" children's books. Evans and Oliphant treaded on 'male territory'. For Evans this was not a problem since she wrote under a male pseudonym, but for Oliphant it was more difficult to gain respect.

The reviews of the novels in the magazines and newspapers differed very much, but tended not to prize women's writings. The nature of the periodical, conservative or liberal, had a great influence on the reviews. In the majority of cases, magazines that could be considered

conservative had a negative opinion towards novels written by female authors. The more liberal magazines often had a positive or neutral opinion about the novels.

The four women discussed in this thesis came from different backgrounds, lived different lives and had different options, but they all faced considerable obstacles as authors because they were female authors. They struggled in finding a publisher or had to use a male pseudonym, they earned less than their male colleagues and they were not always taken seriously as literary authors. One could look at the treatment of later female authors to see to which extent these problems were solved. In the case of Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) it is difficult to come to a verdict, because she published the majority of her works herself and suffered from a mental illness. The Bronte sisters, Charlotte (1816-1855), Emily (1818-1848) and Anne (1820-1849), still published their literary work under a male pseudonym at the beginning of their careers, indicating that their gender posed a difficulty to them too.

Still, the position of female authors clearly did improve in the nineteenth century, as can be shown by a comparison between Austen and Potter, the latter of whom had more options as an author than Austen during her lifetime. This is partially due to the positive change in the overall position of women. By the beginning of the twentieth century women were allowed to vote, to attend university and make decisions for themselves. However, in order to fully understand the struggles of female authors, a larger group of authors active in a larger range of genres should be studied. Based on the analysis of the four authors discussed in previous chapters, it appears that education and income, in addition to the genre they wrote for, were major influencers on their position as female authors. All these changes slowly influenced the presence of women in other professions as well. Yet, even today female authors are not always as appreciated as their male counterparts, as is demonstrated by the example of J.K. Rowling. She had to hide her female identity behind her initials, because it was thought that her intended audience, young boys, would not want to read books written by a woman.

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