

The Series as Commodity: Marketing Fisher Unwin's Pseudonym and Autonym Library

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The Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries were distinctively packaged novelettes that caught the attention of late 19th century British and American audiences and attracted imitators on both sides of the Atlantic. Their publisher, T. Fisher Unwin, was noted as a publisher of both fiction and non-fiction series directed at differing audiences. By 1917 the firm had twenty-eight series in its lists, of which several stood out: the Mermaid series of Restoration and Jacobean plays, the Cameo series of poetry; and the Story of the Nations series of histories written by some of the outstanding historians and writers of the day. Thomas Fisher Unwin (1848-1935) apprenticed in 1868 with the publishing firm of Jackson, Walford, and Hodder. Unwin started his own house in 1882, at the age of 34, purchasing Marshall, Japp & Co. for £1000 and setting up shop in Holborn Viaduct. He later moved to Paternoster Square and then to 1 Adelphi Terrace in 1905. Although the Unwin family were strict Congregationalists, Thomas Fisher Unwin harkened back to his brewer grandfather and namesake, Fisher Unwin (1776-1819), and enjoyed wine with his meals and Continental culture. He had a liberal outlook that made him a champion of free trade, a pro-Boer, and an advocate for Africans in the Congo and for Irish Home Rule. A keen mountaineer, he published books on mountaineering and, when his nephew Stanley Unwin came into the firm, became the distributor of Ordnance Survey maps and Baedeker guides. But he was also jealous of his associates, impatient in his dealings with people, and was described by his

general manager, A.D. Marks, as a lonely man with little sense of humour who became increasingly unable to make decisions.

Unwin was fortunate to have several talented people work with him over the years. Much of the early success of the firm in finding new talent must be attributed to Edward Garnett (1868–1937) who became one of the most respected readers in England. Although Garnett was reputedly hired to pack books but was given a job as a reader only because he was late for work on his first day and impressed Unwin by arriving in a hansom cab, Jefferson (12) notes that it was his father, Richard Garnett, Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, who arranged the job with T. Fisher Unwin and that Unwin would have been aware that this young man came from a family with very strong literary connections: George Meredith, the Rossettis, Madox Brown, and other prominent Victorians were weekly guests at the Garnett house and the writers the young Garnett brought to T. Fisher Unwin included classmates such as Ford Madox Ford and friends such as W.B. Yeats.¹ Although he was only 22 when he started the Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries, Garnett had a strong marketing sense coupled to his critical skills and could recognize when a story or series would appeal to a particular audience and when an author's style was no longer fashionable. Garnett and his wife, translator Constance Black Garnett, had close contacts with the Russian émigré communities in England, enabling Garnett to add foreign authors to the Unwin list. One of Garnett's discoveries was Joseph Conrad, and it was Garnett who encouraged Conrad to continue writing. Garnett remained a reader with T. Fisher Unwin for twelve years before continuing his career with Heinemann and others.

The young firm made a name for itself by publishing fiction from young authors, including Somerset Maugham's *Liza of Lambeth* (1897), Joseph Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* (1895), John Galsworthy's *From the Four Winds* (1897) and poetry and fiction by W.B. Yeats

(S. Unwin 80). They published a Colonial Library and 'Unwin's Library' to compete on the Continent with the German firm of Tauchnitz. Their First Novel Library published Ethel M. Dell's *The Way of an Eagle* (1912) and Dorothy Sayers's *Whose Body?* (1923). The British Library Catalogue lists over 1,600 items under the T. Fisher Unwin imprint. The Unwin catalogue of 1909 provides an example of the breadth of the firm: there are 14 poems and plays by W. B. Yeats; translations of Gorky; Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*. Ford Madox Ford, then writing as Ford H. Hueffer, wrote children's books for the firm, illustrated by his grandfather, Madox Brown, while W.B. Yeats' father Jack B. Yeats also illustrated books for T. Fisher Unwin. Publishing new novelists, even if they were to become recognized as geniuses in later years, brought little income to either the firm or its discoveries. Richard Garnett's introduction to his *Letters from Joseph Conrad* tells us that it took nineteen years for Conrad to achieve any popular success, even though his reviews were favourable from the start: *Almayer's Folly* took seven years to go to a third impression. *Outcast of the Islands* (1896) and *Tales of Unrest* (1898) both took eleven years to reach a second impression, and the *Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897) took sixteen years to reach its third impression (Conrad, 16).

