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**David Williams' *Lessons to a Young Prince***  
**Publisher Influence and Reader Response**

Peter Robinson

Submitted for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
The University of Sussex  
May 2013

**WORK NOT SUBMITTED ELSEWHERE FOR  
EXAMINATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature: Peter Robinson

## ~ CONTENTS ~

Summary	(i)
Acknowledgments	(ii)
Table of Figures	(iii)

### THESIS INTRODUCTION

(I) Rationale	1
(II) Methodology	4
(III) Referencing and citations	5
(IV) Plan of the thesis	6
(V) The extent of modern scholarship	8
(VI) Bibliographic note: editions of <i>Lessons</i>	12

## ~ PART I ~

### ANALYSIS OF *LESSONS* AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

#### CHAPTER ONE: Overview and analysis of *Lessons*

(I) Overview	16
(II) Analysis	20
(i) The English Constitution	20
(ii) The Saxon Constitution	25
(iii) The American and French Revolutions	32
(III) Textual changes between editions	36
(IV) Audience	43
(i) <i>Lessons</i> as a response to <i>Reflections</i>	44
(ii) <i>Lessons</i> as a reply to Burke-in-transition	51
(iii) Intended audience	52

## ~ PART II ~

### PUBLISHER INFLUENCE AND READER-RESPONSE TO *LESSONS*

#### CHAPTER TWO: Authorship and the role of anonymity and pseudonymity

(I) Introduction	59
(II) Authorship of <i>Lessons</i>	63
(III) Reasons for anonymity	69
(i) Anonymity to avoid prosecution	70
(ii) Testing the water	73
(iii) Anonymity as enigma	75
(IV) Pseudonymous <i>Lessons</i> : an 'Old Statesman'	77



### **CHAPTER THREE: Critical reaction and reader-response**

(I)	Introduction	88
(II)	Periodical reviews	91
(III)	Direct rebuttals in print	98
	(i) <i>A Vindication of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke</i> (1791)	99
	(ii) <i>A Defence of the Constitution of England</i> (1791)	102
	(iii) <i>Observations on the Government and Constitution of Great Britain</i> (1792)	105
(IV)	Reaction in America	107
(V)	<i>Lessons</i> in a reading context: Anna Seward	111
(VI)	Williams' response to criticism (Appendix)	114

### **CHAPTER FOUR: *Lessons*' publishers: Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway**

(I)	Introduction	123
(II)	From Whig and Opposition pamphleteers to radical agitators	
	(i) Overview	124
	(ii) Historiography and bibliography	125
(III)	Legal difficulties, disputes, and radicalisation: the changing political faces of Symonds and Ridgway (1789-1797)	132
	(i) Ridgway's suppression of a pamphlet: <i>Withers vs. Ridgway</i> (1789)	133
	(ii) Dissatisfaction with Charles Fox: <i>A Speech at the Whig Club; or a Great Statesman's own Exposition</i> (1792)	136
	(iii) Prosecution for seditious libel: <i>The King vs. Symonds and Ridgway</i> (1791-1793)	140
	(iv) Liberty of the Press: use and abuse, <i>Ridgway vs. Mrs Billington</i>	150
	(v) Ridgway and Williams as witnesses: <i>King vs. Martin</i>	153
	(vi) Membership of the London Corresponding Society (L.C.S.) and the Revolution Society	155

### **CHAPTER FIVE: Direct publisher influence on *Lessons***

(I)	Introduction	166
(II)	Textual interpolations: publisher interference with <i>Lessons</i>	166
(III)	Advertising <i>Lessons</i>	169
	(i) Newspapers	170
	(ii) Book lists and back matter	176

### **CONCLUSION**

(I)	Introduction	183
(II)	Specific conclusions	184
(III)	Limitations of the thesis	186
(IV)	Further extensions and other avenues of research	187

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	188
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## ~ Summary ~

This thesis presents an interpretation of David Williams' (1738-1816) *Lessons to a Young Prince* (1790) ostensibly from a publisher-centric viewpoint. Through close analysis of its English-language editions it argues that *Lessons* has been consistently misattributed, misread, and otherwise taken out of context. The agglomeration of both contextual and particular factors contributed to this general negligence, but the most important factors were anonymity and the transformation of the text by the addition of a tenth lesson on Edmund Burke's *Reflections*, which altered the way *Lessons* was read by contemporaries in light of the revolution controversy. The thesis suggests that the explicit *ad-hominem* attack on Burke in the tenth lesson overshadowed what amounted to an implicit attack on Burke-in-transition towards *Reflections* contained in the original nine lessons.

Using a significant body of previously unknown material to identify Williams' intended audience and the effects of anonymity, *genre*, and advertising on reader-response to *Lessons*, the thesis adds to existing knowledge about Williams' intentions and to the way his texts were read and understood by contemporaries. More particularly it underscores the importance of his publishers and charts their impact upon his text. The influence that *Lessons'* publishers had on the impact of the text, both intentional and unintentional has received no scholarly attention, and they are themselves, as publishers, understudied. However, as this thesis shows, their direct textual interpolations increased the satirical vigour of *Lessons*, whilst a sophisticated marketing campaign attempted to influence reader reception as well as sales. Indirectly, anonymity caused readers to superimpose the political sympathies of the publishers onto *Lessons*, which further pre-ordained the terms on which they were read.

## ~ Acknowledgments ~

It is with great pleasure and immeasurable relief, and after a few aborted attempts, that I come to write the paragraphs, which at times, I wondered if I would ever be writing. The following people have, in their own ways, made the completion of this thesis possible, and to all of them I am forever grateful. My first heartfelt thanks go to my parents and brothers, David, Hazel, Nigel, and Michael, whose inquiring minds, love of discussion, and undying belief in what I might achieve have no doubt set me on this path. To my mother, special thanks are due for her initial proof reading and intuitively probing questions on the text itself. Secondly, I would like to thank Prof. Richard Whatmore, the principal supervisor of this thesis. To him I owe special thanks, not only for his experienced guiding hand, but also for his acquiescence to long periods of little or no contact, and his willingness to supervise a thesis that has changed many times – more often than most – in scope and approach, and two-thirds of which has been completed at a distance of 6,000 miles away. On which note, it is incumbent upon me to pay great tribute to the wonderful internet databases that have made a thesis of this kind possible: GALE's Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, The Times Digital Archive, Oxford Journals Online and Google Books, to name just a few of the most heavily used. A University of Sussex 'Seedcorn Scholarship' fees waiver was gratefully received for the first three years of the research.

I am also indebted to my peers, Dr. Andy Mansfield and Mia Saugman who, though geographically distant, have both stayed in contact for many years, and in various ways have shared the same experience with me. To my colleagues, current and former, at the University of Tokyo, I am grateful for the tolerance that they exercised in allowing me to take a back-seat role in faculty matters. Particular thanks go to Dr. Guy Middleton, Dr. John O'Dea, and Dr. Daniela Kato for their non-specialist, but considered and insightful comments on several chapters; to Nancy Lee and Dr. Mark Bowen for keeping me in good humour; and to Wakako Kamijo for releasing me from administrative burdens.

Finally, my greatest thanks are reserved for my wife, Aiko, for putting up with me so well during times when productivity and motivation waned, for helping me to find the rails again after each successive derailment, for forbearing the long periods when I was absent overseas, and for blessing us with our two sons Hugh and Louis, whose daily journeys of exploration into unknown worlds have so closely mirrored my own. Any errors, omissions, or bad-calls contained in this thesis I own in entirety, though I hope they have been kept to a minimum.

Much of the material in Chapter Two of this thesis has recently been published as 'Authorship and the Role of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in David Williams' *Lessons to a Young Prince*', in *The Hiyoshi Review of English Studies*, no. 57 (2010), Keio University Press, pp. 49–81, although without accompanying illustrations. Material from Chapter Five both informed and was informed by a paper "'This Day is Published': James Ridgway's new publications advertising as a 'book event' in late eighteenth-century England" presented at the University of Stirling, 24 March 2012, and soon to be published.

## ~ Table of Figures ~

2.1	A Typical 'New Publications' list for James Ridgway [c1792], showing a list of works by David Williams grouped consecutively	66
2.2	Comparison of engraved images of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales taken from the first edition of <i>Lessons to a Young Prince</i> (1790), and Tobias Smollett's continuation of David Hume's <i>History of England</i> (1791)	80
3.1	Advertisement for the variant American edition of <i>Lessons</i> by Berry and Rogers (1791)	108
3.2	Advertisement for the American edition of <i>Lessons</i> by Thomas (1791)	108
3.3	Title page of the American edition of <i>Lessons</i> (1791)	108
4.1	Engraving of John Stockdale, the 'Bookselling Blacksmith', from <i>The Intrepid Magazine</i> (1784)	128
4.2	Conder trading token issued 1794 describing Symonds' and Ridgway's imprisonment in Newgate Prison for seditious libel	146
5.1	Title pages of Edmund Burke's <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> (1790) and David Williams' <i>Lessons to a Young Prince</i> (1790), showing similarity of typeface	172
5.2	Different advertising strategies: 'New Publications' lists for H.D. Symonds (left) and James Ridgway (right)	177

## ~ Thesis Introduction ~

### (I) Rationale

I first encountered David Williams (1738-1816) while researching my M.A. thesis on Jean Jacques Rousseau's educational philosophy, particularly as expressed in *Émile*. Although still little known in political philosophy circles, Williams' educational works, and most notably his *Treatise of Education* (1774) are still widely cited. Intrigued by the career of the Dissenting Minister turned educator, turned political philosopher, I began reading his works systematically. The breadth and scope of his *œuvre* was impressive, especially for someone so little known, but it was his *Lessons to a Young Prince* (1790) that particularly drew my attention because, it seemed to me, that it represented a crossroads in his political thought – a curious hybrid of the satirical style exhibited in his *Royal Recollections* (1788), and the sober pedantry of his *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782). It seemed also, to be full of contradictions: on the one hand emphasizing the importance of systems of graduated representation and revealing his disdain towards personal aggrandizement, while on the other hand, defending his own satirical broadsides against government ministers on the grounds that in times of political turmoil, people seek answers in men, not in systems. Contradictory also, because it was conceived, composed, and published before the publication of Edmund Burke's famous *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), but was curiously marketed as a response to 'everything that can be written [by him]', and was later augmented with an actual riposte to *Reflections* in a large additional lesson.<sup>1</sup>

This is the very issue which the first part of the thesis attempts to resolve: if the large additional lesson was self-evidently aimed at the post-*Reflections* Burke, but the original nine lessons were intended to combat the political philosophy espoused by a pre-*Reflections* Burke, then

presumably collectively, lessons one to nine and lesson ten should mirror some of the same contradictions and inconsistencies which were recognized by Burke's contemporaries and which have pre-occupied Burke scholars for the last two centuries.<sup>2</sup> If however, the first edition of *Lessons* can be read more widely as a general critique of the impotence of the Foxite phalanx of the Whig Opposition, of which Burke only represented an increasingly alienated part, then these inconsistencies diminish. It would be grossly naive to read *Lessons* simply as a late example of the 'mirror for princes' literature of the Renaissance, a reading which would identify the Prince of Wales as the real, not merely the imagined audience. Yet to move from the 'nominal addressee' to making assertions about intended audience is in many ways a move just as problematic as establishing authorial intention.<sup>3</sup> Although incomplete, scraps of Williams' surviving correspondence do assist us in this difficult task, as does the advertising material. However, another way to recreate projected audiences is to analyse the body of ideas that *Lessons* was responding to.

After initially overviewing the central themes of *Lessons*, the first part of the thesis attempts to provide the immediate, though turbulent, contextual contours which surrounded *Lessons* and in which it was embedded, in order to facilitate better understanding of the significance of the publishers' influence on the work which is the central theme of the thesis. In so doing, the question arises as whether the first nine lessons and the additional tenth lesson should be considered as separate and distinct works, with only rhetorical rather than philosophical cohesion.

Published first anonymously, and then pseudonymously, a number of cataloguing errors in library inventories past and present, hinted that *Lessons* had been, and was being, misread, or at least not read as fully as it could be.<sup>4</sup> I further noticed that major collection libraries worldwide invariably held the sixth or seventh edition of *Lessons* – the final version of the text – leading me

to realize that without more careful consideration of all editions, it could not be understood properly. *Lessons* was being read out of context: some of its rhetorical features had gone undetected, the impact of the way it was marketed and the development of the text had not been considered, and therefore it was ripe for re-evaluation.

What began, as a thesis focusing on Williams' political philosophy, therefore rapidly became a book-history-type thesis; the once broad focus narrowed, and became at times microscopic. The model for the kind of detailed study that this thesis represents has been Richard Sher's *Enlightenment and the Book* (2001), whilst the overarching conviction that the material culture surrounding the publication of books informs the ideas they contain and significantly affects reading postures, although I have seldom referred to him, has come from Roger Chartier. Reading the work of these two scholars, and others to a lesser degree, made me think seriously, not only about the author-reader relationship, but also about the important role played by the publisher in the birth-event, or more correctly, the birth and continuing life, of a book. Looking into the publishers of *Lessons*, the complex relationship between Williams, Symonds and Ridgway – their shared political perspectives, business relationship, and undoubted friendship – brought home to me the often contingent, earthly, grounded reality of composition, however abstract the ideas contained within a text. Suddenly, the construction of a composite thesis that, whilst never losing sight of the general context of *Lessons*, had as its primary focus the rhetorical aspects of the text, the importance of revisions, analysis of real (not assumed) reader responses, and where possible, establishing the direct causality lying behind all three areas of enquiry, seemed possible.

The starting point has been, inevitably, *On Burning Ground* (1993), James Dybikowski's comprehensive bio-bibliographical monograph on David Williams. This remarkable feat of

scholarship made the current thesis possible, particularly the extended bibliography that supplied many leads to chase.

## (II) Methodology

This thesis has relied heavily on digital databases. Although the geographical distance of the researcher from the main research repositories made this the only practicable research methodology, it did in fact not limit, but rather enhanced the research. Without the centralization of millions of books and records, complete with Boolean and ‘fuzzy’ in-text searching, many of the small but significant references to Williams, *Lessons*, and its publishers, such as the ‘Back matter’ and advertising lists, which have proved crucial in interpreting Williams’ and the publishers’ aims, would have been impossible to find. In this sense, the thesis is of a new kind, the offspring of new research possibilities brought about by technological innovation. However, despite these excellent additions to the researchers’ armoury, they are still imperfect, and it has required lateral thinking, patience, and perseverance, to get the best out of them. For example, whilst searching for the full title ‘Lessons to a Young Prince’ yielded many strong sources, breaking search terms such as by putting ‘Lessons’ and ‘Young Prince’ was unhelpful, resulting in thousands of results to wade through. However, on the other hand, by anticipating the abbreviation of the title by contemporaries, who dropped the ‘Young’, many more crucial references were found. A similar problem encountered was due to the inconsistent spelling of names, for example, of Ridgway (Ridgeway) and Delahay (Delahoy). Italicization of the title of *Lessons* in contemporary printed sources was also a problem, because the search engine was often unable to recognize this font.

The databases that were used during the course of research for this thesis (in descending order of frequency) were: Eighteenth Century Collections Online (GALE databases); Eighteenth Century Journals (Adam Matthew Digital); British Newspapers, 1600-1900 (Gale databases);



Nineteenth Century British Library Newspapers (Gale databases); Early American Newspapers, 1690-1876 (Newsbank); 19<sup>th</sup> Century UK Periodicals (Gale databases); The 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Century Burney Collection Newspapers (Gale databases); The Times Digital Archive (GALE databases); Oxford Journals (Oxford University Press); Electronic Enlightenment (University of Oxford); Google Books.

Gale's Eighteenth Century Collections Online, in particular, allowed me to bring together for the first time, all the editions of *Lessons*, which made the process of comparison easier. The newspaper databases, through their chronological sequencing, facilitated the analysis of changing advertising strategies supporting the sale of *Lessons*.

Despite the thesis' reliance upon digital databases, where necessary, several archival research visits have been made to the British Library, the National Library of Wales (Aberystwyth), Cardiff Central Library (CCL), The London Library, The National Archives (Kew), and documents were obtained from the Archives Nationales (Paris).

### (III) Referencing and citations

In order to ensure that the flow of the main text of the thesis is not interrupted by and overly burdened with citations, especially in the citation- and reference-heavy chapters of Part II, the following referencing and citation system has been adopted. On the first mention of a book title, the date of the first edition has been given in parenthesis and full details provided in chapter endnotes. Thereafter, only the title is given. All embedded quotations are fully referenced in the chapter endnotes via superscript at the end of the sentence in which they appear. Where a work has been cited or quoted before within a chapter, then an abbreviation of the title is used in the chapter endnotes with page references. *Ibid* is used in the conventional way. Where quotations

have been broken up within a sentence or are the subject of ellipsis, then a single reference has been given at the end of the sentence.

#### (IV) Plan of the thesis

The thesis is composed of two parts. Part I: Analysis of *Lessons* and Intended Audience, representing approximately one third of the thesis, has been split into three main sections. The first section after a brief overview is, 'Analysis of *Lessons*', which introduces the reader to the wide range of ideas that the first edition of *Lessons* contains, placing them, where possible, into their ideological and historical context, and situating them within Williams' own *corpus*. In particular, the section considers his interpretation of England's constitutional system at diagnostic moments in its history: at the time of Alfred the Great; at the English Revolution; and in the 1790s. In addition, it discusses the event- or issue-based element in the text where *Lessons* responds directly to events. The second section highlights and discusses the aims and implications of author-sanctioned revisions to the text between editions. Familiarity with the themes of *Lessons*, especially notions of political representation prior to the 'Revolution controversy' sparked by publication of Burke's *Reflections* is essential in identifying and understanding the political philosophy and those figures espousing it that Williams targets and rejects. The last section discusses *Lessons* in its context as a pamphlet of the Revolution debate, with a particular focus on Williams' critique of the language used in Burke's *Reflections*.

PART II: Publisher Influence and Reader Response to *Lessons*, forms a collection of self-contained but interrelated essays, exploring different aspects of the writer-publisher-reader axis. Chapter Two: Authorship and the Role of Anonymity, explores the rationale behind the anonymity of *Lessons*, its rhetorical function, its use in advertising by the publishers, and tests the reality of anonymity through reader response and debunks the myth that Symonds and Ridgway were ignorant of its author. Chapter Three: Critical Reaction and Reader Response,

builds on Chapter Two by surveying and evaluating all known reactions to *Lessons*, including newspaper comments, periodical press reviews, private diaries and correspondence. It demonstrates that reader reaction was extremely disparate: some readers responded to anonymity favourably, others did not. Nationality played a role too, Americans were universally sympathetic, Englishmen critical; which edition readers read also affected responses, as did attachment to party, and so on. The chapter argues that genre and tone also played an important role in its reception because the ideas were closely linked to Thomas Paine's, though the writing style was compared favourably. It also investigates why the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' eclipsed the more sober and technical first nine lessons.

Chapters Four and Five turn directly to the publisher side of the triangle, and argue for the importance of the roles played by Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway in manipulating the reception climate for *Lessons* through a prolonged and sophisticated marketing campaign. In the complete absence of any detailed account of their lives and political sympathies, Chapter Four brings together, from a variety of sources, what is known about them (particularly James Ridgway), and demonstrates that their ideas matched Williams' well, though they held fundamentally different views regarding the significance of the 1688 English Revolution for the English Constitution. Four legal cases involving Ridgway are discussed, and both publishers' imprisonment for seditious libel during William Pitt's crackdown on political dissent in the early 1790s, is shown to be significant.

The overall aim of the thesis is to offer a more nuanced way of reading *Lessons*, to explain why, since its publication, it has been consistently misattributed, misread, and though much praised and much criticized, not received the attention that I think it deserves.

#### (V) The extent of modern scholarship

By the early nineteenth century, sufficient time had passed between the publication of *Lessons* and the events it engaged with, for it to become the subject of bibliographic study and cataloguing accession to collecting libraries. In sales catalogues of second-hand books it continued to be sold anonymously, either with Revolution pamphlets, or sometimes, though rarely, attributed to Edmund Burke. In the early twentieth century, its fortunes improved little until in 1957, an article appeared in the *National Library of Wales Journal* entitled, 'A bibliography of the printed works of David Williams (1738-1816)' by Professor D. Williams. This article was the first time since a biographical article in the *Western Mail* on the 22 and 24 May 1890 by 'Morien' that the works of David Williams received any serious scholarly attention, and was certainly the first time that any comparison had been made between the various editions of *Lessons*.<sup>5</sup> Although the author was unable to consult all editions, the comparison of those that he was able to access showed that *Lessons* was added to on two separate occasions, firstly in the second edition when the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' was added, and secondly in the sixth edition when a large Appendix was added.<sup>6</sup> Part of the reason for the lack of any serious study prior to this is due to the fact that even during David Williams' own lifetime his works were difficult to obtain, and after his death in 1816, they became scarce. It has evidently been a policy of collection libraries worldwide to stock only the most 'complete' version of the text, i.e. the sixth or seventh editions.

In the 1990s, building on the work of Prof. David Williams, James Dybikowski went further in noting in his critical bibliography accompanying *On Burning Ground: the life of David Williams* (1993), that in addition to the added 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*', the contents of the earlier lessons in the second edition had been substantially revised by the author, most significantly with the addition of a diagram representing the American Constitutional

arrangement, and by an 'expanded commentary on the French Constitutional arrangements'.<sup>7</sup> He also noted that subsequent editions contained minor changes, the most significant being the addition of a footnote (p.139), from the third edition onwards, giving details of Williams' only direct contact with Edmund Burke, in connection with the establishment of the Literary Fund. The event was later retold in his posthumously published and incomplete autobiography *Incidents*.<sup>8</sup> This important work by Dybikowski, a section of which had previously been published in his article for the *National Library of Wales Journal*, 'Biographical Notes on David Williams 1738-1816', brought to an end the silence which had accompanied the bibliographic tradition of the work of David Williams, and which had been responsible for producing an historiography of *Lessons* which focused only on the added 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' and to a large extent, viewed the earlier *Lessons* retrospectively through it.<sup>9</sup> Instead of seeing the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' as the product or continuation of the earlier *Lessons*, counter-intuitively the first nine lessons were seen merely as the practical manifestation of his general critique.

Throughout the twentieth century, attention centred on placing Williams' thought within, or sometimes in contradistinction to, radical reform traditions, as in the work of Sussex University-based, Peter France; or, in the case of Whitney R.D. Jones' full-length biography, *David Williams: The Anvil and the Hammer* (1986), in tracing the evolution of Williams' thought through his different publications. Jones in particular, suffered from a lack of precision in his analysis, which resulted in an over simplified view of Williams' thought, especially during the 'High Water' period of his career.<sup>10</sup> For example, Jones paraphrases Williams as arguing in *Lessons* that, 'It is now imperative that the Prince should comply with the earnest wishes of his parents and his country by contracting a marriage and establishing a household alike consistent with his dignity'.<sup>11</sup> In fact, this sentiment did not appear in the first edition, and was only added as a paragraph in the second edition, though retained in future editions.<sup>12</sup> Its addition might be

read as evidence of a significant hardening of Williams' attitude towards the Prince of Wales. Peter France in his introduction to *Incidents*, flags the French edition of 1791 and the expanded second edition with the additional 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*', but then implies that the text remained static thereafter, stating, 'there were several more editions of this enlarged work'.<sup>13</sup> Even Dybikowski, despite noting 'minor' corrections between the second and third editions in his critical bibliography, failed to give these the import that they deserve, and uncharacteristically erred in stating that the first American edition, printed by Childs and Swaine in 1791, was based on the second English edition – in fact, it was based on the Dublin edition as explained by the *Daily Advertiser* (New York), which was itself based on the third English edition, as is evident on a closer inspection of the text.<sup>14</sup> Paragraph three on page one hundred and eighteen of the second edition reads: 'And social security arises from the engagement of the whole community to preserve the person and property of every individual, untouched while unoffending', while the Dublin edition carried the important addition of the words 'and liberty' which also appeared in the first American edition.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the 'substantial revisions' noted between the first and second editions, let alone the addition of the Appendix from the sixth edition onwards, have never been the subject of sustained analysis, and this alone justifies the first part of the present study.

Perhaps the best summary of the ideas contained within *Lessons* available to date is Charles F. Mullet's article 'David Williams: Reformer,' which dedicated three and a half pages to them.<sup>16</sup> However, Mullet's article is generally descriptive, describing only the main points made by Williams, and as the author admitted, he had only seen the first and sixth editions.<sup>17</sup> Even late in the twentieth century, securing access to all editions of *Lessons* has been a considerable obstacle to bibliographical study. Yet, sustained analysis of the changes between editions, how it was marketed, read, and judged by contemporaries not only clarifies Williams' original intentions, but also allows a better understanding of the evolution of his thought during the extremely tense

and disappointing time of the months following the French Revolution. Many of the textual changes between editions are symptomatic of his response to rapidly changing conditions in France, as well as considered responses to other publications, not least Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Unlike his popular satire *Royal Recollections* that remained textually static through fourteen editions, *Lessons* present the historian of ideas with an ongoing dialogue between Williams, his publishers, and his readers.<sup>18</sup>

The somewhat cavalier approach to *Lessons* has lamentably continued in more modern times. Gregory Claeys in his otherwise excellently edited volume of Pickering's *Political Writings of the 1790s* series, re-type-set the sixth edition of *Lessons* and added editorial notes, presumably because he correctly considered this to be the most complete version. Yet, confusingly, he presaged this with a facsimile reproduction of the title page of the second edition. Although the various editions of *Lessons* are listed in the first footnote, no comment is passed about the variances between them. This is symptomatic of the way that even post-Dybikowski scholars have approached *Lessons*, which has invariably been seen as a rather uninspired work belonging to the genre of 'responses to Burke's *Reflections*'. As this thesis contends, such a view neglects the fact that *Lessons* was not a static text, and the first nine lessons were conceived and executed prior to *Reflections*.

(VI) Bibliographical note: editions of *Lessons*

This bibliographical note builds on James Dybikowski's comprehensive bibliographical note in *On Burning Ground*, with the inclusion of advertising material.

**English editions**

First edition:

[David Williams], *Lessons to a Young prince, on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution*. London: for H.D. Simmons [sic], 1790, pp. [2] + 91.

**Additional notes:** Latin quote from Cic. de Div. lib. ii. Ver. 4.

**Reviews:** *Critical Review* 70 (1790), p. 455, *Monthly Review* 4 (1791), pp. 63-67; *General Magazine and Impartial Review* 4 (1790), pp. 507-510; *Scots Magazine* 53 (1791), pp. 22-23; *New Annual Register* (1790), p. 237.

**Advertising:** *The World*, September 23, 1790; Issue 1162; October 1, 1790; Issue 1169.

**Estimated publication date range:** mid-September 1790 to mid-November 1790.

Second edition:

[David Williams], *Lessons to a Young Prince, by an old Statesman, on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution. The second edition. With the Addition of a Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by Reflections on the French Revolution, by the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 1791 [sic], pp. frontis [5] + 157 + [1, adv.].

**Additional notes:** retains Latin quote.

**Reviews:** *Critical Review* I (1791), pp. 230-231.

**Advertising:** *The World*, November 16, 1790; Issue 1209.

**Estimated publication date range:** mid-November to late November 1790.

Third edition:

[David Williams], *Lessons to a Young Prince, by an old Statesman, on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution. The third edition. With the Addition of a Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by Reflections on the French Revolution, by the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, 1790, pp. frontis [5] + 159 + [1, adv.].



**Additional notes:** 'Old Statesman' in italicised script.

**Advertising:** *The World*, November 29, 1790; Issue 1220; December 4, 1790; Issue 1225; December 8, 1790; Issue 1228; December 11, 1790; Issue 1231.

**Estimated publication date range:** late-November – [?]

Fourth Edition

As 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

**Advertising:** none recorded

**Estimated publication date range:**

Fifth edition

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Sixth edition

[David Williams], *Lessons to a Young Prince, by an old Statesman, on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution. The sixth edition. To which is added, a Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by Reflections on the French Revolution, by Edmund Burke*, London: for H.D. Symonds, 1791, pp. *frontis* [5] + 182 + [2, *adv.*].

**Additional notes:** Contains an Appendix [.....] Addition of a poem 'imitated by a correspondent' to the title page.

**Reviews:** *Monthly Review* 4 (1791), p. 346; *Annual Review* 9 (1791), pp. 452-454.

**Advertising:** *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, March 4, 1791; Issue 5570.

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*The World*, September 10, 1792; Issue 1778; September 19, 1792; Issue 1786; September 20, 1792; Issue 1787; September 21, 1792; Issue 1788; September 25, 1792; Issue 1791

### **Irish Editions**

[David Williams] *Lessons to a Young Prince, by an old Statesman, on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution. The fifth edition. With the addition of a Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by Reflections on the French Revolution, by Edmund Burk*, Dublin: William Jones, 1791, pp. half title, *frontis* (not by Assen) [7] + 175. Crudely printed.

### **American Editions**

[David Williams], *Lessons to a Young Prince, by an old Statesman, on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution. The sixth edition. To which is added, a Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by Reflections on the French Revolution, by Edmund Burke*, New York: Childs & Swaine, 1791, [6] + 68. Five plates. Image of Prince of Wales omitted. Based on the Dublin edition.

*Select Pamphlets: viz 1. Lessons to a Young Prince, by an Old Statesman on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution*, Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1796. Also issued separately.

### **French Editions**

[David Williams] *Leçons à un jeune prince, sur la disposition actuelle de L'Europe à une révolution générale. Cet ouvrage, adressé par son auteur au Prince de Galles, est traduit de l'anglais*, A Londres: Chez Boudouin, 1790, title page + 86. 4 plates. Based on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Editor's note describes the second edition in London being at the press.

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<sup>1</sup> *The World*, London, 23 September (1790), issue 1162.

<sup>2</sup> For a good summary of this search for internal consistence in the work of Burke see Tom Furniss', *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: Language, Gender, and Political Economy in Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), pp. 1-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> A well-known publisher specializing in re-prints of out of copyright material recently marketed *Lessons* as by Edmund Burke, and so the misattribution continues to this day.

<sup>5</sup> James Dybikowski, *On Burning Ground: the Life of David Williams*, Oxford: Voltaire Foundation (1993), p. 268.

<sup>6</sup> Prof. David Williams, 'A Bibliography of the Printed Works of David Williams (1738-1816)', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 10 (1957), p. 133. The Appendix actually appears from the sixth edition onwards.

<sup>7</sup> *On Burning Ground*, pp. 316-7.

<sup>8</sup> David Williams, *Incidents in my own life which have been thought of some importance*, Falmer: University of Sussex Library (1980), trans. and ed. by Peter France. The original manuscript is at Cardiff Central Library (CCL), Ms. 2. 191, and was probably written in 1802.

<sup>9</sup> James Dybikowski, 'Biographical Notes on David Williams 1738-181', *National Library of Wales Journal*, (1985-6), pp. 93-117.

<sup>10</sup> See, Chapter Five, 'High-water Mark', pp. 88-112, in Whitney, R.D. Jones, *David Williams: The Anvil & the Hammer*, Cardiff: University of Wales (1986). Jones describes this as representing the period of 1788-1791.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>12</sup> *Lessons to a Young Prince By an Old Statesman on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution, To which is Added, A Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by Reflections on the Revolution in France by Edmund Burke*, London: H.D. Symonds (1790), 2, p. 19. Henceforth, *Lessons* will be referred to as *Lessons* (date), edition number, page number.

<sup>13</sup> *Incidents*, p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> *On Burning Ground*, p. 316.

<sup>15</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 118; *Lessons*, American edition, New York: Childs and Swaine (1791), p. 49. The pagination of this edition is irregular, but if consecutively numbered this would be page 57.

<sup>16</sup> Charles F. Mullet, 'David Williams: Reformer', *Church History*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (1944), pp. 111-131.

<sup>17</sup> Published in 1944, it is perhaps unsurprising that the author was unable to view other editions of this work.

<sup>18</sup> It is argued in the following chapters that this dialogue commenced with *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782), and continued more or less consistently, though presented in different genres, through *Royal Recollections*, (1788), *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789), and finally, *Lessons* (1790).

## ~ Chapter One ~

### Overview and Analysis of *Lessons*

#### (I) Overview

*Lessons to a Young Prince*, first published in September 1790, was an English pamphlet written by David Williams (1738-1816), which took the form of nine lessons directed rhetorically towards the Prince of Wales on a series of political topics, especially the nature of political power and different forms of political constitution.<sup>1</sup> Published just over a year after the momentous events of 14 July 1789 in Paris, and with the internment of the French King and Royal Household on 6 October 1789 at the forefront of Englishmen's minds, it unsurprisingly sought, in part, to discuss the importance of political developments in France: especially when its author, David Williams, held an intimate friendship with Jacques Pierre Brissot, which was rejuvenated on his visit to England in December 1788 – January 1789.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, in another sense, in conception, *Lessons* was deeply anchored in distinctively British radical thought concerning parliamentary reform and the Regency Crisis that had gripped England the previous year.<sup>3</sup> Through the well-used literary device of the schoolmaster-student relationship, Williams sought to publically 'instruct' the Prince of Wales on the principles of just government and good political practise, and to demonstrate the public manner and comportment appropriate to his position. These lessons were given greater rhetorical urgency by the very real possibility of George III suffering a recurrence of madness brought on by porphyria, and by the spectre of further revolutions haunting Europe.<sup>4</sup> It is hardly surprising too, that given Williams' background and life-long interest in education, both as a Dissenting Minister and as the proprietor of a successful private school in Chelsea in the 1770s, that he should have chosen this particular trope to present his ideas.<sup>5</sup> Less than a year

before, he published *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789), which, although more sombre and erudite in tone, directly addressed the Prince and rehearsed much of the same material. The 'Dedication' attached to *Lectures* began by advocating to 'youth' – transparently the Prince of Wales – the study of political economy, for if such study was included in the daily regimen of students, 'English Youth might enter public life with principles instead of prepossessions; and would not, from their birth, be enlisted in factions'.<sup>6</sup>

Williams' choice of title, *Lessons*, which replaced *Lectures*, on one level reflected his growing exasperation with the Prince's public conduct and penchant for adhering to what he called a 'cabal'.<sup>7</sup> Although as this thesis argues, the Prince was mainly only the rhetorical subject of the *Lessons*, this does not preclude a multiplicity of textual meanings which suggests a genuine expression of disappointment in the Prince. In *Lessons*, Williams' tone became noticeably patronising rather than pedagogical. Whereas in *Lectures* the Prince had been expected, and deemed able, to engage with his detailed critique of Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), scarcely a year later, the Prince was portrayed in language that had hitherto been reserved for descriptions of his father, as hopeless and infantile, and Williams' hopes of reforming his character had apparently receded to the point of reliance on sarcasm, a trend which continued through subsequent editions of *Lessons*. Williams' remark at the head of lesson two that, 'I know your Royal Highness is not remarkable for long and patient attention', intimated that he had the concentration span of a child.<sup>8</sup> This infantilism continued elsewhere: having expressly stated that the diagrams representing various political constitutions were intended for the Prince's perusal, a footnote added in the second edition suggested that they had found great popularity with intelligent parents, who, the author had been informed, used them to 'give ideas of political constitutions to youth, which they might not attain through perusal of dissertations'.<sup>9</sup>

The first edition of *Lessons* had two distinctive themes. The first, located mainly in lessons one and two, followed the long-established English tradition of critiquing Royal counsel for being composed of flatterers, sycophants, and placemen.<sup>10</sup> Williams accused the Prince's pedagogues of cultivating his taste for the fine arts and *belle lettres*, at the expense of understanding the workings of society and his own moral responsibilities, 'in moral arrangements, and in prudential preparations for the first impressions of society, the royal system was extremely defective' he observed.<sup>11</sup> Despite inviting the Prince to view the first lesson as a 'history' of his own early education (over which he had no control and was not blameable), most of this lesson focused on lampooning and discrediting the Prince's political advisers and associates. Williams' essential point was that the Prince had been ill-advised by a coterie of self-interested counsellors who lacked political judgment, and who were merely orators, dressing up bad ideas in palatable performances that were simply opportunistic. His first lesson ended by urging the Prince to rid himself of these people unless, like the army of Pantagruel, he wished to forever shelter under their tongues. Lesson two was even more robust and criticised the Prince's role in establishing a projected Regent's Court at Bagshott during his father's recent illness, warning him to get out of the 'habit of admitting and favouring witlings, buffoons, fiddlers, fencers and bruisers', or else his character would be 'fixed with the public', forever.<sup>12</sup>

The second section of *Lessons* abandoned its satirical style and focussed on an abstract discussion of the 'principles of society'. In this section, as Gregory Claeys argues, Williams borrowed heavily from the political vocabulary of Jean Jacques Rousseau, virtually paraphrasing the *Social Contract* (1762), though without citing it directly.<sup>13</sup> Williams asserted that the Prince (and by association his advisors) should be made aware that sovereignty lay

ultimately with the people, and that the value of a political constitution is determined by how well it expresses the General Will. Identifying the best practical mechanism through which the General Will could be expressed was a problem to which Williams returned time and time again. Scarcely two years after the publication of *Lessons* in his manuscript 'Observations on the Late Constitution of France' (CCL: Ms. 2.192), Williams described its attainment as 'the desired object' of his enquiries into representation.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the great question for humanity was not, 'the nature of God, the mechanism of the universe, or the composition of its elements, but the principles of society', and the best constitution was that which allowed 'governing All by All'.<sup>15</sup> For Williams, *après* Rousseau, it was impossible for the people to permanently abrogate their sovereignty to a monarch, an aristocracy or even parliament, for MPs remained only delegates, the servants of the people. These sentiments however, were not of course original, nor new to Williams' own thought. They bore close resemblance to the thought of his contemporary, the Dissenting Minister, Richard Price, who in his *Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (1789), tackled many of the same issues, famously informing the King, '[you are] more properly the Servant than the Sovereign of your People'.<sup>16</sup>

The next five lessons discussed the constitutional arrangements of England at different epochs (at the time of Alfred, at the English Revolution, and in the 1790s). It also analyzed the American and the French constitutions for the purpose of comparison. These five lessons contained the most original and controversial material, particularly in their appraisal of the English Revolution of 1688, and its relationship with the 'liberty' exercised through the English Parliament. His view of the French Constitution, still at this stage embryonic, and in the formulation of which he played a significant role at the behest of Jacques Pierre Brissot, is also interesting, because the first edition of *Lessons* was hurriedly translated into French and published as *Leçons à un jeune prince sur la disposition de l'Europe à une e révolution générale*

(1790). He also later wrote *Observations sur la dernière constitution de la France avec des vues pour la formation de la nouvelle constitution. Traduit de l'anglois par le citoyen Maudru* (1793), which was a direct result of his participation in the Convention in 1792. In lesson nine, the final section, Williams presented a 'conclusion' to all that had preceded it. In this lesson Williams emphasised the role of law and its relationship to the Executive and Legislative powers.

## (II) Analysis

### (i) The English Constitution

Williams commenced his 'Lesson on the English Constitution', which was in fact spread over two lessons, by sharply dismissing the notion that the parliamentary system of government in England was either representative or just. In a two-pronged attack, *Lessons* declared that the system of representation was flawed because of corruption and the control of parliamentary seats by powerful aristocratic families: 'Deduct from the electors, all the tradesmen who are obliged to vote with their customers... the tenants who are appendages to houses; and the freeholders who are entangled with the aristocracy or with government: and you may be surprised at the remainder,' he challenged.<sup>17</sup> How is it, he continued, that such a system could be called free? Furthermore, not only were those in parliament placemen, or motivated by personal ambition, but they had little power over the Executive, which was grouped towards the magnetic power of the Crown. In less than three pages, Williams debunked the 'myth' of the English Constitution, much venerated by Montesquieu and Burke, and defended by numerous other responders to *Lessons*.<sup>18</sup> In lesson three, a fictional monologue, the King, is portrayed as being fully aware of his position of relative strength; unable to do wrong politically since, if any national calamity should befall Crown policy, whether domestic or foreign, the responsibility for it would be placed squarely at the first minister's door:



We CAN DO NO wrong; the blame is on bad counsellors. Let the evils of a detestable and disgraceful war be on Lord---; we have changed our administration; and if we succeed not in any of OUR views by the instrumentality of OUR servants, WE will repent of the unsuccessful measures, dismiss the unsuccessful minister with the guilt of failure on his head; and without apprehension of future consequences, direct all OUR high Priests to call the GOD OF ISRAEL to witness our intentions.<sup>19</sup>

Williams used a similar rhetorical device in *Royal Recollections* (1788), when the King reflected upon the loss of his American Colony with bedazzled wonderment, not at how he had contrived to lose 'a dominion equal to Europe in extent, susceptible of advantages beyond the reach of imagination', but that he had been able to do so whilst making their 'loss hardly felt'.<sup>20</sup>

The reality of the political situation in England, Williams argued, 'as it has existed for some time', could not to be found in the 'romances of Blackstone or Montesquieu', but in the repugnant writings of Burke.<sup>21</sup> Williams objected to the view expressed by the Revolution Society that the English constitutional system, which had found its way to the present mediated through the Glorious Revolution, was fundamentally sound, because it lacked an expression of the General Will through an event of representation. Williams, in denying that the events of 1688 had any relevance to the Constitution, was therefore positioning himself outside of the debate raging between Price and Burke in which both men wanted to recruit it as an asset: with, as Furniss argues Burke emphasizing the legal aspects of hereditary succession and Price the tolerance.<sup>22</sup> After cataloguing the excesses of the Administration, Williams, in common with many other radicals, sought to locate the origins of English liberty in the more distant past, from which point he could narrate the gradual erosion of rights, beginning with the calamity of the Norman Conquest. However, whilst some radicals emerging from the Whig tradition saw the English Revolution of 1688 and its accompanying brace of legislation as a landmark in the development of the English Constitution, Williams rejected this

narrative that found its ultimate mouthpiece in the form of Thomas Babington Macaulay some fifty years later, as merely 'a compact between the Prince and Princess of Orange and the heads of certain families, attended by the Mayor of London and other persons in the exercise of authority' – the replacement of a monarchy with an autocracy, with no involvement of the people.<sup>23</sup> To find a period when England possessed a constitution that was truly capable of expressing the General Will, it was necessary to delve much further back, deep into the Saxon past.

In 1790, determining the constitutional importance of the English Revolution was back in vogue, after a period of relative dormancy during the years of the Whig Supremacy. Debates that had seemed *passé* were suddenly topical again. This was due to the confluence of three things: firstly, the centenary celebrations of the 'Glorious Revolution'; secondly, the Regency Crisis; and finally, revolution in France. At issue were the problems of succession, the hereditary principle, the notion of the King-in-parliament, the people's right to rebuke or 'cashier' its ruler, what to do when a monarch failed to fulfil his duties (France), or was mentally incapacitated (the Regency Crisis), or reneged on his responsibilities (James II at the Revolution). Radicals interpreted the English Revolution in a plethora of different ways that are still being interpreted and reinterpreted by historians today, most recently by Steve Pinkus in *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (2009) which re-wrote the dominant view of a bloodless, sedate, and very 'English' Revolution, foregrounding its barbarity and very Revolutionary credentials. Members of the Revolution Society however, unsurprisingly, emphasized its importance in securing personal freedoms, and used it as the basis for a petition against the suspension of *habeas corpus* by appealing to freedoms secured at the time of the Revolution Settlement.<sup>24</sup> Williams and Thomas Paine, however, rejected claims that it formed part of England's unwritten constitution, viewing it as a 'missed opportunity' for liberty. In the most

direct extant reply to *Lessons*, Williams was dubbed a 'leveller', a charge linking him with Commonwealth excesses, and identifying him with a seventeenth century republican project.<sup>25</sup> According to this anonymous critic, *Lessons* pursued an egalitarian basis of government, which was deemed dangerous to the interests of the country. However, Williams was never in reality an advocate of universal suffrage which he distinguished from universal representation, but, as he wrote in the *Nature and Extent of Intellectual Liberty* (1779) some years before, he recognized the dangers to the political body of cutting off the senses through which the body obtained its nutrition, and this outweighed the dangers of accidentally imbibing something poisonous to the general constitution. Although, as argued in subsequent chapters, his view of the English Revolution was seen as deviant in the eyes of many, even radical contemporaries, and concord with some, though not all, recent assessments of the English Revolution by a number of intellectual historians, who argue that in practical terms 'the risk [of absolutism] was greater' after the English Revolution.<sup>26</sup> John Brewer, for example, suggests that the increase in the size of the army and greater centralization, made absolutism much more possible. However, the tendency to draw on seventeenth-century revolution vocabularies masked the fact that they had different meanings and connotations in the 1790s. As Howard Nenner points out, for example, in the seventeenth century 'absolutism' in parliament meant the perfection of a system, yet, for Williams' generation, it was a byword for despotism.<sup>27</sup> By the 1790s the preference for mixed, balanced government which flourished in the middle half of the eighteenth century, promoted by Montesquieu and others, no-longer held quite the same attraction, and in reform circles had become a symbol of impotency, conservatism, and the failures of the *ancien regime*. The critic of *Lessons* drew his reader's attention to events at the National Convention in Paris, and attempted to draw comparisons with 1688. How did what was happening on the Convention floor differ from the Revolution of 1688, as the author of *Lessons* claimed? Despite his critics, Williams did, however, have his supporters and

fellow-travellers. John Cartwright pointed to the ancient Saxon Constitution as the real origin of English liberty, and for many sympathisers, like the author of *Cato's Letters* before them, the restoration of an ancient Constitution was 'better than meddling with Utopian exercises and constitutional engineering'.<sup>28</sup>

It is over the constitutional implications of the English Revolution that the views of Edmund Burke, Richard Price and David Williams appear at their most discordant. Price adhered to the view that through Parliament, the English people had effectively exercised their right to select their monarch, replacing James II with William and Mary. In fact, not since *Magna Carta* had the English people exercised their freedom so profoundly. However, both Burke and Williams rejected this narrative as implausible. For Burke, far from demonstrating the people's right to choose its own government, the English Revolution defended and reiterated the hereditary principle of monarchy. Citing the *Declaration of Rights*, the first Act of William and Mary, he claimed that this was the 'cornerstone of the constitution', in which the inviolable rights of succession were laid out plainly for all to see.<sup>29</sup> However, in Williams' view, neither Price's nor Burke's position was persuasive. Williams argued that although the flight of James II had given the 'great families' involved considerable political power, by the 1790s, just a century later, the House of Hanover had wrestled power back to the Crown through bribery and corruption. In other words, the Revolution had established a *de facto* autocracy that had been eroded by the Crown ever since – nowhere did the people figure in this picture. J.G.A. Pocock has suggested that much of the satire of this period represented George III either as a benign figure in the clutches of bad advisors, or else as calculating and corrupt. For Williams, however, this description fitted the Prince of Wales better, who, as the first lesson suggested, was benign but ill advised, while his father was both corrupt and corrupting.