In the 19th century authors more commonly used their own names, but the use of pseudonyms and anonymity had not completely gone out of fashion. Anonymous or pseudonymous novels appeared in publishers' lists along side named authors; thus a book titled *The Failure of Lord Curzon: A Study in Imperialism* by 'Twenty-eight Years in India' and the anonymous *Missing Friends: Being the Adventures of a Danish Emigrant in Queensland* appeared in T. Fisher Unwin's catalogue, the titles fitting in among the alphabetical list of named authors without comment or note. So too does the name of John Oliver Hobbes appear among the list of titles in Unwin's Red Cloth Library, with no indication that John Oliver Hobbes was the pseudonym of Pearl Craigie.

Publishing a series that highlighted the use of a pseudonym drew attention to the fact that the author was shielding his or her true identity. Had the first volume in the Pseudonym Library, *Mademoiselle Ixe*, appeared in T. Fisher Unwin's First Novel Library under the authorship of Lanoe Falconer, the pseudonym of Mary Elizabeth Hawker, few would have questioned who Lanoe Falconer was, if the author were male or female, an already known author writing under a pseudonym or a new novelist making a first appearance. But, by publishing *Mademoiselle Ixe* specifically in a series that drew the attention of reviewers and readers to exactly those questions, Unwin tantalized readers with the mystery of the authorship and attracted their attention again with the later revelation of the author's identity. Whether the Pseudonym Library began because T. Fisher Unwin fit the series around the 30,000 words of *Mademoiselle Ixe* and Mary Elizabeth Hawker's use of a pseudonym or not, the combination of short, gripping stories; mysterious authors; and a distinctive physical format made for a series that was enormously popular in the 1890s and copied by several other publishers.²

The first book in the Pseudonym Library series appeared in October 1890 followed by new titles every month or two (Edwards, 11). The Pseudonym Library continued to publish new titles until 1903, showcasing new authors, foreign authors, and translations. Few established authors appeared in the series but several later-famous authors got their start in the Pseudonym Library.

The Pseudonym Library published a total of 55 titles between the first, *Mademoiselle Ixe*, and the final volume, number 55, Vernon Lee's *Penelope Brandling: A Tale of the Welsh coast in the Eighteenth Century*, in 1903.³ There was a gap in the series after number 52, *Anthony Jasper* by Ben Bolt, was published in 1896 and no further titles appeared until *As a Tree Falls* by L. Parry Truscott was published as number 53 in 1903. T. Fisher Unwin may have planned to

replace the Pseudonym with a new series called 'Little Novels' of about the same length but in a slightly larger format. The Pseudonym Library was reissued in one shilling format in 1914 as a 'new edition of the Pioneer Library of Cheap and Good Fiction' (Times List of New Books, 6).

Forty-one different authors wrote for the series, of whom thirty-seven have been identified, eleven men and twenty-six women (Bassett 2002, 121). Four of the established authors who wrote for the series were already known under their pseudonyms: 'Ouida', 'Rita', 'Vernon Lee' and 'Ralph Iron' (Olive Schreiner), whose *Story of an African Farm* (1883) was published under her pseudonym. W.B. Yeats was a young poet on the T. Fisher Unwin list when he wrote a novel for the series under the pseudonym 'Gonconagh', and Walter Raymond had published at least one previous novel (*Misterton's Mistake*, 1888) before he made his appearance as 'Tom Cobbleigh'. Most of the other authors were unknowns and for two, Lanoe Falconer (Mary Elizabeth Hawker, 1848–1908) and John Oliver Hobbes (Pearl Richards Craigie, 1867-1906), the Pseudonym Library was their debut into fame.

Lanoe Falconer was the daughter of a Highlands regiment officer who grew up in Europe after her father's death and mother's remarriage. *Mademoiselle Ixe* was her first major success, followed quickly by *The Hôtel d'Angleterre* and *Cecilia de Noël*. Falconer suffered from tuberculosis and ill-health that prevented her from continuing her career after 1894.