## (ii) The Saxon Constitution

Charles F. Mullet in his article 'David Williams: Reformer', suggests that the potted constitutional history that Williams provided in *Lessons* reinforced the 'genius' of the Saxon political system, laying 'the woof of romance across the warp of shrewd analysis'.<sup>30</sup> It is an accurate assessment, but the implicit romanticization of a mythic 'golden age' was a trope used by authors from the time of Herodotus onwards, and was the very thing that Williams in subsequent editions singled out as the main shortcoming of Burke's *Reflections*. Certainly, some of Williams' descriptions of the Saxon political system bordered on the incredible, but his careful addition of a footnote to the second edition of *Lessons* which provided the source of his information, indicated that for him, the Saxon system of representation had been a concrete political, not a mythic, reality. Although he conceded the Saxon system was imperfect because civil liberties were not protected, slaves were used, and the people were superstitious, it nevertheless produced a high degree of political liberty, and the free parts of the community were organised into a political constitution, the 'best imagined and the most effectual that has hitherto been exhibited in the World!'<sup>31</sup>

Yet serious questions remain as to why Williams chose to turn so wholeheartedly to the Saxon Constitution for the source of his inspiration, above and beyond the obvious rhetorical boost of appealing to the 'authority' and perhaps more importantly, using the malleability of the past. Williams' use of the Saxon Constitution to underpin his notion of political representation was not new to his thought, but did represent a significant departure from his *Plan of Association* (1780) in which an almost identical account of the organisational structure of Alfred was used to underpin 'personal and domestic security' in the wake of the Gordon riots, rather than as a means of achieving full and perfect representation.<sup>32</sup> The answer is perhaps given to us directly by Williams himself who informs us shortly after the publication of *Lessons* that

'...Hottman's [*sic*] *Franco-Gallia* and several writers who have referred to the customs of the Saxons in England, convinced me that the principles of civil society were to be found in the first efforts of rude nations'.<sup>33</sup> He goes on to list Tacitus, John Selden, Sir Henry Spelman the Saxon Chronicle, Francois Hotman's *Franco-Gallia* (1573), and Wilkins' Collection of Anglo Saxon laws as being highly instructive.<sup>34</sup> The Saxon period represented to Williams the first unadulterated version of English society, the point of its origin – when it was unblemished by monarchical despotism and political shenanigans. In a manner reminiscent of Rousseau's postulation of man in the state of nature, in the Saxon Constitution Williams finds society in a similar first nakedness before its fall. Though ultimately swept away by the Imperial powers of Rome, the Saxon past represented a period of decorous, graduated representation. This sublime but distant moment of constitutional harmony dressed in aesthetic terms rather echoed the very Burkean language that Williams rejected so forthrightly.

The system Williams praised was extremely ancient, but for him meant something very specific and concrete. It was based upon the notion of graduated representation. A group of ten householders elected one representative as their Tythingman. Groups of these Tythingmen would then elect a representative to go forward to the Hundred, and so on. Through these progressive steps, the General Will of the people was carried forward and held paramount, whilst progressively smaller bodies were charged with representing more and more of the people until, eventually, the General Will of all would come to rest in as few as two people. The crucial benefit of this system, similar to Rousseau's system of graduated election outlined in *Gouvernement de Pologne* (1772), was that it avoided the problem of a large, unwieldy, Legislative Assembly, the threat of which Williams consistently guarded against, yet, it retained the ethos of representation. Indeed, two years later, in commenting upon the process by which the first French Constitution was drafted, Williams identified this problem as

being the very source of its ultimate deficiency: 'The people everywhere and on all occasions have been drawn together in masses too large, which nothing could pervade or agitate, but the most violent or pernicious passions'.<sup>35</sup> Every stage of representation was a vital element in the composition of the political body which regulated the system and prevented the build-up of general pressure which could jeopardise the correct functioning of other vital organs. Burke's general objection to this system was that it was 'indirect', and that it introduced so many barriers between the people and their governors that the message was likely to be lost in the very act of conveyance. The system of parliamentary election, on the other hand, although simplistic in its conception, offered representation on a more equitable basis.

A crucial feature of Williams' account of the Saxon system was Alfred's realisation of the need for a constitutional guardian or Committee of Constitutional Review, which would meet every year to review the past year's legislation and ensure that it was in compliance with the principles of the Constitution. In the Saxon system, such a body took the form of the Mycle-gemot, or Folkmote – a general assembly made up of all the people. This could not propose law, but could repeal laws contrary to the constitution passed within the previous year. It would decide on all constitutional questions. Above all, Williams wanted to resolve the perennial problem that at election time the people were everything, but as soon as MPs had been elected, they became nothing, an idea that leant heavily on Rousseau: 'When the people have chosen their deputies, are they defunct, are they annihilated?' Williams protested.<sup>36</sup> The Saxon system had an inbuilt constitutional safety valve, which jealously guarded the principles on which the system was founded, a valve that was absent in the present system. Another important component was the Folkmote that allowed the people to monitor and chastise government on the basis of its performance. Whilst Price, for example, argued that the existing system supported the People's right to 'cashier government', Williams provided them with the

institutional mechanism to do so.<sup>37</sup> The Saxon Folkmote was thus, as Williams presented it, broadly comparable in function, if not in precise detail, with 'the periodic councils of Geneva, which had a power to oblige the magistrates and all the orders of the state to confine themselves within the bounds prescribed by arrangements, denominated by the Constitution'.<sup>38</sup>

Throughout *Lessons*, Williams was unmistakably cautious about the power of the mob and the dangers of unbridled democracy, placing great emphasis on establishing a system that directed the will of the people – which was always right even though it might be despotic – towards virtue. In *Lessons*, Williams suggested that his sentiments were fully in accord with his previous work, which had the aim of, 'organising a community into a free, active, and powerful body; having and retaining a permanent judgment and will; and exercising those powers, without tumult and disorder, over all its delegations, whether Kings, Senates, or Magistrates'.<sup>39</sup> In many ways, Williams' fear of disorder was a legacy from the Gordon riots of 1780, when anti-Catholic riots caused mayhem in London and resulted in the deaths of 300 protesters and wide-spread damage to Catholic-held property. Williams had direct experience of the raging mob during the riots, and it was in response to the threat to personal security that he produced *A Plan of Association* (1780) arguing that the design of Associations was to produce channels of communication with Government which would ultimately 'prevent large and tumultuous assemblies', not encourage them.<sup>40</sup> Williams' political scheme however, had changed little in nearly a decade, only the form and strategy through which he promoted it, evolved and responded to changing circumstances. Mullet is correct in asserting that *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782) called on the 'King to reform the constitution, since parliament could not reform itself,' and *Lessons* in many ways echoes this message, only this time it was directed towards the Prince of Wales, not the monarch.<sup>41</sup> Whether this reflected the lingering uncertainty



associated with the Regency Crisis, or a notion of the Prince acting as a check on the King's growing authority, is difficult to say conclusively.

The greatest innovation of *Lessons* was the diagrammatic representation of the different constitutions which they discussed. Two of the three plates present in the first edition, concerned the English political system: its present structure, and under Alfred. They aimed not only to help the reader focus on the abstract ideas *Lessons* contained, reinforcing Williams' critique of the contemporary political climate and the benefits of Alfred's system, but also to facilitate easy comparison with models representing other constitutions, such as those of France and America. In the first plate, 'The Constitution of England under Alfred', a series of concentric circles denoted the entire political body, and the various tiers of representation were shown with explanatory notes. On the outside of the diagram, a broken circular line represented the peasants, who had no election rights or involvement in the formation of policy. One of the clever features of the diagram was that the size of the circumference of each band corresponded with the proportion of the population of which that particular category consisted. The slaves, being the most numerous inhabitants of Saxon settlements, were thus easily distinguished from the single entity of the Crown. The band was detached from the rest of the political body, distinguished by shading. The first unbroken outer band labelled two on the diagram represented the, 'Freemen in Tythings', who elected their 'Tything Men' annually. Band three, much smaller in proportion to the 'Tythings', was made up of 'Judges, Magistrates and Commanders of the Hundreds', who were elected by the 'Tything Men'. In turn, band four represented the, 'Commanders and Magistrates of the Counties', who were elected annually by the 'Hundreds'. Band five showed what Williams deemed to be the most important element of the Saxon system, the 'Myce-gemot' or 'Folkmote'. This was an annual assembly of all the Freemen in the nation, in which ordinary acts of the legislature were judged. Following this,

band six was the 'Wittengemot' or the Ordinary Legislature, consisting of the King, Barons, Bishops etc, whereas the central point of these concentric circles of power, number seven, showed the 'Executive & Ecclesiastical Powers' working in tandem.

On first inspection, the diagrams take the appearance of geometrical proofs, which was precisely the effect that Williams wished to convey – political systems, demonstrable of reasoning, proof, and certainty, what he later called the 'scientific language of philosophy'.<sup>42</sup> Although the diagrams only mirrored the text, they were the subject of considerable contemporary comment, and form a significant theme in the reception history of *Lessons*. Just as the human body could be dissected to reveal many of its secrets, so too, the political body could be anatomised. The essence of the system, or rather what Williams considered the greatness of it, was that the whole external surface of the political body acted as the skin, binding it together and transmitting the General Will of the people to the heart, at its centre. The people were, in other words, 'acting upon' the Executive Power which responded to the sense impressions it received from the largest and most important organ in the body, the skin. Time and time again Williams returned to and refined his medical and anatomical metaphors, each time slightly altering the part of the human body responsible for harvesting the General Will, but always describing the same process. In 'Observations on the Late Constitution of France' he went further and described it as a 'minute and capillary organization'.<sup>43</sup>

However, what the diagrams lacked was any explanation of the political powers or administrative functions that each band would be designated beyond their electoral function. Using the same basic model, Williams considered the situation of the English Government (for he claimed it had no Constitution) in 1790. The changes are important and instructive. On this diagram, Williams placed the origin of political power, not at the outer band, as in the first

diagram, but at its centre. Number one was the 'Crown considerably emancipated and influencing a small majority of the aristocracy', whilst moving outwards, band two represented the aristocracy who were more or less equally divided and balanced through competing factions. The next band made up the 'Legislature', composed of members dependent upon crown and aristocratic appointments. Bands four and five represented the 'Bishops, Lieutenants & etc', and the 'Justices of the Peace and vicars etc' respectively, all appointed and influenced by the political strata above them. Band six, the outer band, was shown as a broken dotted line, unattached to the main political body. This represented the 'body of the people', which was thus symbolically shown in the new diagram exactly as Alfred's peasant slaves were represented in the earlier one. Power, *Lessons* claimed, worked in the opposite direction to that of Alfred's Constitution, from inside outwards, and each band was 'acted upon' by the circle before it.

In the first edition of *Lessons*, and in all subsequent editions, the diagram labelled 'The English Government in 1790', is listed as plate three, but in the British Library copy of the first edition, there is no plate two present. In subsequent editions, plate two was listed as 'The English Constitution at the Revolution.'<sup>44</sup> Assuming that plate two also existed in the first edition (that the British Library copy is incomplete), it shows power emanating from the centre outwards in a similar fashion as plate three though the Crown is held 'in tutelage' (with the familiar dotted line showing enslavement or lack of freedom) by an unequal aristocracy (the few great families). The Legislative Body (Parliament) was elevated to band two, unequally divided, and appointed by the aristocracy. The other bands were the same as those in the diagram depicting 1790, only the Lord Lieutenants and Sheriffs were appointed in the 'name of the crown' not by the crown. The people once again, were shown removed from the political body, disassociated, with an unbridgeable gap, despite being the largest element of the whole model.

### (iii) The American and French Revolutions

Having highlighted the advantages of the Saxon Constitution, and ridiculed the system of government resulting from the English Revolution of 1688, which had deteriorated further in the present epoch, Williams sought further comparable models. In lesson seven he outlined the causes and effects of the American Revolution. The American states, Williams argued, were founded on the basis of a reaction to the religious intolerance and bigotry of the Established Church in England. Planters and settlers escaped to America, and held 'a just abhorrence to those aristocratic and ecclesiastical privileges, which held Europe in perpetual warfare, oppression and misery'.<sup>45</sup> Remarkably, Williams said very little about the War of Independence, simply remarking that having defeated all of Britain's arts to introduce aristocratic and ecclesiastical privileges, it could be correctly assumed that their constitution would be a 'considerable improvement on that of England'.<sup>46</sup> But it was not just to this spirit of intolerance that Williams attributed the loss of America. Returning to the satirical mode of the opening lessons, he summarised the cause and course of the American Revolution in two sentences:

The American war originated in parliamentary jobbing; and its great purpose was to transfer enormous masses of English property into loans, funds and taxes, to form the corrupt ministerial phalanx called the monied Friends of Government. While that faction like a malignant disease, was draining the vital substance of Britain, and even armies and navies were its mere ramifications; the cabinet of France obeyed the sentiments of the French nations, without intending to gratify it; and America obtained its liberty.<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to the 'genius of Alfred', the Americans did not possess any great statesmen when drafting their Articles of Confederation, but were sensible enough to invite advice from abroad

and, as a result, 'information flowed in from every part of the world', whereupon they set about their task with considerable skill and patience.<sup>48</sup> Despite this skill, and though undoubtedly an improvement on the English system of government, for Williams, the American federal system did not offer the unity of purpose and harmony of will required for a lasting political settlement. Each state possessed its own distinct will, a political body in and of itself, and was thus susceptible to breaking up. 'I am convinced,' Williams wrote somewhat prophetically, 'the whole wants the unity, harmony and capacity of common judgment and general will, which would have resulted from a general organisation of the Republic into one body'.<sup>49</sup> The confusion that thirteen separate bodies caused made it impossible for Williams to represent the system in a diagram, and although the 'disparity and incongruity' of the separate states was reckoned upon by the provision of proportionate delegations to the general Congress, Williams did not feel that this would aid matters much.<sup>50</sup> The American Governments separately considered were improvements, and what America lacked constitutionally, it exceeded England by a long way in the 'reality of representation'.<sup>51</sup> Elections were, by and large fair, and an indolent and false hierarchy did not thwart industry. The Articles of Confederation which later formed the basis of the U.S. Constitution rectified the problems and excesses of the English system of government outlined in the first two lessons, but stored up problems for the future. The American system of representation also presented Williams with a problem, for it seemed implausible that there should be a General Will of General Wills, and each state represented a potential faction on a larger scale. Elsewhere in *Lessons*, Williams stated that 'there can be but two species of government—by the General Will or by the will of one or more persons controuling [sic] the General Will,' but the American Constitution did not accord with either of these two models.<sup>52</sup> The seventh lesson ended by briefly touching upon France's involvement in the independence of America. With considerable irony, Williams argued that the actions of the French King to 'divide the empire of a rival power', resulted in unexpected

effects, and the 'French Auxiliaries returned from America charged with an electric fire... the sparks of liberty fell on touch-wood, and the whole at once blazed into ashes'.<sup>53</sup>

In the penultimate lesson, Williams moved on to a discussion of the political situation in France. In contrast to the approach adopted towards the English Revolution he gave no account of the events of the French Revolution, since they had, he argued, been accurately stated in numerous recent publications. Published at the very time that France was forming her constitution at the National Assembly, for Williams, it was more important to give an account of the principles that the National Assembly was operating under. Comment upon the activities of the National Assembly was widespread and Williams grouped these comments into certain schools of thought, which he then took aim at. The first of these groups was represented by Edmund Burke, whose principles of 'sordid selfishness' had been outlined in earlier lessons.<sup>54</sup> The second was comprised of a group of Dissenting ministers, with Richard Price at the helm, who saw in the French Revolution the English Revolution mirrored, promising a reformation of religion, extended tolerance, and the principles of universal benevolence. Finally, there were the political parties, each seeing what political spin-offs the Revolution might bring. In an emphatic restatement of all the principles of the English system that Williams despised, followed by an equally emphatic statement of everything a political constitution should be, Williams distilled the essence of his *Lessons*. The purpose of the National Assembly was to:

...abolish every contrivance and pretence by which one or a few may be privileged, first to benefit, then to injure millions—to destroy that principle of all modern governments, that a part is greater than the whole; and instead of applying a machine denominated either Monarchic, Aristocratic, or Democratic—to govern the community for the advantage of individuals, orders, professions—to organise the community itself; to form an actual body...<sup>55</sup>

Predictably, Williams proceeded to measure the greatness of the system proposed by the Assembly against that of Alfred, although with the Constitution not yet formed, his comments were advisory in tone, and accompanied with the earnest wish that they be taken into consideration. The main complaint was that there was a money qualification to hold the title of citizen which was unjust. On his diagram of the French Constitution this seemed to condemn large proportions of the French people to the status of slaves – represented by a dotted circular line. For Williams, the French were therefore repeating the mistakes of the English system in excluding a great many valuable members of society. However, the National Assembly showed signs that it could be the equivalent of Alfred's Mycle-gemot and Williams strongly urged the deputies to imbue it with powers to 'form and enact all constitutional and fundamental laws without any communication with the executive power.'<sup>56</sup>

In the final lesson, Williams ended on a note of optimism. If the Prince looked to the constitution of Alfred and France, and allowed that power should remain within a community, even once a government has been selected and appointments nominated, then he would be serving his country and humanity. Williams argued that the Mycle-gemot and National Assembly were calculated for this very purpose, but had no equivalent in the current English system. The course of the revolution in France had not been inexorably set – depriving Europe of all Kings within thirty years – but would render the duty and office of kings very different than before. *Lessons* showed how the Prince lived, instructed him on the principles of society, drew his attention to the faults of the English system, pointed out the merits and shortcomings of the American and French Constitutions, and finally, suggested how he might become a king, and still a benefactor of mankind.

### (III) Textual changes between editions

The main themes and arguments contained within the first edition of *Lessons* have been introduced, but the text was not static through its seven English language editions, and the second and third editions went through a series of rapid changes within the space of eight months. Many of these changes had important implications for the way contemporaries received *Lessons*. The most important, transformative addition, the ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’, is discussed in Section IV of this chapter, the key changes between the second and third editions are discussed in Chapter Five, Section I, because they were made by *Lessons*’ publishers, not Williams himself; and the material contained within the Appendix of the sixth edition is discussed in Chapter Three, Section VI, where they are placed in a more immediate context. The following section, therefore, provides an explanation of the principal textual changes to the first nine lessons between the first and second editions.

The revisions fall into four broad categories; (i) correction of typographical, grammatical or formatting errors, (ii) clarification or enhancement of points already made, (iii) substantial alterations of points or arguments being presented, or extension of the explanatory framework, and (iv) specific responses to particular criticism, correspondence, events, or in some cases other publications.

The opportunity to revise the entire work, as well as of adding the extra tenth lesson, was clearly taken by Williams. In addition to sharpening some particular points in several of the other lessons, two embarrassing errors were corrected. The first was a typographical error which occurred in Williams’ critique of the ‘celebrated Revolution of 1788’.<sup>57</sup> This ‘howler’ was swiftly corrected in the second edition.<sup>58</sup> That it slipped into the first edition is perhaps evidence of the speed with which it was composed and went to press. The second error of



commission related to a biblical citation: Williams, never at ease when citing scripture, had in the first edition described how, 'David hewed Agag into pieces', but the error was quickly corrected to attribute this act to Samuel.<sup>59</sup>

Of interest too, in re-creating the editing *milieu* in which Williams operated, was the alteration of the wording of Williams' critique of Charles Brinsley Sheridan on page nine. The essence of the jibe remained the same, that Sheridan was a chameleon and artificer who was more form than substance, but whereas the first edition read: 'Sheridan, with equal imagination, has more art [than Burke]; being educated on the stage...'<sup>60</sup> in the second edition, the phrase was altered to read, '...being educated in the Green Room of the Theatre'. It must surely be no coincidence that in the same year, James Ridgway published a work by Joseph Haslewood entitled, *The Secret Histories of the Green Rooms: containing authentic memoirs of Actors and Actresses in the Three Theatres Royal* (1790) which was advertised on the same page as *Lessons*.<sup>61</sup>

In lesson one, the main change between the first and second editions, was the addition of two footnotes. The first, built on the criticism of the Prince of Wales' education. Whereas the first edition criticised the education system of the age, not any specific individuals, who were not 'answerable for the defects of plan in which they were not consulted', the second edition named the Prince's educators, making it more confrontational in tone.<sup>62</sup> The footnote read:

Whether it was expedient that Princes should be scholars' greatly agitated the domestic cabinet of B-----House almost a year. Dr. M----- and Mr. J--- had engaged them in the road of knowledge. Lord H---traversed their endeavours; and they were exchanged for the supple H---d and the insignificant A---.<sup>63</sup>

Although their names were partly concealed, Claeys has correctly identified them as William Markam, Cyril Jackson, Lord Holderness, Mr Hurd and Arnold, who would have been easily identified by informed contemporaries.<sup>64</sup>

The second footnote related to the trial of Warren Hastings, the former Governor-General of Bengal, impeached for maladministration and fraud on the 10 May 1787. The paragraph to which the footnote was appended began with a general critique of Mr. Pitt, who he considered possessed the art of ‘profiting by the errors of Mr. Fox’, particularly in the case of Warren Hastings.<sup>65</sup> In the footnote Williams built upon his well-rehearsed critique of Pitt, charging him with a policy *volte-face* on the issue of Hastings’ impeachment for politically motivated reasons:

If the conduct of the Minister were thoroughly understood in this business; if the motives of his sudden conversion to the opinion that Hastings should be impeached, were stated to parliament and the country by an able and honest senator, we might see what we have long wanted, a Minister rendered actually responsible.<sup>66</sup>

The impeachment and trial of Warren Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal 1772-1785, was the subject of many pamphlets and he became something of a surprise *cause célèbre* in radical circles. Williams’ consistent line of criticism about the trial was not that impeachment proceedings were either right or wrong, but that they were being used for politically motivated ends. Pitt’s initially equivocal response to the process initiated by Edmund Burke in the Lords in 1786, rapidly hardened towards impeachment, and it was this ‘firming-up’ that Williams lampooned in *Royal Recollections* (1788).<sup>67</sup> After general agreement that the impeachment should not be allowed to proceed, the King suggests that Hastings should be allowed to take over at the Board of Control, a notion which induces the numbers in favour of impeachment to swell to a critical mass which, just hours before were doubtful; ‘in four and twenty hours, Pitt

and Dundas apprized a sufficient number of their friends [that] there were impeachable matters in the conduct of Hastings'.<sup>68</sup> While being of some satirical value, it is unclear why Williams chose to add this note on Hastings to satirise Pitt as it added nothing to his general critique, and given Burke's much more prominent role in the prosecution, seems somewhat inexplicable. Perhaps it was the fact that, as P.J. Marshall argues, 'there can be no question of Burke's sincerity or of his lack of ulterior motive [in the impeachment]', and hence this would have run counter to Williams' theme of corruption and abuse.<sup>69</sup>

In another, more significant alteration, Williams' criticism of the Opposition for shadowing 'an administration incapable, ignorant, and at enmity with the essential principles of a free constitution', was watered down from 'greatest evil', to a 'great evil' which was somewhat inconsistent with other alterations which were less sympathetic towards the Prince of Wales.<sup>70</sup>

The most important alteration to lesson two involved the capitalisation of a phrase, for greater emphasis, and an added footnote. On page twelve Williams again critiqued Sheridan, who he called a 'chameleon – seeming everything to every man', suggesting that while he might hold great place in the Prince's counsel, even the 'power of a throne' would not keep him there.<sup>71</sup> That is, it would not be enough for him. The second edition had POWER OF A THRONE capitalised.<sup>72</sup>

The most obvious and important addition to *Lessons* was an extra paragraph at the end of page nineteen, in which Williams responded to contemporary events. In this paragraph he advised the Prince to make peace with his parents, and to consent to a marriage to a reasonable person, thereby increasing public respect for him and preparing him for the duties that would soon fall on his shoulders. This is a clear example of the temporary suspension of the central rhetorical

trope of *Lessons*, as the 'nominal addressee' transforms into the actual addressee, since Williams was clearly commenting on the Prince's recent advances to Mrs Fitzherbert, and the ongoing rancour between him and his father over debts. The full additional paragraph read:

But this is not to be done among the puerile and petty distractions of your present situation. Consent to the wishes of your Royal Parents—yield to the earnest desires of your country, by a marriage becoming your dignity, and by the establishment of a respectable household: and then your Royal Highness may look forward, with thoughtful consideration, to the incidents and duties that probably await you.<sup>73</sup>

In his introduction to *Incidents*, Peter France suggests that Williams' once favourable attitude towards the Prince of Wales became increasingly antagonistic, pointing to differences between *Authentic Specimens* (1779) and *Royal Recollections* (1788), and this notion is reinforced by the change in tone between the first and second editions of the *Lessons*. Williams' ill disposition towards the Prince appears to have solidified during the second half of 1790. Lessons three and four contained no significant revisions between the two editions, except a few grammatical alterations.