John Oliver Hobbes was the daughter of the American businessman John Morgan Richards, who introduced display advertising and American cigarettes and patent medicines to England (England and America, 175). He relocated his family to London in 1867 where Hobbes grew up on Tavistock Square. She was charming and precocious, and had an unfortunate early marriage to Reginald Walpole Craigie, whom she left shortly before she published *Some Emotions and a Moral* (1891) in the Pseudonym Library. The novel became 'a

success for both author and publisher' and sold 6,000 copies in England within a year (Harding, 56-57).

Hobbes may have had an understanding of advertising from her father. At Hobbes' suggestion, T. Fisher Unwin placed advertisements for her books with complementary and adverse reviews next to each other in parallel columns. He also advertised her novels as 'thousandth' rather than 'second edition', giving buyers a better clue to the novel's popularity. (Waller, 151, 673). Hobbes herself became a prominent personality, a playwright as well as a novelist, with her fame coming first from her novels, then again from her position as a wealthy American socialite in London, and finally, from her early death at the age of 38 in 1906 and the publication of her biography and letters by her father in 1911. Everyone seemed to know that John Oliver Hobbes was Pearl Richards Craigie, and that Mrs Craigie was John Oliver Hobbes. Her identity was revealed in 1892, only a year after her first of her four Pseudonym Library books had appeared.⁴ When her collected *Tales of John Oliver Hobbes* appeared at the end of 1894 outside of the Pseudonym Library it contained her portrait. Her name – or in this case, both of her names – must have helped to sell the Pseudonym Library as much as the Pseudonym Library had brought her to the public's attention. They advertised each other.

From the start, reviews of the Pseudonym Library concentrated as much on the series and its distinctive oblong format and yellow covers as on the individual novels in it. The *Saturday Review* noted that it 'surprises and interests by itself before a word of it is read. It is tall, it is slender, it is bright yellow, it is the first volume of the "Pseudonym Library." It is a most delightful book to hold, being light, and the high narrow column of type recommends itself most agreeably to reading.' The *Athenaeum* agreed that even 'if the text were less interesting than it is, one could always derive a certain comfort and pleasure from

the handling of so dainty a little volume.’⁵ The initial *Times* review (Recent Novels, 11) noted that while ‘rival publishers are racking their brains to devise “libraries” with taking names, it was not an unhappy thought of Mr. Fisher Unwin to start a “Pseudonym Library” and using ‘a narrow, oblong shape and ample margins’ to [eke] out the story to the dimensions of a railway novel’ and atoning for the ‘tenuity of matter’ by the ‘get-up’ of the book and its 1s 6d price. That review may have inspired a poem to the series by Ernest Radford (1880-1920) that appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

Fisher Unwin publishes,
Price one-and-six,
In the 'Pseudonym' Library,
M'selle Ixe.

Publishers are constantly
Up to such tricks;
This is their latest,
M'selle Ixe.

He who sits reading it
Hopelessly sticks
In this pseudonymous
M'selle Ixe.

But the 'get up' of it
Everything licks:---
Buy it, ye Bibliacs,
M'selle Ixe!

He who gets discount
Has straw for his tricks;
If you want to lose fourpence,
Pay one-and-six.⁶

The second review in the *Times* in 1891 praised the series, saying the Library ‘deserves the success it has done much to obtain from the very audacity of the conception. It was a bold and original idea to invite a variety of writers, presumed to be exceptionally gifted, to merge their personalities in that of the publishers, and bring any fame they might gain into a common stock. The result, so far as the scheme has been carried out, has been to

give us a series of novelettes very decidedly above the average' (Pseudonym Library, 6). The review then went on to discuss *Mademoiselle Ixe*, *A Russian Priest*, *The Story of Eleanor Lambert*, *The Hôtel d'Angleterre*, and *A Mystery of the Campagna*, all favourably and with a comment that the identity of the author of *Mademoiselle Ixe* has become a 'matter of notoriety'. Another *Times* review in 1894 begins 'One of the best "Pseudonyms" that that have appeared...' in its review of Alice Spinner's *A Study in Colour* and John Oliver Hobbes' *A Bundle of Love*. Although the reviewer found Hobbes' novels disappointing, the series was still seen as a whole and favourably (One of the Best, 9). T. Fisher Unwin quoted some of the reviews in his advertisements for the series:

'These quaint-shaped booklets always promise originality – Graphic';
'Ces petits volumes, jaunes, au format de carnet, si faciles à mettre dans la poche, d'une prix si modique et d'une lecture si attrayante. – Le Livre Moderne.
'The Pseudonym Library is a veritable academy of new literary reputations – Queen.'

Not everyone was as positive about the series. Eleanor Marx Aveling wrote that while many of T. Fisher Unwin's series were charming and useful, she wondered 'Why is he issuing this "Series?" Simply because it is pseudonymous?' Nor was she impressed with the format, finding that 'It resembles only one thing – a cash-book. Those of us – a very few – who have cash-books don't need such reminders. Those, most of us, who have no cash-books can hardly enjoy being reminded of what they have not. And, finally, the volumes will fit neither into a travelling-bag, a pocket, nor a book-case.' (Marx Aveling 1891). Over sixty years later the *Times* was still talking about the Pseudonym Library. Oliver Edwards (the pseudonym of Sir William Haley, 1901–1987, then editor of the *Times*) reviewed the series again in 1957, noting that the 'an odd shape can fix a book in one's mind as much as anything else, and never was there an odder – or a more convenient – shape for a book than Mr. Fisher Unwin's Pseudonym Library' (Edwards 11).

The Pseudonym Library continued Unwin's promotion of new authors. Ford Madox Ford recounts that not only was Conrad a new discovery, with 'English that was new, magic, and unsurpassable' but also among Unwin's finds were Hobbes and the other

authors of the Pseudonym Library, with its sulphur-yellow colour covers that penetrated like a fumigation into every corner of Europe. *Mademoiselle Ixe* must have found millions of readers. And it was *really* the talk of the town. Mr. Gladstone, I think, wrote a postcard about it. Then there was Olive Schreiner, who was a prophetess, and who wrote wonderfully well about South Africa, and lectured the Almighty for the benefit of Hampstead. (Ford, 250-251).

Mademoiselle Ixe may not have had a million readers but it did sell at least 40,000 copies (Lee). Its sales certainly helped the success of the series. Short, readable, attractively packaged and priced, they must have stood out at the booksellers or at W.H. Smith's railway counters. Peter Unwin says that they were 'fashionable upon the occasional tables of the 'nineties' and their popularity was such that both Conrad and Maugham submitted their first manuscripts to T. Fisher Unwin for publication in the series (P. Unwin, 42). According to Unwin, the series was begun 'with the object of utilising the short novels that from time to time were offered to the publisher' and by the end of 1894 had required the printing of half a million copies (*Good Reading*, 127). Sales were also helped by the use of a striking poster for the Pseudonym Library, 'Girl and a Bookshop', done in 1893 by Aubrey Beardsley. Beardsley did another poster for the Autonym Library that was later and incongruously used to promote Unwin's children's books.⁷

Pseudonym authors who proved their popularity would later appear in full-length novels under their pseudonym: T. Fisher Unwin published four novels by John Oliver Hobbes in the Pseudonym Library and nine other novels in other editions, one of them, *Tales of John Oliver Hobbes*, collecting all of the Pseudonym titles into one volume. Lanoe Falconer's two Pseudonym novels were bound together in the one shilling 'Popular edition'.

Rita's *A Jilt's Journal* and *Vanity: The Confessions of a Court Modiste* and Ouida's *The Silver Christ* were republished in separate, more expensive editions.