Lesson five contained an interesting deletion, which indicated that Williams had started to face the sobering reality of the French Revolution and its excesses. Although his involvement in helping to frame the first French Constitution was not until 1792, he had been in contact with Brissot regularly since 1790, and suggested that the Convention that emerged was a 'commentary on his work'.<sup>74</sup> The lesson in question opened with the statement that:

With all the boasted learning and improvement of mankind, no society has been yet so constituted or organized as to produce that genuine public principle, whose object is the security and happiness of the community without injury to the rights of the world.<sup>75</sup>

Significantly, in the second edition of *Lessons* the phrase 'without injury to the rights of the world' was omitted. It is surmised that this omission reflected the need for Williams to assert his patriotism and 'British credentials' in a climate of increasing national enmity towards France. English interests might be pursued at the expense of other nations.

With the next small addition, Williams refined his organic metaphor to delineate the properties and functions of the Constitution, adding a simple but important clause to his description of the representative system of Alfred, which, as has been discussed, played a role analogous to the skin in the human body. Williams added the phrase, 'by minute sub-division' which allowed the Constitution, like the skin, to 'receive and transmit instantaneous impression internal and external', so extending the anthropomorphic vision of the political constitution'.<sup>76</sup> This ordered, 'minute subdivision', was necessary to combat the effects of large assemblies, and prevent the formation of a 'mobocracy', a spectre that had always been present in his thought, but which loomed larger in light of events in Paris which he witnessed first-hand. Madame Roland's *An Appeal to Impartial Posterity* (1795) emphasised Williams' obvious aversion to the populace *en masse*, which he increasingly distinguished from 'the people'. Roland writes, 'I saw him [Williams]...uneasy at the disorder of the debates, afflicted by the influence exercised by the galleries'.<sup>77</sup>

There then followed a significant addition to the lesson centred on his critique of the Revolution of 1688. As has been already argued, for many radicals who had emerged out of the Whig tradition or, like Price who had designs of expanding religious toleration, this event traditionally represented the benchmark of liberty, which had been steadily eroded over the previous century and increasingly challenged by a strengthening and corrupt Royal interest. For Williams, however, this marked the formation of little more than an autocracy. The first

edition argued that the English Revolution represented a 'compact between the Prince and Princess of Orange, and the heads of certain families', but despite having the 'general approbation', did not represent a decision taken freely by the people (the exercise of the General Will), because at that stage, the country did not have the necessary organ through which this public will might be expressed.<sup>78</sup> The first edition was silent on why this organ was missing, or indeed what this organ might have looked like, but this gap was filled in the second edition with the addition of the following explanation, 'despotism and violence had decomposed it as a body; and factions, more or less exceptionable, assumed its name, offices, and privileges'.<sup>79</sup>

Williams' attachment to anthropomorphic metaphor continued in the last major addition to the existing *Lessons*, in what amounted to three additional pages.<sup>80</sup> In a glowing tribute to Alfred's 'genius', Williams suggested that he, and he alone, recognized that society was a 'moral body or effective CONSTITUTION'.<sup>81</sup> In these additional pages, Williams' conception of society as analogous to the human body, with distinctive, unequal but equitable parts, acting in unison towards a common goal, or General Will, reached its zenith. Williams explained Alfred's representative system thus:

In his structure, the householders are subdivided on the surface, and form the external senses, the origin of all ideas. The Mycle-gemot is the seat of the mind; where the ideas are combined into thoughts; and where the will, the judgment, and reason, direct the active or executive powers. Here no competitions can arise among ranks and orders; because all the parts, however externally distinguished, are, like the members of the natural body, directed and impelled by the general animating principle, the general will, and the general interest.

The English nation at this time is not arranged, constructed, or organized into a political body. All its householders have not even nominal votes. They, who are said to possess the privilege, are

controlled or directed in the exercise of it, by various orders affecting to be their superiors. The ideas of this pretended body therefore do not originate in the external senses.

A factitious body is generated within the society, which assumes the denomination of the state: but not being in sympathy with all the parts, often acts in direct opposition to the general feeling, inclination, or interest, which is the actuating principle or fundamental law of every free community.<sup>82</sup>

Clearly, the ‘factitious body’ represents a sort of cancerous growth within the body of society, but this is only able to occur because it is a ‘pretended body’ not a real one, which would in Rousseau-like language, be incapable of self-harm. Nevertheless, the spectre of self-harm or internal decay is raised, and finds its fulfilment in Williams’ disappointment at the way the French Revolution turned out in which ‘Degradation and Shame [is the] General Expression of Parisian Physiognomy’.<sup>83</sup> In many ways, Williams’ insistence on the regular formation of a constitutional organ which would provide a sort of constitutional colonic to flush out the impurities built up within the political body over a period of time, is the best solution to the predicament of disease, malaise, and the ultimate mortality of society.

#### (IV) Audience

The Introduction to this thesis noted that scholars and librarians have generally viewed *Lessons* through its relationship with Edmund Burke’s *Reflections*, and therefore its intended audience might be reasonably assumed to be all those who participated within the hotly contested ‘Revolution debate’, as direct contributors, or as readers. In chapter three, actual rather than projected readership is analysed, but in this section, a distinction is drawn between imagined audiences (which are, but their very nature difficult to prove), and the ideas and purveyors of those ideas against which or in support of which *Lessons* operates. While the

target of the tenth *Lesson* on Burke is self-evident, the reason behind Williams' attack is not. Nor is Williams' intended audience, and the following sections both explain the Burke-Williams confrontation, and seek to work through what have been considered bibliographical problems.

(i) *Lessons* as a reply to *Reflections* (1790)

In *The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke* (1975), James Boulton surveys the wide range of responses to Edmund Burke's *Reflections*.<sup>84</sup> Part of his argument is that its linguistic 'manner', or form, affected how contemporary readers received it. Burke's *Reflections* was, by no means, the first publication to respond to the revolution in France, but more than any other work, it set the discursive parameters in which the debate was to be conducted.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, Boulton suggests that the aristocratic vision of government that Burke outlined – paternalistic and conservative, chivalrous and passionate, elitist and hierarchical – was mirrored by his eloquent and effusive style. *Reflections* had a verisimilitude of form and content which allowed the educated reader to grasp Burke's message in the very act of reading itself, just as Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1790) successfully married a coarse, vulgar style, with popular ideas which resonated with his target audience as powerfully as *Reflections* offended.<sup>86</sup> In Chapter Two, which surveys responses to *Lessons*, it is shown that style was important to readers and reviewers, and should not be dismissed as a modern notion born with the linguistic turn. Style, clearly, did not change ideas, which remained the heart of a book or pamphlet, but in the eighteenth century it did materially affect the way readers responded to texts. Though many readers connected Williams' thought with that of Thomas Paine, they were more often than not distinguished from one another by their style and accordingly, received different coverage, and had different intentions attributed to them as a result. In the English manuscript copy of Williams' *Observations sur la dernière de la France* (1793) written at the beginning of 1793, Williams dwelt upon this very point, conceding a firm connection



between style and reception, but cautioning against its pernicious effects when used to convey misunderstood principles:

Polemic writers never discover principles; their business is to translate into a vulgar tongue the positions and axioms which in the terse and scientific language of philosophers would never reach the common people. But if the axiom is misunderstood, the controversialists diffuse the mingled mass of truth and error, and the people in general are less benefitted than injured.<sup>87</sup>

Nowhere does Burke's style marry his argument better than in his 'apostrophe' to Marie Antoinette. Burke's portrayal of the vulgarity of the mob invading her bedchamber, intent on murder and rapine, is contrasted with her radiant beauty and grace of sixteen years before, when she was seen 'glittering like a morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy'.<sup>88</sup> Such a portrait, it is argued, drove readers to sympathise with the plight of this noble and genteel aristocrat, and by extension the values that she symbolised—values that were intrinsic to the *ancien regime*, a period when, 'ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult.'<sup>89</sup> Isaac Kramnick has gone further and suggested that this passage embodies a wider gender division in Burke's aesthetic philosophy between female aristocratic values and the 'barbaric terror and ridiculous (male) bathos' of a masculine bourgeoisie.<sup>90</sup> Tom Furniss has also produced an interesting thesis which argues that Burke's apostrophe to Antoinette was more than a theatrical event, because, however horrific, it represented the full potential of the 'sublime' and as such represented in Burke more than a political shift, an aesthetic one too.<sup>91</sup>

The effectiveness of Burke's style in conveying his message to his readership was not lost on other contemporaries, and especially his chief combatants. Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) particularly objected to his seductive style, describing his aim as to 'dazzle the senses', as did the diarist Anna Seward.<sup>92</sup> This was a characteristic

feature of the early replies to Burke. Williams, for example, ridiculed his style in general, using almost identical phraseology to that of Wollstonecraft, conceding that, 'Passages, on the first perusal, dazzle the eye and have the appearance of elegance'.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, in tone, both of these early critiques are remarkably similar, each in turn, seizing upon Burke's 'mystic' and 'mysterious instinct', that 'discerns truth, without the tedious labours of ratiocination'.<sup>94</sup> In what was the most important and voluminous pamphlet controversy of the late eighteenth century, the literary marketplace for such works was highly competitive – verging on saturated – and readers were discerning. Contributors to the debate either had to be first, or else original.<sup>95</sup> Most participants in the debate recognized the power of Burke's language and the need to adopt a singular linguistic approach in order to combat it. In his Appendix to the sixth edition of *Lessons*, Williams informed his readers that he was not 'insensible to the effect of contrast in literary composition', but of the few replies which attempted to trade linguistic blows with Burke, most failed dismally.<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere, in the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' Williams derided Burke:

...the eloquence, imagery, and phraseology of the work, [is] admirably calculated to diffuse the principles of it among the "great vulgar and the little" – and that no man since the "immortal Whitfield", could enter into competition with him in this species of composition.<sup>97</sup>

*Reflections* was published on the 1 November 1790, but the genealogy of their composition is complex.<sup>98</sup> The work was held at the press for several months, owing to doubts about its political effects. As far as research can ascertain, this delay was caused by the unfavourable reaction to the draft by Sir Philip Francis, who voiced concern that it would spark a pamphlet war.<sup>99</sup> Boulton also suggests that Burke's involvement in the House of Commons with the Test and Corporation Acts, and the Warren Hastings trial may have caused the delay in publication. Williams was, however, characteristically sceptical of the delay, satirically portraying Burke in

*Lessons* as the 'Aristocratic Oracle', who waited agitatedly whilst correcting the proofs as 'events fluctuated in France', persistently 'tortured by hope and despondence' until events seemed on the brink of conforming to his vision.<sup>100</sup> When Calonne announced his plan for a counter-revolution (in *De L'État de la France*), Burke gave the signal to publish.<sup>101</sup> The image of Burke as a mystic runs throughout *Lessons*, and served not only to suggest that the *Reflections* was an imaginative work contrary to fact, but that it in some senses claimed to be prophetic.<sup>102</sup> This theme pervaded Williams' paragraph concerning the circumstances of Burke's composition:

Burke put on his magic spectacles; distinctly saw the Austrians marching through Flanders, the Spaniards in the Pyrenees, the Savoyards and Swiss in the Alps, and German and English officers sneaking off singly and reluctantly from poverty and confinement, to assist in the projected massacre and devastation. Burke grew frantic with joy: he sniffed the murky air, loaded with the exhalations of twenty millions of atheistic and patriotic carcasses. 'The incense is divine!' exclaimed the 'holy' man – 'My prophecies and revelations shall be honoured'; and – the Book was published.<sup>103</sup>

Although undoubtedly of satirical merit, such a portrayal was not fully justified. *Reflections* originated as two letters written in November 1789, in a reply to a young Frenchman named Charles-Jean-Francois De Pont which were not designed for publication, or, certainly as nothing more than an ephemeral piece.<sup>104</sup> They were subsequently transformed over a period of twelve months into a much more substantial piece. The stimulus to expand the work was Richard Price's *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (1789), which was first given as a sermon at the Old Jewry on the 4 November 1789, and issued as a pamphlet soon thereafter.<sup>105</sup> As has already been discussed, it celebrated the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, which saved the nation from the 'dangers of Popery and arbitrary power'.<sup>106</sup> The full title of *Reflections* indicated Burke's preoccupation with refuting Price's work, and the proposition that the

'English people have the right to chose their own governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government ourselves'.<sup>107</sup> In addition to 'Reflections on the Revolution in France', the sub-title read, 'on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event'.<sup>108</sup> Burke seized upon the moment to revise these letters and to significantly expand his analysis and objectives.

*Reflections* was, as contemporaries wrote, long anticipated in the press, which lends support to Williams' caustic observation that the work had an unusually long gestation period: Burke's 'mighty brain teemed with it for twelve months – I wish I could devote as many days to make your Royal Highness sensible to its merits' he wrote in the sixth edition of *Lessons*.<sup>109</sup> Significantly, unlike Robert Woolsey, Williams did not refer to pressure to get a reply into the public forum.<sup>110</sup> This might best be explained by the fact that Williams was prone to write quickly and without correction, although his letters to Jacques Pierre Brissot in 1790 indicated that he was aware that *Reflections* was being composed, and soon after the announcement of the intended publication in *The World* on the 13 February 1790, he had already decided to write a reply.<sup>111</sup> On the 21 April 1790, he wrote to Brissot that, 'On his [Burke's] announcing a Pamphlet respecting your Revolution, I held myself in readiness to bestow on him some wholesome discipline'.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, his allusion to a 'competitor in the same art', as having 'seen the letter of Mr. Burke, some months before its publication', and who was supposedly busy meditating a reply, proves that he could not have seriously commenced drafting his own reply until early in September.<sup>113</sup> Necessarily, his reply would be briefer than the full-length treatment given to *Reflections* by Mackintosh, and Christie *et al*, which impacted on his choice of style.<sup>114</sup>

Williams ended his 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' by citing extracts from *Reflections* accompanied by direct comments in a style reminiscent of another early reply by Robert Woolsey, *Reflections on Reflections* (1790). Boulton condemns this short work which appeared in December 1790, as 'abusive, perhaps to be humorous, but certainly not to persuade the reader into adopting new and positive beliefs'.<sup>115</sup> Yet, the final four pages of *Lessons* was dedicated to this very method, page references were given, and the effect Burke intended to achieve (ironically portrayed) stated. For example, p.68, 'Bombast, substituted for Philosophy', p. 71, 'Vulgarity to heighten admiration', p. 151, 'Nasty without occasion', and so on.<sup>116</sup> The impression that this technique gave was of pre-meditated and disengaged stock responses. As a result, as a serious rebuttal of Burke it lacked philosophical substance, and as argued in Chapter Two, appeared to most contemporaries as a series of *ad hominem* attacks, an accusation to which Williams responded in the sixth edition of *Lessons*.<sup>117</sup> In order to accept the remarks, readers had to tacitly agree with the arguments that he outlined in the preceding nine lessons and subscribe to the idea that, the 'first law' of the Constitution is that 'the General Will; and it must be the determination of the General Will, [is] that every citizen, without distinction of birth, possessions, or talents, enjoy the great objects of society—liberty, property, and security.'<sup>118</sup> Dybikowski's argument that the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' added nothing new to the text by way of political or philosophical material, and was 'a satirical attack on Burke's person and his use of eloquence rather than the painstaking methods Williams advocated: establishing theory on fact and demonstrative reasoning', is near to the mark.<sup>119</sup> It provoked largely negative periodical reviews in the English press, and most importantly, obscured the more substantial content of the preceding nine lessons.

For Burke, *Reflections* was an opportunity to arrest the growing feeling in England that events in France, particularly the establishment and proceedings of the National Assembly could

produce a constitutional model that England might follow. This was precisely the premise on which Williams ended *Lessons* in the original edition: 'If you keep your eye on the Constitution of France' he had advised the young Prince, 'you may prepare yourself for the character you may have to sustain'.<sup>120</sup> With considerable irony, Williams astutely observed that the belief in radical circles that the political system in post-revolutionary France might be more advantageous to liberty than England's was something of a reversal in fortunes since, 'The genius of England, in political design had been so long the theme of panegyric, that it was not imagined, the French would presume to attempt anything beyond an humble imitation of the English Government'.<sup>121</sup> It was this 'national insult' that was the source of Burke's rejection of the French model, since 'the dangers of the example furnished by France, are extremely numerous and alarming, to those who occupy (disinterestedly without doubt) the various departments of our "wonderful constitution"'.<sup>122</sup> In *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789), published the previous year, Williams decried the fervour that 'extolled' the Constitution of England, dismissing it as mere 'prejudice'. In the same Dedication to the Prince of Wales he made it absolutely clear, 'if the ideas of the wise and temperate patriotism, take effect in that country, it will instantly act on England'.<sup>123</sup>

In an Appendix to his work on *Reflections*, Boulton provides a very useful list and description of the main replies to Burke, including when they first appeared, but although listing *Lessons* they are only given three lines. The 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' was not among the strongest replies to Burke, it was brief (some 40 pages), was essentially cast in the mode of an ironic satire, and leant too heavily on the rhetorical position outlined in the preceding nine *Lessons*, but it was early, and solicited some favourable comments in the English and American press. However, *Lessons* was not simply a narrowly focussed reply to Burke: it should be more accurately described as a reply to *Reflections*. Its evolution as a text created what I argue was

an uncomfortable hybrid of styles and confused intentions. The ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ was not even strictly speaking, a reply to Burke, but the continuation of the Prince of Wales’ political education. It is difficult to see why Williams chose to add his satire of Burke to *Lessons* because its organising trope limited his discursive and argumentative freedom, creating a reply to Burke that was not really a reply to Burke at all.

In the twentieth century, *Lessons* has been viewed as a relatively weak response to Burke, but subsequent chapters of this thesis suggest that this is because it has been misidentified and misread. Chapter Two argues that the ‘modern’ treatment of *Lessons* seems to have some antecedence in contemporary reaction, but may have been mitigated, as Chapter Three and Four argues, by a deliberate attempt by its publishers to market *Lessons* through *Reflections*.

(ii) *Lessons* as a reply to Burke-in-transition

If, as argued, the second edition of *Lessons* was hijacked by the inclusion of a direct and hasty satirical reply to Burke’s *Reflections*, what then of the first nine lessons which were published before *Reflections*? Towards whom or at what were they directed? In this light, Williams’ note to Brissot in which he stated that *Lessons* would bestow some ‘wholesome discipline [on Burke]’ does not appear terribly meaningful. Discipline for what? In resolving this problem of timing, the earliest known advertisement for *Lessons* represents the key. On the 23 September 1790 an advertisement for the first edition of *Lessons* appeared in *The World* which stated categorically that *Lessons* was aimed at the political philosophy of Edmund Burke: *Lessons* ‘destroy at once the effect of those frothy declarations, and the tinselled sophistry by which the hacknied [*sic*] and interested Partisans of Feudal Families, or ambitious Factions, would impede the progress of Political Truth...they therefore employ a full answer to everything that

**has been spoken by**, and everything that can be written by Mr. Burke...[my emphasis]'.<sup>124</sup>

The important thing is that they show that Williams did not mercurially anticipate Burke's political metamorphosis in *Reflections* – the tenor of which surprised even some of Burke's closest friends – but that he was in fact responding to an earlier spoken rather than written declaration. This can only refer to Burke's parliamentary speech made on the 9 February 1790 in which he signalled for the first time that his initial stance as curious voyeur of events in France had given way to opposition and indignation. As Tom Furniss points out, the speech was 'more like *Reflections*'.<sup>125</sup> In it, Burke rehearsed some of the conservative and legalistic rhetoric which would later become his signature in *Reflections*, asking his captivated audience, 'how would [they] like to have their mansions pulled down and pillaged, their persons abused, insulted, and destroyed; their title deeds brought out and burned before their faces'.<sup>126</sup> Williams it seems had correctly identified Burke's drift in political ideology and therefore was neither responding to the sublime Burke of his earlier political career, the Burke of the *Enquiry*, nor as yet the fully-fledged defender of hereditary title, but a Burke in the process of transition.