The much-less successful Autonym Library began in 1894 with Francis Marion Crawford's *The Upper Berth* and concluded in 1896 with number 18, Cosmo Hamilton's (Henry Charles Hamilton Gibbs, 1870-1942) first book, *Which is Absurd*, which was reviewed by Jerome K. Jerome with a two-word review of 'Quite so' (Hamilton 90). The Autonym Library followed the same physical format but its list of authors included some of the most popular of the time: S.R. Crockett, who had published his popular *Stickit Minister* with T. Fisher Unwin; Mrs Oliphant, George Gissing, and W.E. Norris. In George Gissing's case and perhaps in the others as well, T. Fisher Unwin solicited contributions to the series, writing to Gissing early in January 1895 to ask for a piece for the Autonym Library. Although Gissing's reply to Unwin's initial offer indicates that Unwin had asked for a contribution specifically to the Autonym Library, Unwin must have written back to Gissing after he agreed to do the story asking if Gissing preferred to publish in the Autonym or the Pseudonym Library. Apparently it did not matter to Unwin if Gissing's work appeared in either, giving a good example of how fiction had become a commodity, in this case 30,000 words that could sell in the Autonym Library as a Gissing work or 30,000 words that would sell in the Pseudonym Library as a simple piece of well-crafted fiction. Gissing sent the completed manuscript of *Sleeping Fires* to Unwin on 13 March. Garnett thought the work would sell a 'few thousand copies' solely because of Gissing's name, but still he wrote:

What is Mr Gissing's Market Value for a tale of say 30,000 words? On the answer to that question depends we should say in TFU's next letter to him for of all the half & half potboilers we have come across, this is the finest specimen of them all.

... Of course Gissing's name has a certain marketable value, but we feel that a stronger effort be made to get good work out of him, that he ought not to get rid of work which very likely would be refused by every other publisher [underlines in original] (Gissing).

Fortunately for Gissing, T. Fisher Unwin's other reader, W.H. Cheeson, was more charitable and convinced Unwin to accept the novel as it was 'a quiet earnest and sincere outcome of Mr. Gissing's convictions' and 'if it would be agreeable to have a Gissing story in the 'half crown' series, why this is a fair enough specimen for the purpose', the 'half-crown series' most likely being the 'Popular Copyright Novels' of reprints of works by established authors (Gissing). Garnett also used the 'potboiler' term in referring to Rita's submission of *A Husband of No Importance*, saying that it would not 'do for the Pseudonym' as it was too 'vulgar and cheap' for the Pseudonym's requirement of 'good distinctive art', but that since it was a 'New Woman' potboiler it could be popular enough to 'pull the Autonym up, and make it talked about. What we want in that series is up to date fiction, fiction essentially of the hour' that would appeal to the 'railway bookstall public who like some sensation and cheapness for their money' (Jefferson 49-50).

Given the low price of the books, T. Fisher Unwin could not have paid the authors handsomely for writing for the Pseudonym or Autonym libraries. Cosmo Hamilton received only £10 for his Autonym contribution but it was his first book and a reasonable amount for a short novel, considering that T. Fisher Unwin only paid Conrad £25 for the entire copyright of *Almayer's Folly* (P. Unwin, 4). Established authors would have certainly received more and, if Gissing's fee (£150) is typical, Unwin would have paid £5 for each thousand words for all rights, the same rate that Gissing's agent, J.B. Pinker, was able to negotiate for Gissing's short stories that he sold to periodicals.

The Autonym Library was imitated by the Pocket Library series published by Cassell under the editorship of Max Pemberton in 1895. The Pocket Library copied the oblong format and size of the Pseudonym and Autonym series almost exactly. It sold for 1s 4d, just

undercutting the 1s 6d price for the Autonym Library. Shortly after sending the typescript of *Sleeping Fires* to Unwin in late March 1895, Gissing was approached by Max Pemberton for a contribution to the competing series. Cassell's only published five titles in the series and Gissing's *The Paying Guest* (1895) was the last.⁸ Including the £50 for the British and the £25 Gissing was paid for the American rights, Cassell paid £3 per thousand, less than the 3 guineas that Gissing had received for short stories earlier in his career.