### (iii) Intended audience

As seems clear, through *Lessons* Williams was responding mainly to Burke and certain elements of the Foxite Whigs whose plans for parliamentary reform had stalled or were not ambitious enough, but this does not necessarily imply that they were his intended audience or readership, just as the Prince of Wales's position as 'nominal addressee' did not automatically signify that he was the real audience. Trying to identify the intended audience of a work without the benefit of an explicit internal or external reference by its author is notoriously problematic – somewhat like divining for water, at best a hit-and-miss process. In the case of *Lessons* however, its mixture of satirical and wide ranging parody, complex rhetoric, deliberative and at times ponderous quasi-scientific focus on the ancient Saxon Constitution,



and dynamic text, makes it almost impossible to ascertain with any degree of certainty who Williams was trying to reach. However, it is common sense to suggest that the people mentioned and lampooned in the work were unlikely to be his intended readers. Indeed, the advertisement for the third edition of *Lessons* was changed by the publisher to read as a list of people mentioned, alluded to or characterised within the work. They included most of the political and social elites including the Prince of Wales, Fox, Pitt, and Burke, a move that presumably disqualifies them from the ranks of prospective subscribers. It is much more credible to suggest that, in reality, Williams' real audience – rather than satirical target – was precisely the coterie of radical liberals, with which he associated, the John Cartwrights, the Captain Morrisises, the Ridgways of this world, as well as provincial and independent readers like the poet Anna Seward who documented reading *Lessons* with great pleasure. These were the people who constituted Williams' 'public', not the great pompous statesmen, the ambitious tied to Party purse strings.<sup>127</sup> Readers cast pretty much in his own image. Which is an important point to remember as the thesis moves on to look at publisher influence and reader response.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific aspects of the rhetorical rather than literal disposition of *Lessons* are addressed in Chapter Two and in Chapter Three, Section IV, and are confirmed in Williams' letter to Brissot AN, 446AP6, 21 April 1789, 'I mean to write *Lessons to the Prince* on the subjects now agitating Europe—and by rendering the principles of your Revolution obvious to him, I shall make them intelligible to the public'.

<sup>2</sup> For a good analysis of Williams' friendship with Brissot which commenced in England in 1783, his general 'mentor-like' influence over him, and his later participation in the Convention, see Dybikowski, Chapter 9, 'Williams, Brissot and the French Revolution', in *On Burning Ground*, pp. 190-207. See also, David Williams, 'The Mission of David Williams and James Tilly Mathews to England (1793)', *English Historical Review*, 53 (1938), pp. 651-668.

<sup>3</sup> The Regency Crisis erupted in November 1788 when the King suffered from a fit of madness. There ensued a period of intense political speculation as to whether the Prince of Wales had the right to assume a Regency or whether he was constitutionally obliged to wait for Parliament's assent. William Pitt feared that if the Regent assumed the helm he would be dismissed, and the opposition Charles Fox, the Prince's favourite, would take over the administration. The Regency Bill passed in January 1789 attempted to quell this possibility by significantly limiting the Regent's powers.

<sup>4</sup> Williams' foreboding title, which talked about the 'present disposition in Europe to a general revolution', was no doubt calculated to alarm.

<sup>5</sup> His two principal works on education were: *A Treatise on Education*, London: T. Payne, E. and C. Dilly *et al.* (1774), and *Lectures on Education*, London, J. Bell (1787). See also Nicholas Hans, *New*

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*Developments in Education in the Eighteenth Century*, London (1951). For details of his schools in Chelsea and Lawrence Street see, *On Burning Ground*, pp. 115-133.

<sup>6</sup> David Williams, *Lectures on Political Principles; the Subject of Eighteen Books in Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws: Read to Students under the Author's direction* London, J. Bell (1789).p. ii.

<sup>7</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, pp. 9, 18, 20, 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, pp. 116-117.

<sup>10</sup> This theme was given literary treatment in Chaucer's 'Tale of Melibee'.

<sup>11</sup> The Prince's extravagant life-style had resulted in the accumulation of debts totalling some £161,000, which were settled by a House of Commons grant in 1787, on the express condition that the Prince publicly denounced rumours of his union with Mrs. Fitzherbert. *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 17-18.

<sup>13</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Book. 1, Chapter. 6. Williams however, denies the very existence of a contract between government and the people. The 'act which constitutes government is not, cannot be even a contract, it is the will, the arbitrary will, of an absolute sovereign', *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> 'Observations on the late Constitution of France with a View to the Formation of a new Constitution', CCL: Ms. 2.192, dated 7 January 1793.

<sup>15</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Price, *Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, London: T. Cadell (1789), in *Political Writings of the 1790s*, vol. 3, ed. Geoffrey Claey's, London: William Pickering (1995), p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Three, Section III: Direct rebuttals in print, for a description of the 'defenders of the constitution'.

<sup>19</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> [David Williams], *Royal Recollections on a Tour to Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester and Places Adjacent in the Year 1788*, London: Ridgway (1788), p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Lessons* (1790) 1, p. 28.

<sup>22</sup> For Furniss' robust account of this see *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology*, p. 142-3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> For an explanation of the Revolution Society see Chapter Four, Section III (vi). The Act of *Habeas Corpus* was suspended by 16 May 1794 until July 1795.

<sup>25</sup> [Anon] *The Civil and the Ecclesiastical Systems of England Defended and Fortified* (London: Longman (1791) p. 147.

<sup>26</sup> John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688-1783*, New York (1989), cited by Howard Nenner in 'The later Stuart age' pp. 180-208, in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993).

<sup>27</sup> Howard Nenner in 'The later Stuart age' pp. 180-208, in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), p. 181.

<sup>28</sup> John Cartwright (1740-1824), political reformer. For an extended discussion of Catonic criticism see Nicholas Phillipson, 'Politics and politeness: Anne and the early Hanoverians', in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500-1800*, pp. 230.

<sup>29</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event. In a Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris by the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, London: J. Dodsley (1790), p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> Charles F. Mullet, 'David Williams: Reformer', *Church History*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1944), pp. 124-125.

See also Ralph A. Manogue's, 'The Plight of James Ridgway, London Bookseller and Publisher, and the

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Newgate Radicals of 1792-1797', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 27 (1996), pp. 158-166 and 'James Ridgway and America', *Early American Literature*, 31, issue 3. (1996), pp. 264-288.

<sup>31</sup> *Lessons* (1790) 1, p. 42.

<sup>32</sup> [David Williams], *A Plan of Association, on Constitutional Principles, for the Parishes, Tithings, Hundreds, and Counties of Great Britain*, London: G. Kearsly (1780), p. 43.

<sup>33</sup> 'Observations', CCL: Ms. 2.192

<sup>34</sup> John Selden (1584-1654), a well-known and respected English Jurist and scholar of ancient laws and constitutions. John Spelman (1594-1643), politician and historian, known for his biography of *Alfred the Great*. Williams must be referring to David Wilkins' three-volume collected edition of Selden's works published in 1725. Francois Hotman, author of *Franco-Gallia* (1573).

<sup>35</sup> 'Observations', CCL: Ms. 2.192.

<sup>36</sup> *Lessons* (1790) 1, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> *Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, p. 13.

<sup>38</sup> *Lessons* (1790) 1, p. 58.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 76-77.

<sup>40</sup> [David Williams], *A Plan of Association, on Constitutional Principles, for the Parishes, Tithings, Hundreds, and Counties of Great Britain*, London: G. Kearsly (1780), p. 43.

<sup>41</sup> *David Williams: Reformer*, p. 121.

<sup>42</sup> 'Observations', CCL: Ms. 2.192.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> The British Library copy, also available through Eighteenth Century Collections Online, shows evidence that the plates are from later editions glued in. The present author has been unable to trace another edition showing the true first edition plates.

<sup>45</sup> *Lessons* (1790) 1, p. 65.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p. 65.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.

<sup>48</sup> It is difficult not to imagine that Williams is referring to himself here. *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 67.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 68.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 45.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p. 72.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* p. 83.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 73

<sup>58</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 75.

<sup>59</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 30; *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 29.

<sup>60</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 9; *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Joseph Haslewood, *The Secret Histories of the Green Rooms: containing authentic memoirs of Actors and Actresses in the Three Theatres Royal*, London: J. Ridgway, J. Forbes, & H.D. Symonds (1790).

<sup>62</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 2. This is evidently a reference to Plato's concept of the 'philosopher king'. See, Plato's *Republic*, bk. VII.

<sup>64</sup> *Political Writings of the 1790s*, vol. 3, ed. Geoffrey Claeys, London: William Pickering (1995), p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 8.

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- <sup>67</sup> [David Williams], *Royal Recollections on a tour to Cheltenham, in the Year 1788*, London: J. Ridgway, (1788). p. 47.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.
- <sup>69</sup> P. J. Marshall, 'Hastings, Warren (1732–1818)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12587, accessed 28 Sept 2012].
- <sup>70</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 3; *Ibid.* p. 3; *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 3.
- <sup>71</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 12.
- <sup>72</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 12.
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.
- <sup>74</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 78.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.
- <sup>76</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 43.
- <sup>77</sup> Marie-Jeanne Rolland, *An Appeal to Impartial Posterity*, London: J. Johnson (1795), p. 42. For Mme Rolland's favourable account of the merits of Williams' political acumen, see pp. 43–43, where she compares him favourably to Thomas Paine.
- <sup>78</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 47.
- <sup>79</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 44.
- <sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 46–48.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 46–48.
- <sup>83</sup> [David Williams], 'Note from France 1802', CCL: Ms. 3.160.
- <sup>84</sup> James T. Boulton, *The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press (1975); Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France, on the Proceedings in Certain Societies in London Relative to that Event. In a Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris by the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, London: J. Dodsley (1790).
- <sup>85</sup> However these tended to be narrative accounts of the revolution or the memoirs of aristocrats. See for example, the anonymous, *Authentic Narrative, of the Most Interesting Events, which preceded and accompanied the Late Revolution in France*, Cork: J. Haly (1789). Two notable exceptions were, Richard Price's *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, London: T. Cadell (1789), and James Courtenay's *Philosophical reflections on the Late Revolution in France, and the Conduct of the Dissenters in England: in a letter to the Rev. Dr. Priestly*, London: T. Beckett (1790). An advertisement in *The Times* indicated that it was published on Wednesday, May 12, 1790.
- <sup>86</sup> Tomas Paine, *Rights of Man, Part I*, London: J. Jordan (1791), *Part II*, (1792).
- <sup>87</sup> CCL. Ms. 2.192. English copy of 'Observations on the late Constitution of France,' c. January 1793.
- <sup>88</sup> *Reflections*, p. 112. It was Burke's description of this scene that caused more comment than any other, both for its inaccuracies and for its dramatic tone. The passages reads, 'History will record that on the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, 1789, the king and queen of France, after a day of confusion, alarm, dismay, and slaughter, lay down, under the pledged security of public faith, to indulge nature in a few hours respite, and troubled melancholy repose. From this sleep the queen was first startled by the voice of the sentinel at her door, who cried out to her, to save herself by flight—that this was the last proof of his fidelity he could give—that they were upon him, and he was dead. Instantly he was cut down. A band of cruel ruffians and assassins, reeking with his blood, rushed into the chamber of the queen, and pierced with an hundred strokes of bayonets and poniards the bed, from whence this persecuted woman had but just time to fly almost naked... to seek refuge at the feet of a king and husband, not secure of his own life for a moment' (*Reflections*, p. 106).
- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* p. 113.

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- <sup>90</sup> Cited by T. Furniss in, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: language, gender, and political economy in Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), p. 5.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 138-140.
- <sup>92</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*, London: J. Johnson (1790), p. 52.
- <sup>93</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 159.
- <sup>94</sup> Boulton suggests that the second edition of Williams' *Lessons to a Young Prince* appeared on the 17 November, while Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* appeared on the 29 November, (p. 266). Only John Scott's, *Letter by a Member of the Revolution Society* (1790), and the anonymous, *Short Observations on Burke's Reflections* (1790) appeared earlier. Williams' descriptions of Burke as a mystic commence on page 103, 'a blazing eccentric comet, of mystic and menacing omen' and continues with his ironic request that the Prince of Wales study Burke's 'mystic piety' (p. 124). Other references are to Burke's 'mystic religion' (p. 125), mocking him as a 'parent of mystic despotism and arbitrary power' (p. 127), and finally reference is made to his 'mystic hints concerning the origin of that Constitution [English]' (p. 135). In the third edition of *Lessons*, Williams further referred to the 'mystic genius of our political Swedenbourg' (p. 133). Emmanuel Swedenbourg (1688-1772) was a Swedish scientist and renowned mystic. See John Clowes', *Dialogues on the Nature, Design and Evidence of the Theological Writings of the Hon. Emanuel Swedenborg, with a Brief Account of Some of His Philosophical works*, London: J. Denis (1788). Wollstonecraft's similar expressions appear on pages 64 and 68 of the *Vindication of the Rights of Men*.
- <sup>95</sup> From the first appearance of the *Reflections*, by 1793, more than seventy direct replies to Burke had been produced.
- <sup>96</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 162.
- <sup>97</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 154.
- <sup>98</sup> *The Language of Politics*, p. 79.
- <sup>99</sup> Sir Philip Francis (1740-1818), a politician and pamphleteer. Suggestions have been made that he was the author of the *Letters of Junius*. Long-time friend of Burke, and intimately involved in the trial of Warren Hastings, he was significantly more sympathetic to the French Revolution than Burke.
- <sup>100</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 114.
- <sup>101</sup> Charles Alexandre de Calonne, Vicomte (1734-1802), Controller-General of Finances from 3 November 1783 to 8 April 1787, see his *De l'état de la France, present et à venir*, Londres: T. Spilsbury & Fils (1790).
- <sup>102</sup> Richard Price took particular exception to Burke's misrepresentation of his position regarding the events of the 6 October. Burke had intimated that two letters by Price that he cited on p. 99 and p. 128 showed his liking for blood and compared him to Hugh Peters who gave a sermon at the execution of Charles II, but was later executed himself. As Price points out, the letters in question were plainly dated in July and referred to the relatively bloodless events of the 14 July.
- <sup>103</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 114-115.
- <sup>104</sup> See his, *Answer to the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke*, London: J. Debrett (1791).
- <sup>105</sup> Price continued adding to this work, with lengthy additions made to the fifth edition in particular.
- <sup>106</sup> *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country*, p. 2.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.
- <sup>108</sup> The principle society to which Burke referred was The Revolution Society, of which Price was a member. It was founded in 1788 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Glorious Revolution, and was under the chairmanship of Earl Stanhope, brother-in-law to William Pitt. It was to this society that Price first made his address, *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* (1789).
- <sup>109</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 113.

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- <sup>110</sup> Woolsey, *Reflections on Reflections*, London: J. Colerick (1790), which carried the apology, 'Owing to the hurry of the press, some typographical errors have crept in to the following letters—These of course you will please excuse' (p. iv).
- <sup>111</sup> For more detail on this assertion, see Whitney R.D. Jones, *David Williams: The Hammer and the Anvil*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press (1986), p. xvi. Jones is however wrong to suggest that Williams 'never bothered to revise' (p. xvi), since significant revisions were made to *Lessons to Young Prince* (1790) and *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782).
- <sup>112</sup> Archives Nationales (AN), 446AP6, DW to JPB, 21 April 1790.
- <sup>113</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 102.
- <sup>114</sup> James Mackintosh, *Vindiciae Gallicae*, London: G.G.J & J. Robinson (1791). Emerging relatively late in the debate, some six months after the first publication of *Reflections*, this comprehensive rebuttal of Burke ran to 351 pages.
- <sup>115</sup> *The Language of Politics*, p. 187.
- <sup>116</sup> This should be compared with Woolsey's, 'Page 7 to 13. A great bundle of metaphysics and general stuff, full of your own uneasiness, solicitude, astonishment etc', 'Page 13 to 16. Irrelevant farrago' and 'Page 50 to p. 99. A mighty jumble of general stuff, according to custom; full of groans, prophecies, etc' (p.9).
- <sup>117</sup> The third and subsequent editions of *Lessons* contain a footnote citing a letter conveyed to the bookseller, which endorsed much of the content of *Lessons*, but which is sharply critical of his having 'indulged in satire, which however just, is unworthy of you' (p. 140). There is however no trace of such a letter and it is quite plausible that this was entirely fabricated by Williams himself.
- <sup>118</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p.
- <sup>119</sup> *On Burning Ground*, p. 206.
- <sup>120</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 90.
- <sup>121</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 115.
- <sup>122</sup> *Ibid.* p. 116.
- <sup>123</sup> David Williams, *Lectures on Political Principles*, London: J. Bell (1789), p. iv.
- <sup>124</sup> *The World*, London, 23 September (1790), issue 1162.
- <sup>125</sup> Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology: language, gender, and political economy in Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1993), p. 127.
- <sup>126</sup> *Parliamentary History*, XXVIII, pp. 351ff, cited by Tom Furniss, *Edmund Burke's Aesthetic Ideology* (1993).
- <sup>127</sup> AN, 446AP6.

## ~ Chapter Two ~

### Authorship and the Role of Anonymity and Pseudonymity

Thyself (like fam'd Aeneas in the cloud)  
Unseen, exalt thy sapient voice aloud.  
For tho' thou may'st escape the vulgar eyes,  
All Wisdom's Goddess shines throughout the  
deep disguise.

Philo-Mentor

#### (I) Introduction

In *Enlightenment and the Book* Richard Sher follows Michel Foucault in detecting a fundamental shift in the *raison d'être* behind anonymous publication in England between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, signalling the end of 'courtly conventions of anonymity' and marking the beginning of a reversal in attitudes towards the use of anonymity for scientific and literary works.<sup>1</sup> Scientific works, Foucault argues, previously derived authority from their association with learned men, but this gradually gave way to a desire to disassociate the particularity of the author from the universal credentials of scientific discourse. In the other direction, literary works that had stronger traditions of anonymity developed powerful author cults, their subjectivity celebrated as distinctiveness. However, for Sher, whilst Foucault's general point concerning the 'author-function in literary productions' stands, it does not always hold true when subjected to close analysis of particular geographical regions or literary genres, as he demonstrates with regard to the principal works which formed the spine of the 'Scottish Enlightenment'.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the eighteenth century, the vast majority of Scottish authors (some seventy-five percent) wrote to be 'known by their reader', despite the heavy scientific bias of their work. Just as this is a 'corrective' to Foucault, so too it puts pressure on Robert Griffin's claim that, in the English-speaking world, before the twentieth century,

anonymity was 'at least as much the norm as signed authorship'.<sup>3</sup> Whilst Sher is careful to point out that when political pamphlets are taken into account, in totality the claims are more persuasive, his larger point is that literary anonymity has a long tradition – as long as writing itself – and that the use of anonymity is transient, and deployed for different reasons at different times. What is clear from both Sher's and Griffin's work is that literary anonymity is complex, both in its use and in its effects. The decision to write anonymously, pseudonymously, or to claim/confess to a work is neither accidental nor inconsequential, and potentially sheds light on authorial intent, reflexivity, and projected audience. As I will show, anonymity, whilst time, place, and genre specific, is above all author-specific and the result of a series of calculations and decisions made collaboratively between author and publisher, who function cognizant of literary conventions and trade lore, but who cannot escape the immediacy of their material and thought environment.

The increasing use of anonymity in late eighteenth-century political pamphlets, a *corpus* within which *Lessons* takes its place, is a distinctive trend. However, this general trend masks a number of factors, not least the distinction that should be drawn between 'mitigated anonymity' and 'true anonymity'.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, mitigated anonymity, which occurs when a text does not explicitly contain the author's name on the title page, but nevertheless declares authorship through a variety of intra- and extra-textual means, or else ensures that the identity of the author is a deliberately 'open secret', was prevalent in the late eighteenth century, raising questions about authorial intention which are directly relevant to *Lessons*.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, true anonymity, occurs only when a text genuinely appears without any meaningful indication of authorship. This form of anonymity is more problematic because it is assumed, incorrectly, that this requires permanent anonymity, when in fact 'true anonymity' need only last as long as the author intended. However, this categorisation of different types of



anonymity, though useful, can only be made meaningful for a particular text when coupled with firm historical evidence, including clear evidence of authorial intent, which is in part identifiable through analysis of reader-response. It is therefore necessary to scrutinise anonymity carefully: if, for example, use of anonymity is diagnosed in a particular case as conforming to Foucault's 'guise of an enigma', verification that contemporaries did actually view the author as enigmatic adds to the persuasiveness of the diagnosis.<sup>6</sup> Significant divergence between authorial/publisher intent and reader-response may indicate authorial failure, or else suggest that the motivation behind anonymity has been incorrectly ascertained. Examination of *Lessons* from this perspective not only sheds light on David Williams' own self-perception, but also adds significantly to our understanding of what he was trying to achieve with *Lessons*. The results are also important because they help to develop a more nuanced interpretation of the function of anonymity in the late eighteenth-century context, and raise questions that seem to complicate Sher's thesis.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, authorship of *Lessons* was only an attribution-by-convention, though it was frequently misattributed.<sup>7</sup> It is the central argument of this chapter that it was misattributed due to the cautious and evasive language used by the author, but also because of the activities of its publisher and distributor, Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway, who issued a series of misleading advertisements. *Lessons'* anonymity is particularly important to analyse because it triggered efforts by contemporaries to associate it with a person, and uncertainty over authorship heightened the attention given to Symonds and Ridgway.

The basic rationale behind anonymous or pseudo-anonymous works is to deny the reader, the critic, and the would-be-commentator the opportunity to satisfy what is an intrinsic desire to

ground and humanise ideas, and to reinforce understanding of an argument or concept by reference to a tangible person. However, anonymity itself is complicated and should, it is argued, be considered in layers. At the most basic level, it protects the author from the direct consequences of a work's contents. This was especially pertinent to eighteenth-century writers and publishers because, prior to the passing of the Libel Act in 1792, defendants prosecuted for libel appeared before a judge rather than a jury, and this judge was usually sympathetic to the Government which initiated most prosecutions. On the next level, anonymity removes from the armoury of the critic the unexacting – but nonetheless damaging – charge of 'hypocrisy', a commonplace charge in eighteenth-century criticism: the result of incongruity between an individual's private conduct and the positions they adopt in their writings. Under such conditions, the normal relationship between the self-identifying author and his reader is turned on its head: the challenge for the reader is to recreate the personality using the ideas in the work, rather than *vice versa*. In this way, the absence of an explicit claim to authorship reverses Roland Barthes' concept of the 'death of the author', creating a void which functions as a catalyst for efforts to imbue the text with an author, ensuring that the text's unity and meaning lies with its originator, not, as Barthes argues, its 'destination'.<sup>8</sup> A third result of anonymity is that readers try to develop a surrogate for the 'missing author' identifying a text as coming from a particular perspective, school of thought, Party, tradition, or as belonging to a specific genre. As part of this process of role reversal, the eighteenth-century critic quickly replaces the charge of 'hypocrisy' with that of 'partisanship'. In short, anonymity demands and receives a different kind of reading of the text.

To the informed historian with all the benefits of hindsight and overview this reformulation of the reader-writer relationship produces rich source material, that can be used to pose alternative questions of a text, such as why a body of ideas is attributed to a certain person or

ideological position. In light of the importance of anonymity to the meaning of a text, this chapter starts by establishing beyond doubt Williams' authorship of *Lessons*. It then determines which category of anonymity on Sher's sliding scale *Lessons* fit into most comfortably, and finishes by asking whether it was truly anonymous as it purported to be, and if so, how long this anonymity lasted.

## (II) Authorship of *Lessons*

*Lessons to a Young Prince* first appeared anonymously in September 1790, and all subsequent editions under the pseudonym 'Old Statesman'.<sup>9</sup> This subtle transition from anonymity to pseudonymity is significant. As the *Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1818* accurately recorded, it was 'never publicly avowed' by Williams, and was not, for example, mentioned in his posthumously published autobiography *Incidents*.<sup>10</sup> Only midway through the twentieth century when Prof. David Williams subjected it to sustained research, asserting that there was 'no question' about Williams' authorship was it consistently and correctly attributed in library catalogues.<sup>11</sup> Concrete proof of authorship finally emerged in the form of a series of letters written by David Williams to Jacques-Pierre Brissot between the 22 June and 24 November 1790. Uncovered in the early 1990s by James Dybikowski, they provide ample documentary evidence in Williams' own hand to determine authorship. This was further corroborated the publisher's end by the discovery, during research for this thesis, of a list of 'New Publications' for James Ridgway appended as back matter to Henry Yorke's, *These are the Times that Try Men's Souls!* Whilst all other extant back matter advertisements list *Lessons* anonymously, or by the second edition using the pseudonym 'Old Statesman', this advertisement clearly states, '*Lessons to a Young Prince* by the **Rev. David Williams**, Sixth Edition enlarged' [my emphasis].<sup>12</sup> Its very existence presents something of a paradox given the author's claim in the preface that his name had been concealed from the publisher.

Although *Lessons* never bore the author's name on its title page, there can now be no doubt that Williams was the author, but whether absolute anonymity was ever really intended, or indeed existed in practice is unclear. Were eighteenth-century readers, without access to his private correspondence or the powerful digital collections and search engines of today really unaware of the author's identity? The appropriately named Philo-Mentor's early poetical response 'Impromptu, Addressed to the Unknown Author of *Lessons to a Young Prince*', dated 13 January 1791, which appeared in the Appendix to the sixth edition, certainly implied that this was the case, dedicating an entire stanza to the issue of anonymity. The poem described the author as 'unknown', 'unseen', 'deep disguised', and as 'escape[ing] the vulgar eyes [of criticism]'.<sup>13</sup> Whether authorship of *Lessons* was widely known to eighteenth-century readers matters because, as this chapter shows, it was a decisive factor in determining how the ideas it contained were delivered and received.

In the first edition of *Lessons* the author insisted that he wished to remain anonymous, describing in the introduction the care that had been taken in, 'concealing my name even from the Printer and Publisher.'<sup>14</sup> Analysis of early periodical reviews and reaction to *Lessons* suggests that he achieved this aim, and that in the first year and a half in which they circulated, from autumn 1790 to December 1791, authorship was uncertain, lending support to Williams' claim in his autobiography *Incidents* that 'some of the most popular and most saleable [works] were taken from me, transcribed with some little interpolations and long attributed to others before my name was ever associated with them'.<sup>15</sup> Although the *Critical Review* hinted in its review of the first edition, produced within two months of *Lessons*' appearance, that from the 'characteristical part' they could 'recognize the author from a former production', they were not confident enough to unmask him.<sup>16</sup> However, by the time of their review of the second

edition, deemed necessary because of the addition of the large and controversial ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’, they were confident enough to connect them with the author of *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782) which had been owned by Williams since the second edition.<sup>17</sup> The review began astutely, ‘The Old Statesman has long been employed giving lectures [...] on “political liberty”’.<sup>18</sup> However, the six other reviews that appeared between November 1790 and December 1791, considered in length in Chapter Three, made no such claims. The *Monthly Review*’s review of the sixth edition declared, ‘who the sage-Mentor may be, does not so directly appear’.<sup>19</sup> The author of the most direct extant reply to *Lessons*, *Defence of the Constitution of England* (1791), was uncertain enough to state that it was immaterial to his critique ‘whether the public suspicion [of authorship] had fallen on the author of *Lessons*’.<sup>20</sup> As it turned out, determining authorship was not as immaterial as he claimed. At the opposite and most extreme end of the spectrum there were occasions when *Lessons* was completely misattributed, as in the case of a contemporary reader of the 1791 Dublin edition held at the National Library of Wales bearing the inscription, ‘this work is understood to be the production of the late Lord Shelburne, afterwards the Marquis of Lansdowne, the friend of Dr. Priestly and one of the wisest statesmen of England’.<sup>21</sup> In America it was by many ‘supposed to be by the same person’, that some years ago wrote the celebrated letters under the signature of JUNIUS’, and advertised widely as ‘supposed to be written by the author of *Junius’ Letters*’.<sup>22</sup>

On the surface at least, *Lessons* was both intended to be truly anonymous and largely achieved that goal amongst contemporary readers outside of Williams’ immediate circle of contacts centred at James Ridgway’s.<sup>23</sup> The existence of an advertisement placed by its publisher Henry Delahay Symonds in the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* dated 4 March 1791 provides further evidence that the work was often misattributed and that its author’s anonymity amongst the general public largely prevailed. Following a brief summary of the contents of the

book, the advertisement suggested that the publisher was 'very sensible of the patience and goodness with which several Gentlemen have endured the imputation of being the Author; but

the author is yet unknown'.<sup>24</sup>

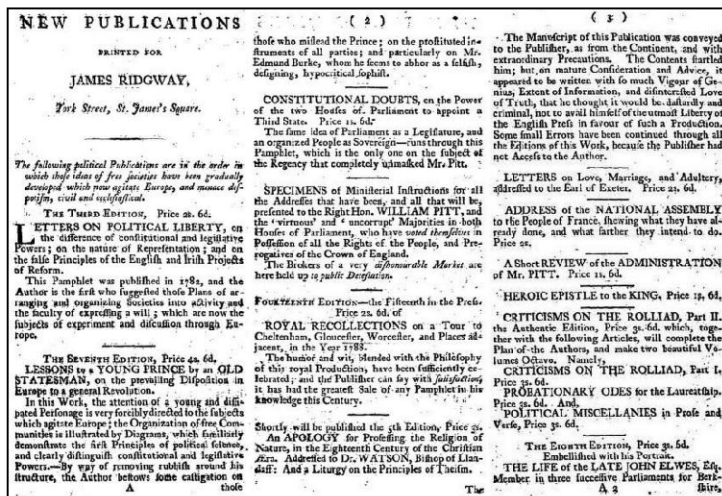


Fig. 2.1 A typical 'New Publications' list for James Ridgway showing six works by David Williams grouped together. © The British Library Board

However, when considered in the light of other evidence, the simplicity of anonymity and the plausible sincerity of Williams' claims begin to unravel. Firstly,

as James Dybikowski points out, there are sufficient 'scattered

hints' throughout the text, such as the ringing endorsement of the sentiments expressed in *Letters on Political Liberty* and *A Plan of Association* to connect him with *Lessons*.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, anonymity was greatly mitigated by the extensive advertising prospectuses for books published and distributed by Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway that conspicuously grouped together works by particular authors. For example, the advertising back matter appended to the anonymous *The Rights of Kings* (1791) listed *Lessons* second in a string of six works known to be by Williams headed by *Letters on Political Liberty* (1789).<sup>26</sup> The organisation of advertisements and grouping of works within them also offer clues about how the publisher considered the ideological and political content of their inventory. In the above case, the publisher claimed to have organised the list 'in order which those ideas of free societies have been gradually developed which now agitate Europe', yet there is clear evidence of the systematic clustering of Williams' texts in this and other advertisements, which undoubtedly followed a sales strategy similar to the 'people who bought this book also bought' pitch used by leading internet booksellers today.<sup>27</sup>

From this perspective, *Lessons* fits better into Sher's category of 'mitigated anonymity', in which the author, in close co-operation with his publishers revealed enough hints throughout the text and promotional material for the attentive reader to make the connection and tentatively identify the author, as many leading reviewers did, although not immediately. *Letters on Political Liberty* and *A Plan of Association* transparently referred to in *Lessons* were clearly two of his 'former efforts,' whose fate and inefficacy he was now anxious to avoid with *Lessons*, however much he avowed otherwise.<sup>28</sup> If *Lessons* were never designed to be truly anonymous, contrary to Williams' assertions, doubt concerning the credibility of the other half of his claim also arises, for as evidence in Chapter Five shows, he was in frequent and intimate contact with his publishers throughout the period.<sup>29</sup> It is inconceivable that they were unaware of the author's identity as they and Williams claimed. *Lessons'* anonymity represented full use of the gamut of strategies at the author's and publisher's disposal, treading a thin line between avoiding censure and direct criticism on the one hand, and fostering a sense of intrigue and celebrity for the author on the other.

According to this view, Williams never intended to completely conceal his authorship of *Lessons*, but more likely intended gradual authorial reveal, strengthening his authorship credentials over a period of time. In a sense, he was merely flirting with anonymity, and his *Letters on Political Liberty* provides the precedent for this. Further weight is added to this interpretation by the fact that the period of 'true anonymity' that *Lessons* experienced was relatively short-lived. In 1792, Captain Thomas Morris who was intimately acquainted with Williams went some way towards dispelling any uncertainty which remained when in his *General View of the Life and Writings of the Rev. David Williams*; he stated that it was likely that Williams was the author.<sup>30</sup> Despite his decision not to affirm authorship outright, the presence

in the sixth London edition of *Lessons* of Morris' 'Ode in Honour of the Unknown Author of *Lessons to a Young Prince*', gave the suggestion further credence in the eyes of contemporaries.<sup>31</sup> Their close friendship was well known, as was their mutual participation in the development of the Literary Fund and a business arrangement related to the sale of Dr. Velnos' Vegetable Nostrum.<sup>32</sup> Added to this, sharp-eyed readers may have seen the slip by the publisher in the 'New Publications' list referred to earlier, which appeared in 1793.<sup>33</sup>

By 12 October 1795 the eccentric antiquarian scholar Joseph Ritson confidently listed Williams as the author in a list of works by that 'volumous writer' which he was attempting to procure for his nephew.<sup>34</sup> While biographies of Williams which appeared after Morris', including one in *British Public Characters of 1798* still refrained from absolute attribution, stating simply that, 'The "Lessons to a Young Prince", and "An Apology for Professing the Religion of Nature in the Eighteenth century", may possibly have come from his [Williams'] pen', authorship was largely accepted in England by the middle of the decade.<sup>35</sup> Ironically, it is partly this delayed 'outing' of authorship that led to the cancellation of Williams' commission to write the continuation of Hume's *History of England*, for, as one observer acutely noted, 'If a Philosopher will venture to write *Lessons* to modern Kings and Princes, they will not select him to write History, and he will not write fulsome dedications'.<sup>36</sup> Thus, anonymity in practice lasted for little more than the printing of the English editions of *Lessons*.

Finally, consideration must be given to the possibility that a clear demarcation existed between people considered 'in the know', close associates centred around Ridgway's shop, who were aware of his authorship, figures such as Jacques-Pierre Brissot, and those readers, especially provincial readers, who were not party to this knowledge. This would mean, therefore, that *Lessons* in effect had two reading publics, both of whom had very different



reading experiences. Writing again to Brissot in Paris on the 24 November 1790, Williams emphasised that his 'chastisement of Burke' is 'highly relished here', implying that he was known by some people to be writing the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*'. The language is too ambiguous to press the point further, for it is conceivable that the extra lesson was anticipated from the 'unknown author', and that the rumour of its forthcoming publication maintained the impetus for continued anonymity through pseudonymity.

The delay in establishing authorship categorically amongst 'cold' readers was, it is argued, a critical factor in accounting for the relatively subdued responses to *Lessons* that are analysed in Chapter Three. It also partly explains the frequency of poetic responses to the 'Unknown Author of *Lessons*' and the paucity of detailed, argumentative, responses which engaged with his political ideas, as well as why few measures were taken to suppress them by the Administration at a time of heightened political sensitivity.<sup>37</sup>

### (III) Reasons for anonymity

In his discussion of anonymity and the use of pseudonyms Sher identifies several different categories which each had distinctive rationales.<sup>38</sup> At one extreme there was total anonymity, used primarily for the avoidance of censure and reprisal, and at the other, inclusion of the author's name prominently on the title page. In between, other options were available to the writer and publisher: the use of a pseudonym, signing a dedication several pages through the work, revealing clues to authorship within the text, or forming open secrets in which details of authorship were industriously circulated in newspapers or correspondence ('mitigated anonymity'), and temporary anonymity where authorship was claimed after the second or third edition of a work. The list is not exhaustive because many combinations of anonymity were possible. Generally, they fall into three broad categories: firstly, to avoid official

censorship or from fear of prosecution; secondly, to conform to long-established conventions of literary modesty with the added benefit of ‘testing the water’ before claiming a work; and finally, what Foucault calls ‘anonymity in the guise of enigma’ – anonymity designed to provoke speculation and intrigue, and by extension, sales.<sup>39</sup>

When *Lessons* is examined from all three perspectives the strategy behind its anonymity is less clear-cut than Sher’s categorisation would indicate. Indeed, after close examination, a strong case can be made that Williams’ motivation for publishing anonymously involved a complex amalgam of all these elements: especially given that his authorship was truly anonymous in practice for approximately a year and a half, even though this anonymity was deliberately mitigated through cautious textual reveal and, from the second edition onwards, further weakened by the introduction of a pseudonym. Analysis also suggests that *Lessons*’ author used anonymity in a fourth way: anonymity as an integral part of the rhetoric of the text, reflecting the book’s central concern about ulterior motives behind political participation.

(i) Anonymity to avoid prosecution

The first and most obvious reason for *Lessons*’ anonymity was to protect the true identity of the author in order to avoid prosecution for ‘seditious libel’. Several commentators alluded to this as being the prime motivation in the case of *Lessons*. Without offering evidence, one anonymous critic suggested that a financial arrangement between the author of *Lessons* and his publisher Henry Delahay Symonds had been reached which secured the author’s anonymity. The critic went further and intimated that to an extent, the arrangement was reciprocal: the author protecting his publisher from prosecution by expressing his political views in a fictional monologue spoken by the Prince of Wales, a proxy spokesman who, by virtue of his rank, was beyond political reprisal. The extract reads, ‘he [the author] seems to

regard his safety and has settled the price of it with his publisher. He has also guarded the publisher by the art of his composition and stile [*sic*]', in stark contrast to Ridgway's alternative satirist, Charles Pigott, author of the *The Jockey Club* which used such direct and vulgar language that it induced the prosecution of more than one of its publishers.<sup>40</sup> Even though it has already been suggested that Williams was not aiming at literal or permanent anonymity, such an absolute standard of anonymity was not required in order to provide protection from prosecution, since proof of authorship had to be concrete and compelling. It also accounts for the Pitt Administration's targeted prosecutions of booksellers and publishers for seditious libel, rather than authors. As the critic intimated however, a carefully written work allowed the reader to make an informed guess about authorship given the time and inclination, without reaching the standard of proof necessary for a successful prosecution by Crown agents.

Yet, how much of a threat was prosecution in reality anyway, and to what degree was the content of *Lessons* radical or libellous enough to induce a prosecution? Broadly accepting Dybikowski's argument that the political ideas in *Lessons* were heavily indebted to the weightier treatment given to constitutional issues in *Letters on Political Liberty* which was claimed by Williams and received no attention from the authorities, only two factors could account for the likelihood of them inducing a prosecution: the satirical attacks on prominent political figures (libel), and/or a substantial change in the political climate.<sup>41</sup> The characteristic parts of *Lessons* which satirised William Pitt, Charles Fox, Edmund Burke and Charles Brinsley Sheridan in particular, were certainly libellous by eighteenth-century standards, but they were relatively mild compared with many other pamphlets circulating at the time.<sup>42</sup> Of far greater importance was that they appeared during the early phase of the French Revolution that meant they circulated at a time of dramatically heightened government

sensitivity about political criticism and dissent. Although the Royal Proclamation against seditious libel was not issued until 21 May 1792, and Pitt's reign of 'terror' – the euphemism for the politically inspired prosecutions of authors and booksellers – did not commence until after all editions of *Lessons* had appeared (with the exception of the reissue of the American edition by Mathew Carey in 1796), the threat of prosecution remained real. Copies continued to be sold, circulated, and read years after its publication date, while prosecutions for libel could take several months, even years to materialise, as Crown agents built their case.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, the arrest and prosecution of Henry Delahay Symonds in 1791 and James Ridgway in 1793, principally for selling the second part of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, impressed upon Williams the reality of the ongoing threat of prosecution and incarceration.<sup>44</sup> Given that more than one contemporary argued that the ideas contained within *Lessons* were the intellectual substance behind Paine's 'libel on the constitution' in the *Rights of Man*, initial anonymity was an important factor in ensuring the author's freedom from political molestation.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the double protection afforded by anonymity and careful composition, Williams certainly felt some political heat. In a letter to Brissot dated 24 November 1790 he wrote of his pleasure in seeing 'three large editions [of *Lessons*]... rapidly sold', but added that this was despite the fact that 'Aristocrats have abused & menaced [them] in a high tone'.<sup>46</sup> The comment was repeated in a note in the sixth edition: 'Menaces have been used to intimidate the author', and the rumour, 'industriously circulated, "that the Work is a Libel; and if the Author were known he would be exemplarily punished"'.<sup>47</sup> The only difference in sentiment was that Williams now identified this threat as coming specifically from Lord Thurlow, the Lord High Chancellor of England, the man responsible for conducting political prosecutions, and therefore raising the jeopardy considerably.<sup>48</sup> In another letter of the same period,

Williams informed Brissot with contempt that 'no extracts [of *Lessons*] are made in our Venal Papers by order of the Treasury'.<sup>49</sup> It seems likely that it was to repair this deficit that the periodical reviews, which apparently did not come under the scope of this ban, carried such unusually lengthy extracts from *Lessons*.<sup>50</sup> Ensuring his own personal safety was, without question, one reason why Williams continued to hide behind the veil of anonymity, even though provocative glimpses were now and then allowed. Williams' high-profile visit to France in the first week of December 1792 at the behest of Brissot, where he took part in discussions over the framing of the new French Constitution, also receiving honorary French citizenship (accepted October 1792), as well as ill-defined clandestine diplomatic activities in an effort to avert war between Britain and France, put Williams firmly on the authorities' radar, drastically reducing the likelihood of him ever claiming the work.

(ii) Testing the water

The anonymous nature of *Lessons* protected Williams from prosecution. However, Sher's second reason for anonymity seems to apply equally well. In this view, anonymity was merely a temporary expedient and designed to allow Williams and his publishers to test peer reception to the work before subsequently proceeding to deny or to claim it. The precedent for such a strategy was his *Letters on Political Liberty*, which initially came out anonymously in 1782, but after favourable reviews in the periodical press, prominently bore his name from the second edition onwards. It is unusual for a work to appear anonymously in its first edition, and then in subsequent editions to carry a pseudonym; yet this is exactly the case with *Lessons* which, from the second edition onwards, bore the *nom-de-plume* 'Old Statesman'. This requires some explanation. In accordance with the temporary anonymity theory, it can be argued that Williams had every intention of claiming *Lessons* in subsequent editions once there was evidence that it was well received, and perhaps the threat of prosecution had waned. In the

end however, two factors conspired to persuade him that a pseudonymous claim, rather than outright avowal, was more prudent: the first, the deteriorating and dangerous publishing climate for anti-Administration, 'patriot' authors, highlighted by a slew of high-profile detentions; and the second, the fact that his satirical 'chastisement' of Burke, which was added to the second edition, amounted to a much stronger character assassination, significantly more robust than the single paragraph treatment given in the first edition, and therefore opening himself up to a civil, as well as criminal, prosecution for libel.<sup>51</sup> This lengthy 'abuse', as one reviewer called it, significantly raised the personal jeopardy involved in authorship avowal, especially in light of Burke's powerful new allies following his defection from the Opposition to the ranks of the Administration.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the strongly satirical, rather than scholarly tone of the additional lesson did not conform to the serious and erudite *persona* which Williams cultivated, and it was this very personal attack which drew the wrath of the *Critical Review*, which had been initially more sympathetic to *Lessons*. In manuscript fragments, published at the end of his posthumously published autobiography *Incidents*, Williams revealed his penchant for satire in an unmistakably apologetic tone: 'I had a strong and almost unconquerable disposition to satire, unconquerable even by a mild and candid temper, and I attribute it to an early force on my inclinations in favour of a profession which had to my imagination very strong points of ridicule'.<sup>53</sup> His authorship was therefore not to be widely known or broadcasted amongst his peers, and was certainly not commensurate with the contemporary sketch of him as a 'solemn pompous pedagogue' as described by his fiercest critic John King. Neither was it fitting of a man suited to 'cool deliberate discussion in committee or the rigours of the legislator', as described by his admirer Citizeness Roland, nor still as 'Mentor to Royal George's Son'.<sup>54</sup>

There is further evidence to support the argument that Williams was acutely aware of the genre which *Lessons* had slipped into, admitting in another letter to Brissot dated 27 September 1790, that ‘parts of the Lessons wear a satirical form’ but nevertheless insisting that his friend could ‘rely on the accuracy & truth of every circumstance & allusion’.<sup>55</sup> The added ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ tipped the balance between satirical part and satirical whole. As Chapter Three argues, displeasure at what contemporaries saw as an *ad hominem* satirical attack was a repeating theme in periodical review criticism. Thus, not only did anonymity afford protection from prosecution, but it was also designed to insulate Williams from criticism by his peers. Quite simply, he did not want to be publicly identified with the work. Again, there were recent precedents to consider. His *Royal Recollections* (1788) and *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions* (1789), both pamphlets published by James Ridgway, were full-blooded satires but were never claimed, not even using a pseudonym. In light of the *British Public Characters*’ statement that some quarters linked him to *Royal Recollections*, ‘but it is so infinitely beneath his abilities, that no one of his friends can allow it to be his’, such reticence seems well placed.<sup>56</sup> The distinction between anonymous publication for reasons of security, and for the preservation of moral standing or reputation in the ‘Republic of Letters’ did not go unrecognised by contemporaries. Joseph Ritson, who, as aforementioned, was in 1794 busy compiling a collection of Williams’ work for his nephew, made a point of reminding him that ‘many of his works are anonymous, and many **unowned**’ [my emphasis].<sup>57</sup> The distinction drawn between ‘anonymous’ and ‘unowned’ is clear: unowned meant in the pejorative sense, not admitted to, in spite of readers’ strong suspicions.