The appearance and demise of the Cassell series in 1895 and the suspension of the Unwin series from 1896 until 1903 reflects the shifting market after the expensive three-decker novel died in 1894. New novels were appearing at 6s, with re-issues at 3s 6d and 2s appearing about a year later. I suspect that Unwin and Cassell found that paying established authors £50 or £150 for a novelette selling at 1s 4d or 1s 6d was proving unprofitable and faced too much competition from new full-length novels that were now appearing at an affordable price. According to Stanley Unwin, T. Fisher Unwin paid £1,500 for Olive Schreiner's *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (1897). At fewer than 25,000 words it could never have recovered the large copyright payment selling at the Pseudonym Library's 1s 6d; instead it was published at 6s, the type spread out to 100 words a page so as to fill 264 pages of an octavo volume.

Imitation of the Pseudonym and Autonym format was not confined to Cassell or to Britain: three American imitators appeared, copying the format, the series name or a variation on it, and reprinting several of the titles. T. Fisher Unwin had close relationships with two of the publishers, Putnam and Cassell, and seems to have sold the titles and influenced the format of his American imitators.

The three American 'Pseudonyms' were the Incognito Library published by Putnam, the Unknown Library published by Cassell in New York, and the Pseudonym Library

published by J.S. Tait & Sons. The New York Cassell's Unknown Library was announced in the *New York Times* on 28 February 1891 thusly:

A new series which promises to be one of the successes of the year. The stories are written by well-known writers, who prefer for the once to write over a pseudonym. The books are long and narrow, just the right shape to slip readily into the pocket of a man's or woman's coat, and they are bound in flexible cloth, and ornamented with a chaste design. The type is large and the margins generous. The first volume in the "Unknown Library" is:

MADEMOISELLE IXE

By Lanoe Falconer. Cloth, 50 cents.

"Mademoiselle Ixe" is the story of a Russian Nihilist, told with such strength and power as to hold the reader spell bound.

Putnam's Incognito Library appeared in 1894 and an advertisement appearing in Margaret Green's *The Doctor, His Wife and the Clock* (1895), one of the Autonym Library books published by Putnam, announced that their Incognito series was 'A series of small books by representative writers, whose names will for the present not be given. In this series will be included the authorized American editions of the future issues of Mr. Unwin's "PSEUDONYM LIBRARY," which has won for itself a noteworthy prestige.'

Note that element of mystery in 'names for the present will not be given': these were not the usual pseudonymous or anonymous books.

The Tait Pseudonym Library may have begun as early as 1892 – the early volumes are undated - but ended in 1894 with the publication of *A Bundle of Life*, number six in its series. The company began in 1892 as Tait, Sons and Company and early imprints bear that name. In 1893 the firm began publishing British fiction under the name of the Anglo-American Publishing Company but in 1894 the name was changed to J. Selwin Tait and Sons, the imprint under which the last Pseudonym title was published in 1894. The firm was purchased by the Eskdale Press in 1897 and seems to have died out shortly thereafter. While the Incognito and the Unknown Libraries had more elaborate decoration on their covers than did the Unwin books, the Tait Pseudonyms were almost exact imitations of the Unwin

books, unadorned except for the narrow bands at the head and tail of the spines and covers. All three publishers issued their series at fifty cents.

Putnam's also published the Autonym Library. They must have negotiated the rights to each title in the Autonym separately, as Gissing's Autonym title was published in the United States by Appleton in 1896 and not by Putnam. A *New York Times* review of the first two titles published in Putnam's Autonym series (Recent Fiction, 23) reveal that the American series differed in that it featured American writers, in this case Mary Putnam Jacobi, whose book *Found and Lost* actually consisted of two short stories previously published thirty years earlier.⁹ Interestingly, the Putnam advertisement for the Jacobi book implies that it was 'issued in co-operation with Mr. Unwin of London. Copyrighted for the United States', but as the book was not published in England or in the Autonym Library, the advertisement may only be referring to the series (New York Times, 5). Two *New York Times* reviews remarked on the recent appearance of similar 'little books', noting that 'a great deal of ingenuity of the publishing trade seems to be expended on devising tasteful and novel forms for them' (Famous Ghost Story, 23). The *New York Times* review of Dr Jacobi's book listed the Autonym, the Incognito, the Vest Pocket Series, the Handy Volume Series, and Knickerbocker Nuggets as examples of a new 'swarm' of volumes 'built for people who snatch their reading as a certain variety of business man snatches his lunch' but also noting that their low price were a temptation and that the Autonym was 'at once self-respecting and attainable' (Recent Fiction 23).

Some of the titles in the Unknown Library were by obscure American authors, *My Two Wives* by One of Their Husbands and *Wanted: a Copyist* by W.H. Brearley are two examples. Cassell's Unknown Library published Falconer's *Hôtel d'Angleterre*, three of John Oliver Hobbes' titles and seven other titles from the British series. Putnam's Incognito

Library published four of the Unwin 'Pseudonyms'. Tait did not publish any American titles in their series, confining their Pseudonym Library to seven T. Fisher Unwin titles. Both Tait and Cassell published Hobbes' *A Bundle of Life* in 1894.¹⁰ The Tait and Cassell editions of *A Bundle of Life* are identical, both using the same plates.

None of the American series seem to have published any new titles beyond 1896 or 1897. An advertisement for Wanamaker's department store in New York, appearing in the *New York Times* on 26 January 1897 (p. 4) lists four titles from the Incognito Library remaindered at ten cents each. The Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries may not have done as well in the American market because their English or foreign settings may not have been of much interest to the Americans and they were competing in a market in which new, full-length novels were available for only fifty cents more and often for less.¹¹ There was also an economic depression in the United States in 1896-97 that may have affected the market. However, why did both the British and American Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries cease after 1896? Garnett was at T. Fisher Unwin's until the end of 1899, and presumably still had an interest in the series but Unwin stopped acquiring more titles for the series until 1903. (Jefferson 72-73). Leslie Howsam's study of Victorian serials notes the growth of their numbers between 1881 and 1897 and their decline between 1898 and 1900 (Howsam, 7). The top 20 publishers of series produced 211 titles in 1881-1889, 478 in the period from 1890 to 1897, but only 250 in the period from 1898 to 1900. The novelty may have worn off, especially with other imitators on the market and competition from the increased number of journals, selling at a shilling or less, that carried new short stories by popular authors some of whom were appearing in the Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries. Both series would continue to appear in the T. Fisher Unwin catalogue for many years, but that is an indication of stock rather than of sales, or at least that there were still sufficient sales that the series was

not remaindered *en masse*. Certainly there was enough interest in the series to see it revived in 1914.

Perhaps the Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries best serve as a way to see the series as a commodity, a certain number of words, of a certain quality, ordered and purchased at a price suiting the source, and then sold on to carefully selected markets. The Garnett and Cheeson comments above reflect this concentration on marketing and should not be surprising: commodification is inherent in the nature of print. Printing and publishing require capital for the purchase of the text, for the presses, type, ink, paper, binding, skilled labour, and a distribution system. Publishers have to recover their costs for the title in hand and have sufficient return to produce the next. This was as true in Caxton's time as it was in the 19th century.¹² What was different in the 19th century was the expansion of the middle class and the rise of a literate working class. Publishers now had to find ways to exploit these new markets and discovered that they could align their books to match the tastes and demands of various segments within each group. Unwin's readers, literary men that they were, still talked and thought in terms of markets. Unwin packaged Hobbes for different markets: the Green Cloth Library at 6s and the 3s 6d edition for those who wanted what today could be the trade paper edition. Hobbes' Pseudonym titles were collected and marketed in new formats, perhaps taking Eleanor Marx's advice and making the volume more something suitable for the bookcase in the Adelphi Library series at 3s 6d or for a gift in the Green Cloth Library at 6s. For those who preferred Hobbes' *Flute of Pan* and more romantic novels there was the Red Cloth series. Readers could choose titles from the Popular Copyright Novels or from Unwin's Shilling Reprints of Standard Novels, with titles from the Pseudonym Library appearing in both. There was the First Novel Library for the curious, Unwin's Shilling Novels for those on a budget, and, for the almost impecunious,