### (iii) Anonymity as enigma

Sher’s third reason why works appear anonymously is that anonymity imbues the work with a mysterious air, inducing speculation about the identity of the author, his political affiliations

and his intentions, or to borrow Foucault's phrase, transforming the author into an enigma, which translated into sales success. There is no doubt that in the case of *Lessons*, the management of readers' curiosity was an intentional by-product of this anonymity, exploited skilfully by both author and publisher after the first edition sold well. The hagiographical 'Ode to the Unknown Author of *Lessons*' by Morris, which first appeared in *The World* on the 2 December 1790 before being attached as an Appendix to the sixth edition, was carefully calculated to stimulate interest in it as well as to provide an opportunity for further ridicule of the incautious speculator. As the poem waxed lyrical, it also directly challenged, even taunted the reader to identify the author who was so lauded, and thus helped to keep the work in the public eye:

Glow not your hearts, ye Britons, when you look  
In this great Sage's book?  
Contemplate Alfred's admirable plan  
And know the pow'r of Kings is not from God, but man.<sup>58</sup>

The degree to which Williams and his publishers consciously managed anonymity in this way is an interesting question. Correspondence between Brissot and Williams sheds some light on the issue and suggests that Williams appreciated elements of the author-function and was discriminating when deploying his name. In a letter dated 27 April 1789, prior to the composition of *Lessons*, he revealed, 'I have sent to Mr. Bridel the Apology & c – but I do not hope to be **named** here as the author, you may do as you please. To the Lectures on Education I put **my name** & I shall send them to Bridel soon' [my emphasis].<sup>59</sup> In other words, he did not want to be named as the author of the deistical attack on the Christian Church, *An Apology for Professing the Religion of Nature in the Eighteenth Century of the Christian Aera*, but was entirely happy to publicly avow the less controversial and solemn *Lectures on Education*. Further evidence indicates that Williams was scrupulous about the management of his



imprimatur, reminding Brissot in a postscript to the same letter, 'when you mention me in your paper, let it always be by my **full & plain Name** David Williams – without any epithet of Reverend & etc' [my emphasis].<sup>60</sup> Having abandoned the Dissenting Ministry in the early 1770s he was clearly anxious to distance himself from the title's connotations.<sup>61</sup> This sensitivity over address was also detected by a correspondent of the *St James's Chronicle* who opened his brief discussion of Williams' *Lectures on Education* with the line, 'The Rev. D. Williams, or, as he seems desirous to be called, David Williams...'<sup>62</sup>

Applying Sher's three fundamental reasons for writing anonymously in the eighteenth century: escaping persecution, avoiding being associated with failed publications or publications incommensurate with the author's professional status, and creating intrigue and mystery to enhance demand for *Lessons*, shows them to be interdependent. Williams' anonymity was designed to, and did, take advantage of all three. Before reaching any final conclusions however, one final aspect of *Lessons*' anonymity should be addressed, namely the adoption of a pseudonym from the second edition onwards.

#### (IV) Pseudonymous *Lessons*: an 'Old Statesman'

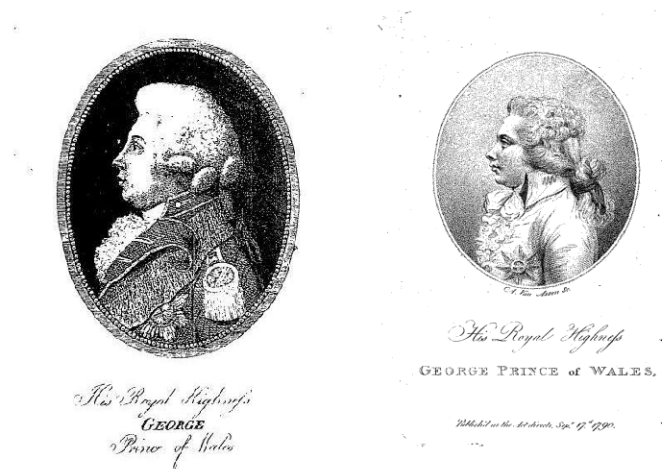
The introduction to *Lessons* of a pseudonym that was not readily recognised by contemporaries in the way that, for example, Peter Pindar was known to be the alias of John Walcott, or Anthony Pasquin the alias of John Williams, not only upheld the shielding effects of anonymity but introduced a new rhetorical dimension that was exploited by Williams and his publishers.<sup>63</sup> Eran Shalev and Margaret Ezell have both emphasised the 'masking' aspect of pseudonymity that is not present with anonymity: the former emphasizing its implicit deception (rather than absence – in the case of anonymity), the latter the theatrical, performance aspects: both qualities which Williams used to good effect.<sup>64</sup>

Rhetorically, the introduction of the pseudonym 'Old Statesman' did little to jeopardise the author's earlier posture of anonymous, benign, worldly 'disinterestedness' free of any desire for personal aggrandisement, and thus continued to foreground one of the central messages of the entire work which was, as one reviewer put it, 'the subject of [political] favouritism'.<sup>65</sup> The author, still unknown, could not be accused of courting acclaim or recognition by a particular faction, thus drawing a stark contrast between the author's professed 'altruistic' motives and the factional bickering and cults of personality surrounding leading figures of political life, especially Edmund Burke, Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Henry Dundas. The effectiveness of this move to uncouple authorship as fully as possible from its association with political patronage, whether in the aristocratic tradition or from the ranks of the hack scribblers tied to Party purse-strings, was strengthened by the adoption of the specific pseudonym 'Old Statesman' because it also implied intellectual and financial independence, experience, detached wisdom and *gravitas*.<sup>66</sup> The image Williams was projecting was not of the furtive author sniping at a distance – the radical (Painite) agitator – but of a disinterested statesman with a strong sense of public virtue and duty, who, as he reminded readers, had 'not been a spectator only of the incidents of this age.'<sup>67</sup> The author, although unknown, was no longer therefore, *persona non-grata*. Although at this time Williams was fifty-two years of age and may possibly be considered 'old' by eighteenth-century standards, he was not in any modern sense of the term a statesman, having never held any political or diplomatic office. This element of conscious 'deception' or 'disguise' accords with Shalev's central claim about the nature of pseudonymity, but the projection of a *persona* through a pseudonym might, in this case, just as persuasively be interpreted as an aspirational self-image, rather than as a deliberate attempt to mislead others.

However, this particular pseudonym is more carefully chosen and load-bearing than might at first appear because it must also be read in light of Plato's *Statesman* (*Politicus*).<sup>68</sup> When considered in this way, Williams, it is argued, is not likening himself to a statesman defined in late eighteenth-century terms which emphasized the 'sensible influence exerted' by leading persons 'over the destinies of their fellow creatures', but to the Platonic Statesman harmonizing the qualities of temperance and courage.<sup>69</sup> Despite choosing not to use the Latinate pseudonym *Politicus* in favour of the vernacular (a trend also seen in his epigraphs), its use not only fits rhetorically, but is consistent with a well-established tradition of Whig-leaning authors adopting classical pseudonyms, and perhaps more relevantly, coincides with Shalev's identification of a revival in this practice in American Republican discourse.<sup>70</sup> While use of a classic pseudonym imbued such works with 'ancient authority', for Williams, it was less about tapping this authority and more about imbuing *Lessons* with the universalism that the Platonic Statesman-figure offered. By adopting this *persona* Williams was bringing the ideas of *Lessons* out of the imaginary royal classroom and into the public sphere: away from the closeted private domain of the Prince's chamber implied by the voice of 'tutor' or 'Mentor', and into the wider theatre of Revolution politics. This was precisely what Williams had envisaged before he had even commenced composition which is made clear in correspondence with Brissot dated 21 April 1790, Williams informing his friend, 'I mean to write Lessons to the Prince on the subjects now agitating Europe -- & by rendering the principles of your Revolution obvious to him, I shall make them intelligible to the public'.<sup>71</sup>

Through this carefully chosen pseudonym Williams therefore subtly altered the terms on which *Lessons* was to be read, but this did not represent the abandonment of the trope of 'Mentor' which continued to provide *Lessons* with its internal rhetorical consistency. Williams was now playing with two masks: a duality which challenged conventional assumptions

regarding the incompatibility of two such roles. Indeed the ‘Mentor’ figure was strengthened in the second edition by the addition of an engraving of the Prince of Wales by van Assen, prominently positioned opposite the title page, which not only helped to cement the overall impression of respectability and official sanction, but as the *Monthly Review* noted, gave sufficient hints ‘not only by a portrait, as a frontispiece, but through the whole course of the *Lessons*, who is the Telemachus’, thus invoking the image of Fenelon’s preceptor.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, when closely compared with a very similar profile portrait contained in the



eight-volume 1791 Edinburgh edition of Smollett’s continuation of David Hume’s *History of England* published a year later, I argue, the Prince was deliberately made to appear more youthful, almost boy-like, with puppy fat and knavish

Fig. 2.2 Smollett’s *History* 1791 (left) *Lessons* 1790 (right).  
© The British Library Board

locks; thus heightening the rhetorical impression that he, the

Young Prince, could still be ‘lessoned’ by Williams, the royal tutor [see Fig. 2.2].<sup>73</sup>

From the outset, Williams decried any motive behind his publication but that of a ‘public nature,’ and the laboured description of withholding his name from the publisher, as aforementioned, can now be interpreted as symbolic of a desire to be seen to be free from faction and party – the two things most ‘inimical to liberty’, rather than as a genuine effort to maintain the secrecy of his identity.<sup>74</sup> The credentials of this claim are further scrutinised in Chapters Four and Five, where it is suggested that symmetry in the political beliefs of Williams and his publishers H.D. Symonds and James Ridgway, and their attachment to Carlton House, casts a shadow over this claim of authorial independence.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, the claim of

impartiality found some support in reviews of the first edition of *Lessons*, and Williams demonstrated his contempt for the Opposition almost as ferociously as towards the Administration, managing his argument by using a very broad definition of the term 'party', which he defined as, 'any combination which is not founded on public principles'.<sup>76</sup> By casting himself as the Platonic 'Old Statesman' while simultaneously labelling the acknowledged statesmen of the day, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the eloquent orator Edmund Burke, and others Sophists, whom he accused of putting personal interest before that of the public weal, irony can be added to the list of strategies that Williams deployed.<sup>77</sup> As in previous publications dedicated to the Prince of Wales, Williams found little to praise in the Prince's conduct, but the what perhaps considered that he was perhaps the nation's only reforming hope – a hope that by the second edition of *Lessons* looked increasingly forlorn.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the final lesson, Williams addressed the Prince directly, asserting that, 'I have no private interest in the trouble I have taken, I seek not your favour; and in the decent and legal exercise of my abilities I respectfully assume I need not fear your displeasure'.<sup>79</sup> With anonymity tenuously preserved and its effects enhanced by the choice of pseudonymity, it is clear that the wish to appear to want to remain anonymous represented his desire to assuage charges of a perfidious will to ingratiate himself with what he consistently called a 'cabal,' and thus had a rhetorical dimension in addition to the other more conventional functions of anonymity.<sup>80</sup>

It is difficult to come to an accurate assessment of whether the ends that Williams wished to achieve through not publicly declaring *Lessons* to be his were actually met. To do so must involve a study of how they were received and read, the focus of Chapter Four. Certainly, *Lessons* was one of the few major works that he did not own in his autobiography, *Incidents*. Yet, within the *corpus* of his works, it was second only to *Royal Recollections* in the number of published editions. The enigmatic value of anonymity and pseudonymity, bolstered by the

numerous poems addressed to the 'unknown author' and its publishers' 'baffled' ruse in advertisements to the public, challenged contemporaries to identify the author. The stakes were raised by his claim that he had no desire for personal gain from them, whether financial, literary or political. The altruistic tone naturally induced respondents to try to 'draw him out' so as to scrutinise his personal conduct and other ideological convictions. Such attempts were largely unsuccessful. Some, like the *Monthly Review* found the disinterested claim too difficult to swallow, informing their readers that, 'it will be suspected that a preceptor must have had some other motive [than party], who thus publicly seats himself in the magisterial chair, and proclaims the abilities that can so smartly take to task the Heir Apparent of a Crown!'<sup>81</sup> This was not the only sceptical voice. In the Appendix to *Lessons* in which Williams responded to claims that 'the Author's satire [was] the offspring of disappointment,' he countered by declaring that whilst various paths of ambition had been open to him at different times, 'his mind had been intractable to the political discipline of the present reign, and he never could command the servile patience to be cursed and damned even into the flattering and profitable privilege of dispensing the gifts of the holy spirit'.<sup>82</sup> In his very anonymity, Williams was therefore making a statement to his reader, the sincerity of which was palpable.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard B. Sher, *The Enlightenment and the Book: Scottish Authors & their Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, & America*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press (2006), pp. 97-194. See also Marcy L. North, *The Anonymous Renaissance: Cultures of Discretion in Tudor-Stuart England*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press (2003), in which she develops the thesis that in early print cultures, responses to anonymity often depended on the genre of the publication, 'Readers grumbled and railed about anonymous adversaries, praised the modesty of elite poets, and discussed openly anonymity's advantages and disadvantages...' (p. 89). Although during the Renaissance, anonymity was the norm rather than the exception, 'mundane, familiar, and expected' (p. 91), professionalization of writing in the mid-eighteenth century increased the desire to write openly and establish literary reputations.

<sup>2</sup> *Enlightenment and the Book*, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 154-155. See also Robert J. Griffin (ed.), *The Faces of Anonymity and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, London: Palgrave Macmillan (2003).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 148.

<sup>5</sup> The examples Sher gives are (i) the author signing a dedication (ii) the author's name appearing in contemporary newspaper advertisements (iii) revealing authorship by linking the anonymous work with other works by the same author that did not appear anonymously.

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- <sup>6</sup> Cited by Sher, Michel Foucault, 'What Is an Author?' pp. 109-10, from Roger Chartier, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, (trans.) Lydia G. Cochrane, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press (1994).
- <sup>7</sup> Even advertisements for the American edition of *Lessons* attributed them to the author of the *Letters of Junius*. See, notes twenty five and twenty six of this chapter.
- <sup>8</sup> Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, (ed. & trans.), Stephen Heath, New York: Hill, (1977), p. 148.
- <sup>9</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 27 September 1790. Williams announced to his friend, 'I have written a little Pamphlet as an antidote to the Poison which is here diffused by the Court, the Nobles & Clergy, who are alarmed at the Progress of Liberty'. It is debateable whether 'Old Statesman' is a pseudonym (false name) in the literal sense of the word. Both anonymity and pseudonymity hide an identity, but a pseudonym develops a new identity or *persona*, which seems to fit better with Williams' intentions. Advertisements for the first edition of *Lessons* mention them as being by an Old Statesman, which appears to be the genesis of the pseudonym.
- <sup>10</sup> *Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1818*, vol. II, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & others (1818), p. 48.
- <sup>11</sup> Prof. David Williams, 'A Bibliography of the Printed Works of David Williams (1738-1816), *National Library of Wales Journal*, vol. X, 1957, no.2, p. 133.
- <sup>12</sup> James Ridgway, 'New Publications', appended to Henry Yorke, *These are the Times that Try Men's Souls!*, London: Ridgway & Symonds (1793). For an explanation of this 'outing', see Chapter Four.
- <sup>13</sup> David Williams, *Lessons to a Young Prince on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution*, sixth ed., London: H.D. Symonds (1791) p. 176.
- <sup>14</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iii.
- <sup>15</sup> Chapter Five, Section II argues that for *Lessons*, these 'little interpolations' had greater consequence than Williams thought. Identifying these interpolations and the individuals who were responsible for them is important when considering their impact. The only edition of one of Williams' works misattributed on its title page is the Irish edition of *Royal Recollections*, bearing the pseudonym Peter Pindar, see David Williams, *Incidents in My Own Life which have been Thought of Some Importance*, (ed.) Peter France, Brighton: University of Sussex Library (1980), p.55.
- <sup>16</sup> *Critical Review*, 70 (1790), p. 455.
- <sup>17</sup> [David Williams] *Letters on Political Liberty. Addressed to a Member of the English House of Commons, on his having been chosen into the Committee of an Associating County*, London: T. Evans (1782). The second edition of 1784 named David Williams as the author on the title page.
- <sup>18</sup> *Critical Review*, 1 (1791), pp. 230-231.
- <sup>19</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
- <sup>20</sup> *A Defence of the Constitution of England, Against the Libels that Have Lately been Published on it; Particularly in Paine's Rights of Man*, Dublin: P. Byrne, J. Moore, J. Jones and others (1791), p. 2.
- <sup>21</sup> Cited by Prof. David Williams in 'A Bibliography of the Printed Works of David Williams (1738-1816), *National Library of Wales Journal*, X (1957), no.2, p. 133.
- <sup>22</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, New York, 7 July (1791), vol. VII, issue 1992, p. 2; *The Worcester Magazine*, Worcester: Massachusetts, 15 September (1791), vol. xx, issue 963.
- <sup>23</sup> For a detailed assessment of the influence of James Ridgway and members of the 'Ridgway conversazione' see *On Burning Ground*, pp. 277-278.
- <sup>24</sup> *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, London, March 4 (1791), issue 5570.
- <sup>25</sup> [David Williams], *Letters on Political Liberty*, London: T. Evans (1782), cited on p. 76-77 of the first edition of *Lessons*; [David Williams], *A Plan of Association*, London: G. Kearsly (1780), cited on p. 76-77 of the first edition of *Lessons*.

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<sup>26</sup> 'New Publications Printed for James Ridgway', London: J. Ridgway (1791), appended to [Anon], *The Rights of Kings*, London: J. Ridgway (1791), pp. 1-3.

<sup>27</sup> This example highlights the sheer complexity of cautious authorial reveal. The list was headed with the note from the publisher that, 'The following political Publications are in order which those ideas of free societies have been gradually developed which now agitate Europe, and menace despotism, civil and ecclesiastical', *ibid.* (p.1). Although other extant publication lists advertise *Letters on Political Liberty* as being by David Williams, this one does not. The rationale was presumably that to do so would have made attribution uncomfortably obvious, turning suspicion into confidence, though not certainty. For a full discussion of the advertising techniques employed by James Ridgway and Henry Delahay Symonds, see Chapter Five, Section III. The internet-based company Amazon.com use this technique heavily.

<sup>28</sup> *Letters on Political Liberty* carried Williams' name on the title page from the second edition onwards, though no copy appears extant; *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iv.

<sup>29</sup> Although *Lessons* were printed for H.D. Simmons [*sic*], rather than James Ridgway, they were more or less a co-operative partnership. Extant 'New Publications Lists' of the period invariably advertise works published by both publishers. The intense working relationship between James Ridgway and David Williams during this period is evidenced by *Hints to Families on the increasing prevalence of Scrofula, asthmas, consumptions and palsies from the present method of treatment of measles and small pox*, London: J. Ridgway (1787); *Royal Recollections*, London: J. Ridgway (1788); the third edition of *Letters on Political Liberty*, London: J. Ridgway (1789), which had previously been published by T. Evans; *Constitutional Doubts*, London: J. Ridgway (1789); *An Apology for Expressing the Religion of Nature*, London: J. Ridgway (1789); *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions*, London: J. Ridgway (1789). For a full assessment of Symonds' and Ridgway's influence on Williams, see Chapters Four and Chapter Five.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Morris, *A General View of the Life and Writings of the Rev. David Williams*, London: J. Ridgway (1792).

<sup>31</sup> The 'Ode' first appeared in *The World*, December 2 (1790), and was also published in *Lessons*, sixth and seventh editions, pp. 171-176, and as Dybikowski notes in Morris' *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*, London: J. Ridgway (1791).

<sup>32</sup> For David Williams' connection with Velnos Vegetable Syrup see *On Burning Ground*, pp. 310-312.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter Five for an account of this error.

<sup>34</sup> Joseph Ritson, *The Letters of Joseph Ritson, Esq. Edited Chiefly from Originals in the Possession of his Nephew*, London: W. Pickering (1833), vol. II, p.101. Ritson to 'The Editor', 12 October 1795. Ritson's nephew had evidently commissioned his uncle to procure him a complete library of works by David Williams. Though the exchanges over a series of four letters give interesting anecdotal information on Williams at this time, caution should be exercised when consulting these posthumously published letters since forty years had elapsed since they were written. A letter in the same sequence of correspondence is erroneously dated 15 December 1794 when it should read 1795. Nonetheless, several features suggest they represent a genuine sequence of correspondence, not least Ritson's concern over the correct translation into English of the French word for female citizen, Citoyenne, Citizeness, etc. His famously pedantic and erratic spelling led to the slightly unusual possessive derivation of Williams in his correspondence. Dybikowski describes Ritson as 'no friend of Williams's' (*On Burning Ground*, p. 138), an assessment derived from Ritson's unflattering assessment of his talents: 'You probably over rate the merits of the above prolific writer. Godwin says he is never without an eye to self' (p.104), and the suggestion that Williams obtained the famously favourable account of his character by Madame Roland in her memoirs as much by 'well managed flattery as by profound politics' (p. 104). For a brief but good account of the life of Joseph Ritson see Stephanie L. Barczewski, 'Ritson, Joseph (1752-1803)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, (2004), [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23685>].



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<sup>35</sup> *British Public Characters of 1798*, London: R. Phillips (1798), p. 471. Anonymity seems to have persisted longer in America, and conversely, for a shorter period in France. See Chapter Three for a brief analysis of this issue.

<sup>36</sup> *Morning Post*, 11 June (1793), issue 6283. David Williams had been commissioned to write the continuation, as advertised in several leading papers from January 1792. However, the choice of author for the project which was the brainchild of Robert Bowyer, miniature painter to His Majesty and which was ‘under his Majesty’s patronage’, caused considerable problems with would-be subscribers who objected to Williams’ role. Dybikowski makes a powerful case that the breach of contract was predominantly to do with Williams’ acceptance of French citizenship and participation in the discussions regarding the formation of a new constitution. However, this comment indicates that dissatisfaction may have occurred at a much higher level. See Dybikowski’s *On Burning Ground*, pp. 134-139. The continuation was eventually completed by Tobias Smollett.

<sup>37</sup> In his letter of 24 November 1790 to Brissot, Williams does indicate that some suppressive measures had been taken, ‘I have sent you a compleat [sic] copy of the *Lessons to a Young Prince*, to which is added a short Chastisement of Burke, which is very highly relished here; though no Extracts are made in our Venal Papers by Order of the Treasury’, A.N., Ms. 446AP6.

<sup>38</sup> *Enlightenment and the Book*, pp.148-155.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 150.

<sup>40</sup> *Defence of the Constitution of England*, p. 2. Charles Pigott’s *The Jockey Club; or a Sketch of the Manners of the Age* (1792) was one of the works for which both Ridgway and Symonds were incarcerated in Newgate Prison. See Chapter Four for a full account of their imprisonment and the effect it had on revisions of *Lessons*.

<sup>41</sup> *On Burning Ground*, pp. 186-187. For two opposing views of the Jacobin threat to England, see Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People?* Oxford: Oxford University Press (2007), and Edward Royle, *Revolutionary Britannia?* Manchester: Manchester University Press (2000).

<sup>42</sup> Advertisements for *Lessons* soon began to list the public figures who received ‘treatment’ in the work, and they became reminiscent of the advertisements for *Royal Recollections* two years earlier, declaring that they lifted the veil from a ‘cabal in a certain appendage of Carlton House’. With an adroit and carefully calculated, defensive but ironic sidestep the leader on the advertisement stated, ‘the following personages appear in glowing colours’, *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, London, March 4 (1791), issue 5570.