Unwin's Sixpenny Editions, mostly novels, including some by Hobbes, but also including Unwin's long-time bestseller, *How to be Happy Though Married*, by E.J. Hardy.¹³ The audience that the Pseudonym and Autonym Libraries were aimed at seem to have been railway bookstall buyers, young City clerks and fashionable young women, people who would be entertained by a good, quick mystery, who were sophisticated enough to want to read a story that not only had a foreign setting but may also have even been written by a foreigner: five Pseudonyms had Russian authors. In the Pseudonym Library, 'John Smith' and 'Ben Bolt' kept company with authors named 'Juhani Aho' and 'Holger Drachmann'. This was a time of nationalistic ferment abroad, and at home, an imperial, adventuring, travelling, and missionary England that was intrigued by all things foreign. Lanoe Falconer was inspired to write *Mademoiselle Ixe* when she heard the 'torment' of a Russian tune and would later donate some of her earnings to assist Russian exiles, the sorts of exiles that Edward and Constance Garnett were intimate with in London. For half an hour, a commuter from Bromley to Blackfriars could escape a crowded carriage and be with mysterious people in Russia, France, or even China. Mysterious people, strange settings, an author who was not what he (or she) seemed, all set in a book of unusual format: the formula worked for T. Fisher Unwin in the 1890s and carried the firm into the new century.

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¹ Although the story of the cab is from Constance Black Garnett's memory, it may be apocryphal, as Autonym author Cosmo Hamilton also planned to make his initial appearance at Pasternoster Row a dramatic entrance behind a prancing horse. He discovered that the Row was too narrow to admit the hansom cab and had to walk from the end of the street (Hamilton 90).

² Bassett (2004) cites Evelyn March Phillipps, 'Lanoe Falconer,' *Cornhill Magazine* 32, November 1912: 233 as the source for the Pseudonym Library tailored to Falconer's novel.

³ Bassett and others count 54 to 56 titles in the series but the 1909 Unwin list shows that there were in fact 55.

⁴ Lanoe Falconer, much more reticent, kept her real name hidden until her death, but she too had an interview in 1892 that disclosed the woman behind the masculine name ((Bassett 2004, 153).

⁵ 'Novels' *Saturday Review* 70, 8 November 1890: 622; 'Novels of the Week', *Athenaeum* 3289, 8 November 1890, quoted in Bassett 2002, p 123-124.

⁶ Unwin used a modified version of the poem in *Good Reading* (p. 129), published as a New Year's gift for booksellers. The poem was revised to read 'Publishers are constantly Up to *new* tricks' and closed with 'the Trade will knock fourpence Off one-and-six'.

⁷ The poster used for the children's series appears in *Good Reading* (p. 133) described as a detail from a poster for the Autonym Library.

⁸ The titles were *A King's Diary*. By Percy White; *The Little Huguenot*, by Max Pemberton; *A White Baby* by James Welsh; *Lady Bonnie's Experiment*, by Tighe Hopkins; *A Whirl Asunder*, by Gertrude Atherton; and *The Paying Guest*, by George Gissing (Catalogue From *Ia* By Q, Cassell, 1896.) The British Library records two Cassell's Pocket Library series, this one, edited by Max Pemberton, and a later and different series that started in 1928.

⁹ It was her first publication, at age 17. Mary Putnam Jacobi, daughter of the publisher, G.P. Putnam, was a physician and pioneer in advancing the careers of women in medicine.

¹⁰ It was number 34 in the Cassell Unknown Library and number six in the Tait Pseudonym Library. It was number 31 in the Unwin Pseudonym Library. The Unwin edition has 195 pages and the two American editions 159.

¹¹Gissing's *Denzil Quarrier* was available from Macmillan for \$1 and his *Eve's Ransom* from Appleton for the same price. *The Unclassed* was sold by Fenno for \$1.25. A slim novel from Grant Allen, *The Bride from the Desert*, was also on sale from Fenno for only fifty cents.

¹² For Caxton and the commodification of texts, see William Kuskin's recent study.

¹³Originally published in 1885 under the pseudonym 'A Graduate in the University of Matrimony', it would continue selling in numerous editions for many years, from the 6d edition above to a deluxe white vellum, gilt-edged edition suitable for a wedding present and selling for 7s 6d. The 1910 Unwin catalogue lists six different editions.