<sup>43</sup> In correspondence between Joseph Ritson and his nephew dated 23 November 1795, he mentions obtaining a second-hand copy of *Lessons* from the bookseller Egerton and that it would, he thought, be ‘extravagant to get them new’, *Letters of Joseph Ritson* (p. 107). In a letter immediately following, he remarked that he had managed to procure them for ‘four shilling and sixpence’ (p. 107), which was actually the price that the new Seventh Edition was being sold for by Ridgway in 1792! Back matter attached to Thomas Paine’s, *Miscellaneous Articles*, London, J. Ridgway (1792).

<sup>44</sup> The importance of the association between Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man Pt II* and *Lessons* is discussed in Chapter Three, both in terms of their ideas, and their connection with Ridgway and Symonds.

<sup>45</sup> *Defence of the Constitution of England*, title page.

<sup>46</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.

<sup>47</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, pp. 169-170.

<sup>48</sup> The year before, Williams lampooned Thurlow with particular venom as, ‘Profligate in his own principles, and at heart indifferent to all, he sees only the point of interest in which every benefice may be placed. The object of his inclination and power is to depress the scrupulous and conscientious minds; to have but one opinion and one will in the country; and that dictated by him; dictating to a cabinet. The sudden elevation of his brother was, however, beyond my opinion even of his assurance. Two boys,

designed for Norwich weavers; the descendents of a degraded family (if anything could be degraded in the service of Oliver Cromwell); the one of moderate abilities, and very confined knowledge; the other an incorrigible blockhead: at the head of the law, and nearly at the head of the Church of England'. *Royal Recollections*, (p. 19). In *Incidents*, written some ten years later, Williams reflected on his activity, both politically and as a writer, 'I withdrew from the political arena, not from fear, though I had some reasons for fear, not from change in principles or connections, but from despair occasioned by the ignorance and impetuosity of those reformers to whom power seemed to have been delegated only by chance' (p. 34).

<sup>49</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.

<sup>50</sup> For example, the *Scots Magazine*, no. 53 (January: 1791), pp.22-23, which reprinted eight full paragraphs.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> See Lucyle Werkmeister, *The London Daily Press 1772-1792*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press (1963) who dates Burke's break with Sheridan to the 9 February 1790 and with Fox on the 6 May 1791, pp. 423-424.

<sup>53</sup> *Incidents*, p. 55. Williams here alludes to his entry into the ranks of the Dissenting clergy, first at Frome, Somerset; then in Exeter; and finally at Highgate in London.

<sup>54</sup> John King, *Mr King's Apology, or a Reply to his Calumniators. The Objects Treated and Facts Stated*, London: T. Wilkins (1798), p. 35; Marie-Jeanne Roland, *An Appeal to Impartial Posterity by Citizeness Roland, Wife of the Minister of the Home Department: or, a Collection of Pieces Written by Her During her Confinement in the Prisons of the Abbey, and St. Pélagie*, London: J. Johnson (1795), p. 42; 'Impromptu Addressed to the Unknown Author of *Lessons* to a Young Prince', Appendix to *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 176.

<sup>55</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 27 September 1790.

<sup>56</sup> *British Public Characters*, p. 471.

<sup>57</sup> *Letters of Joseph Ritson*, p. 101.

<sup>58</sup> This poem was first published in the gazetteer, *The World* on the 2 December 1790, in the Appendix to the sixth edition of *Lessons*, and later in *A General View*.

<sup>59</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 27 April 1789.

<sup>60</sup> Williams is apparently referring to *Le patriote français* which Brissot edited from 10 April 1789 until his arrest by the Montagnard faction on the 2 June 1793.

<sup>61</sup> It is of interest to note that Captain Thomas Morris' biography of Williams, *A General View* used the epithet 'Rev.' raising questions about how intimate he really was with Williams during the period of the composition of *Lessons*.

<sup>62</sup> *St James's Chronicle*, 21 July (1791), issue 4731.

<sup>63</sup> The Irish edition of *Royal Recollections on a Tour to Cheltenham, Gloucester, Worcester, and Places Adjacent in the Year 1788*, stated the author as Peter Pindar, but has been shown by Dybikowski to be erroneous, probably the printer's error in taking it for the similarly titled *The Royal Tour, and Weymouth Amusements: a solemn and reprimanding epistle*, London: J. Walker (1795).

<sup>64</sup> Eran Shalev, 'Ancient Mask, American Fathers: Classical Pseudonyms During the American Revolution and Early Republic', *Journal of the Early Republic*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2003, pp. 151-172.

Margaret J.M. Ezell, "'By a Lady": The Mask of the Feminine in Restoration, Early Eighteenth-Century Print Culture', pp. 63-79, in Robert J. Griffin, *The Faces of Anonymity*.

<sup>65</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iii; *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.63

<sup>66</sup> Williams' decision to use the pseudonym 'Old Statesman', is interesting when related to his criticism of Fox, Burke and Sheridan in Lesson I, whereupon he argues that, 'The abilities and accomplishments of these three united would not constitute a statesman or a truly great man' (p.9). Such a view is consistent with his long held view that these men were orators rather than political thinkers.

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- <sup>67</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iv. It is also worth remembering that eighteenth-century political life was still dominated by deference to age and experience. Indeed William Pitt the Younger was, on account of his age, much ridiculed and lampooned as the popular ditty ‘a sight to make all nations stand and stare: a kingdom trusted to a schoolboy’s care...’, cited by William Hague, ... p. 152 (2005).
- <sup>68</sup> Plato, *Statesman*, Robin Waterfield (trans.), Julia Annas & Robin Waterfield (eds.), New York: Cambridge University Press (1995).
- <sup>69</sup> Henry Lord Brougham, *Historical Sketches of Statesmen Who Flourished in the Time of George III*, vol. I, Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard (1840), p. 9. For a good discussion of the ‘weaving’ of these two qualities, see Sherwin Klein’s ‘Plato’s Statesman and the Nature of Business Leadership: An Analysis from an Ethical Point of View’, *Journal of Business Ethics*, no. 7 (1988), pp. 283-294.
- <sup>70</sup> Shalev, p. 152.
- <sup>71</sup> AN, 446AP6, David Williams to JPB, 21 April 1790.
- <sup>72</sup> A. Van Assen (?-c.1817), is described as ‘an engraver of talent’ by William Young Ottley in his *Notices of Engravers and their Works, Being a New Dictionary... and Numerous Original Notices of the Performances of other Artists Hitherto Little Known*, London: Longman, Rees, Orme & others (1831), un-paginated. He is known through three listed works from which Ottley deduces that he was active between 1802 and 1810. The engraving for *Lessons*, unlisted, is therefore his earliest known work. Given that *Lessons* was only a pamphlet, it follows that Symonds did not commission a well-known (and therefore expensive) engraver. *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
- <sup>73</sup> Tobias Smollett, *The History of England from the Revolution to the End of the American War, and Peace of Versailles in 1783*, vol. VII, Edinburgh: Mundie, Guthrie, and J & J Fairbairn (1791), frontispiece. The changing attitude of David Williams to the Prince of Wales is discussed at greater length in Chapter Five. It can, however, be summarised by the fact that *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789) were ‘dedicated’ to the Prince of Wales, whereas *Lessons* (1790) were ‘addressed’ to him.
- <sup>74</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iv; *ibid*, p. 13. .
- <sup>75</sup> During this period Carlton House, London, was the Prince of Wales’ main residence.
- <sup>76</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p.3.
- <sup>77</sup> Williams’ critique of Sheridan focussed on his role in the planning of the Regent’s Court during the constitutional crisis of 1788/9 when the King suffered an attack of insanity. See *Lessons*, 1, pp. 15-17. However, somewhat ironically, perhaps Sheridan’s most quoted line is that he had an ‘un-purchasable mind,’ which was his response to Henry Addington’s offer of a peerage in return for supporting the Tories. Edmund Burke (1729-1797), an Anglo-Irish Whig M.P.
- <sup>78</sup> Williams’ *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789) contained a wholesome ‘Dedication’ to the Prince of Wales, and crucially, as was continuously emphasized by advertisements, they were dedicated ‘by permission’ which *Lessons* were not.
- <sup>79</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 90.
- <sup>80</sup> See, *Lessons* (1790), 1, pp. 9, 18, 20, 21.
- <sup>81</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
- <sup>82</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 181.

~ Chapter Three ~  
Critical Reaction and Reader-response

(I) Introduction

In the Appendix to the sixth edition of *Lessons* David Williams asserted that his work had, ‘so much engaged the public attention, as not only to occasion an uncommon sale, but to produce a species of criticism, of which the author is obliged to take some notice’, later adding, the ‘number of Letters, Papers, poems, &c. which have been left for the “unknown author” is not inconsiderable’.<sup>1</sup> The first part of his claim, that *Lessons* sold well, is strongly supported by the number of editions published (seven in less than two years). Correspondence between Jacques Pierre Brissot and Williams further highlights the speed of its sale, as well as providing information about the size of the editions; Williams remarking in November 1790 that, ‘three **large** editions of the *Lessons* have been rapidly sold... with a fourth at the press’ [my emphasis].<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere in the same letter, he raised the possibility of a fifth edition, which he believed would ‘soon be called for.’<sup>3</sup> The apparently genuine popularity of *Lessons* was all the more impressive because several factors went against it: a substantial increase in price between the first and second editions from 2s 6d to 4s 6d, and because, unlike Edmund Burke’s pamphlet *Reflections*, it was not promoted by either the Administration or Opposition, ‘none of the efforts & artifices [have been] used for its circulation which the \*\*\* votaries of arbitrary Power have practised to circulate Burke’s pamphlet’, Williams declared shortly after the fourth edition.<sup>4</sup> As already noted, extracts from the ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ were banned from appearing in the daily press by the Treasury, wishing to quell the slew of pamphlet replies which were spawned by the ill-advised publication of Burke’s *Reflections*. The significant price increase was due to the additional ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ which increased the number of pages from ninety-one in the first edition to one hundred and

fifty seven in the second edition.<sup>5</sup> The insertion of two extra plates depicting the 'English Government at the Revolution' and the 'Constitution of the American States', contributed disproportionately to this increase. But despite this price rise, even the critical writer of one of the few direct replies to *Lessons* conceded that it 'hath rapidly sold'.<sup>6</sup> Finally, a preview of the American edition stated enthusiastically that they had been 'read with so great avidity throughout Great Britain and Ireland, that the demand could scarcely be supplied'.<sup>7</sup>

However, even if the first part of Williams' claim can be corroborated, it is much more difficult to substantiate the second part of his claim regarding the allegedly wide response to *Lessons*, for although it is entirely plausible that numerous 'Letters, Papers, &c' were written to the 'unknown author', unfortunately the majority seem not to have survived. The sixth edition of *Lessons* claimed to reprint three poems addressed to the author and the contents of one unsigned letter was buried in a footnote, but in the light of little physical evidence, whether they represent highlights of a larger correspondence, or evidence of hyperbole, is impossible to determine.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, whether the items of correspondence selected by Williams for inclusion in the Appendix were very representative or, as is more likely, carefully selected, is a question that is difficult to resolve.

No solely dedicated response to *Lessons* has been located, but three reasonably substantial part-responses survive in: *A Vindication of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (1791) by Thomas Goold; the anonymous *A Defence of the Constitution of England* (1791), and *Observations on the Government and Constitution of Great Britain* (1792) by the curate to Lord Sheffield, the Rev. Jerom Alley, as well as a number of works which cite *Lessons*, especially *Observations on the Life and Character of Alfred the Great* (1794), possibly by Daniel Isaac Eaton.<sup>9</sup> *Lessons* had some visibility in correspondence and personal diaries, most notably in the correspondence of

the poet Anna Seward, best known for her letter exchange with the physician and natural philosopher Erasmus Darwin, and also in the *Literary Diary* of the American clergyman and president of Yale College, Ezra Stiles.<sup>10</sup> These glimpses give valuable, if incomplete, information about the breadth of its readership, and demonstrate that it reached some of the most highly cultured, if not the most politically influential, minds of the eighteenth century.

However, explicit responses to *Lessons* were in general, relatively few, and relatively late, suggesting that whilst it was widely read, it did not seize the public's attention in the manner that Williams claimed. Looking beyond the British Isles, there is some evidence of a wider readership in Europe, particularly in France, where the first edition of *Lessons* was translated, and in America, where it was received, perhaps unsurprisingly, more favourably than in England.<sup>11</sup> In light of Williams' subsequent role as constitutional advisor in France, pursuing the fortunes and impact of *Lessons* in France would undoubtedly be rewarding, though it falls outside the scope of the present study. In both cases, evidence of readership only appeared following locally printed editions. The English editions of *Lessons* did not travel well. By far the largest body of surviving evidence giving a snapshot of contemporary reaction to *Lessons* outside the 'safety' of the Appendix were the periodical reviews, which is where this analysis of reader-reaction begins.

There is a small but important caveat: this chapter focuses exclusively on three main types of reaction to *Lessons*, all of which directly refer to it; published critical responses, personal reaction, and the use of *Lessons* to provide 'authority' in the form of citations. However, this does not imply that readers did not respond to the ideas that they contained indirectly which in turn may have affected their thought patterns and writing. The problem is that tracing such

influences is deeply problematic from an epistemological and methodological point of view, especially given the profusion of 'Revolution literature' produced in the early 1790s.

## (II) Periodical Reviews

In *On Burning Ground*, Dybikowski notes all the reviews of *Lessons*, which appeared in the periodical press shortly after its release. In total, it attracted eight reviews by six different periodicals; the *Critical Review*; the *Monthly Review*; the *Annual Review*; the *General Magazine and Impartial Review*; the *Scots Magazine*; and the *New Annual Register*.<sup>12</sup> The sizeable number of reviews is testament to the importance and popularity of *Lessons*, but also provides a very good starting point from which to explore the connection between the political orientation of readers and the way *Lessons* was read. Importantly, the *Critical Review* reviewed both the first and second editions, thus highlighting the impact that the additional 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' had on contemporary perceptions of authorial intent, whilst the *Monthly Review's* reviews of the second and sixth editions (with the Appendix), further reflect changing responses to an expanding text. Reviews of *Lessons* in the daily press are limited to two entries in *The World* for the 13 and 29 October 1790, a publication that was also their principal advertising organ.<sup>13</sup>

Although contrasting greatly in the volume of their treatment, both the *Critical Review* and *Impartial Review* received the first edition of *Lessons* favourably, whilst John Noorthouck and Ralph Griffiths' review for the *Monthly Review* attacked many aspects of it.<sup>14</sup> The *Critical Review* provided its readers with a single paragraph, laudatory review, containing no detailed examination of the ideas, or even a summary of them, focussing entirely on the author's claim to be free from political allegiance. It acknowledged that the author 'writes with the freedom and apparent impartiality of a man whose principles are independent', whilst it also suggested

that the sentiments expressed were 'worthy of being inculcated, and will always meet with a candid reception from a liberal and ingenious mind'.<sup>15</sup> Pointing out that the author drew unfavourable portraits of individuals supposedly connected with the Prince of Wales, it cautiously invited readers to contemplate their justice and accuracy. As discussed in Chapter Two, the anonymous reviewer believed that he knew the identity of the author but, rather than voicing his suspicions, was content to advise his readers that, 'from the characteristical part of the subject, we think we can recognize the author from a former production'.<sup>16</sup>

In a four-page review written in November, the *Impartial Review* heaped praise on the work which, attracted 'universal attention', because of the author's 'brilliant conceptions', 'tropical language', and 'enthusiasm for liberty', but was critical of the author's self-deprecation in claiming not to be a professional writer, and his 'pretensions to being an old man', affirming in Painite language, that the author was 'one of the liveliest and most ingenious advocates for the rights of men'.<sup>17</sup> Like the *Critical Review*, the *Impartial Review* largely accepted the author's declaration of independence from Party, citing a lengthy extract so that 'he may not be suspected as a slave of power'.<sup>18</sup> Whilst inveighing against the Administration, the reviewer pointed out that the characteristical sketches of 'celebrated characters that he deems the principal leaders of the cabal at Carleton House' are original, quoting lengthy verbatim passages on the Whig faction leader Charles Fox, Edmund Burke and Charles Brinsley Sheridan.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the reviewer highlighted the author's positive posture towards the political events in France, again quoting a lengthy extract, which it added, was 'finely said'. A typically flattering passage:

The Composition is throughout charming, not only in respect of diction singularly elegant and precise, from the boldness and originality of the genius it displays and the profound political science, it has the address to unite with the richest elocution and the liveliest fancy.<sup>20</sup>



These two highly favourable reviews offered no substantial examination of the political ideas that *Lessons* contained, and in their general treatment only gave the reader an indication of which aspects of *Lessons* particularly caught their attention. By contrast, in a much more thorough and negative review for the *Monthly Review* (January, 1791) John Noorthouck and Ralph Griffiths, the general editors, countered many of the premises on which the work was based. The tone was unmistakably critical and sceptical. From the outset, the reviewers expressed their surprise and distrust of the basic premise of a self-appointed 'preceptor to the Prince'.<sup>21</sup> Recognising the inherent egotism that lay behind such a claim, they questioned the author's motives, expressing real indignation that this would-be preceptor had the affront to lecture from his 'magisterial chair the Heir apparent to the Crown.'<sup>22</sup> However, they were unable to offer the reader any clues as to what the author's real motive might be, conceding that *Lessons* did not appear Party-led for 'in the course of his admonitions [the author] explodes and satirizes...with the utmost boldness and freedom, without respect to all persons or parties'.<sup>23</sup> Whereas the *Critical Review* interpreted this independence or 'liberal mind' positively, Noorthouck and Griffiths questioned the wisdom of adopting such a disinterested stance, 'so far, he seems unbiased, and impartial: but at the same time, his censures have so much the air of political misanthropy, that while he appears to espouse no sect or party, it seems pretty clear that no sect or party, will espouse him'.<sup>24</sup> Their point was that to enact change, one has to be a participant in the political arena. Nonetheless, the reviewers perceptively added that they predicted good sales for the pamphlet and 'quite a few admirers'.<sup>25</sup> Like the *Critical Review*, the *Monthly Review* also paid particular attention to *Lessons*' satirical dimension or, as they put it, its 'discernment of political characters'.<sup>26</sup> In order to attract the attention of their readers, both reviews' authors quoted long passages from *Lessons*' satirical broadsides and touchstone issues such as the trial of Warren Hastings and Fox's India Bill, inviting readers to make their own judgements as to their accuracy. As a result,

the more theoretical contents of the middle chapters; the analysis of the constitutions and governments of England, France and America, were buried by periodical criticism. The *Scots Magazine's* review included by Dybikowski as a separate review was actually not a separate review at all, but simply a shortened verbatim version of the entry in the *Monthly Review*.<sup>27</sup>

In Chapter Two the purpose of anonymity was introduced and analysed, and it was suggested that one of the effects of *Lessons'* anonymity was to provoke readers into trying to guess the author's identity, or to try to take his likeness by associating him with a party or faction. Given that *Lessons* disavowed such connections, there was one further option available to the reader, an approach adopted by the *Monthly Review*. The strategy was designed to lessen the rhetorical effect of anonymity by affixing to the work a pseudonym, not of the author's, but of the reviewer's own choosing, which resonated with their characterisation of the work, and disempowered the author. In this case, the *Monthly Review* christened the anonymous author twice; first as the 'volunteer school-master of princes', and then as the 'reformer of national Conventions'.<sup>28</sup> The effect was to undermine and ridicule the whole endeavour, belittling the notion that the author was capable of lessoning the Prince, and making the whole work appear fanciful and conceited.<sup>29</sup> This method of criticism did not attack the substance of the work, but the very premise on which it derived its rhetorical effect. In stark contrast to the *Critical Review's* positive assessment of the author's attachment to the principles of the French Revolution, the *Monthly Review* cried contradiction, comparing it with his attitude towards 'that equally important event in our own country distinguished by the name of 'The Revolution'.<sup>30</sup> Griffiths and Noorthouck, who broadly subscribed to the prevailing Whig interpretation of the origins of English liberty, which viewed the 1688 English Revolution as the 'spring of English freedom', argued that 1688 was analogous, indeed preferable to, what was happening in France – a time when the people overcame James II's monarchical despotism.

The author of *Lessons* however, in their view, inconsistently claimed that the 1688 Revolution merely represented the ascent of an autocracy, 'a compact between the Prince and Princess of Orange and the heads of certain families, attended by the Mayor of London and other persons in the exercise of authority'.<sup>31</sup>

One of the aspects of *Lessons* that drew the particular attention of reviewers was the use of diagrams to represent the political constitutions of England, France, and from the second edition, America. Continuing in the vein of the rest of their review, the *Monthly Review* found the copper plates used to 'illustrate his dogmas' an 'extraordinary performance',<sup>32</sup> adding that the writer resembled 'Jacob Behmen and other mystics who sketched out types and symbols, what have been called demonstrations, of what no one could comprehend'.<sup>33</sup> In effect, they argued that, regardless of whether an idea is visually or linguistically represented, the idea itself remains the same. The review continued, 'though they may be calculated for Royal optics; to our humble organs they appear fanciful contrivances, fitted for amusement rather than instruction'.<sup>34</sup> Periodical responses to the diagrams were, predictably, polarised along editorial lines. The *Impartial Review*, for example, favourably commented on his 'sketches, and pictures' in the way they outlined the defects of the constitution.<sup>35</sup> Other non-review sources were also broadly supportive. On the 13 October 1790 a short comment, possibly by Williams, appeared in the daily paper *The World*. It suggested that the diagrams in *Lessons* had 'given great offence to Mr. Burke, who says they are sacred *Arcana*,' despite rendering 'forms of government comprehensible by children'.<sup>36</sup> From the second edition onwards, *Lessons* contained a footnote claiming to reproduce a letter to its author, which although generally critical, stated that the 'mode of illustrating political problems by Diagrams is a valuable and important discovery'.<sup>37</sup> In the same note, Williams claimed to have seen the diagrams 'prepared for the printshops' as standalone productions which would allow the people 'to

discern the deceitful conduct of their pretended representatives'.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, in France, as Dybikowski notes, Nicholas Bonneville adopted the diagrams without acknowledging their source in his *De l'esprit des religions* (1792), and Thomas Morris's 'Ode' delivered a very favourable, if unsurprising verdict:<sup>39</sup>

More profitably far thy hours are spent  
When thou' without a tedious clew  
By diagrams, lay'st open to our view  
An easy way that leads to government.<sup>40</sup>

In a letter to Brissot dated 27 September 1790, Williams made explicit reference to the use of diagrams, declaring with pride that 'The mode of explaining political problems by diagrams is new'.<sup>41</sup> However, he stopped short of claiming that they represented new ideas, 'I hope it [the diagrammatic form] will have effect on those who have better eyes than understanding', an observation no doubt based on his pedagogical experience as a Chelsea school master.<sup>42</sup>

Of the four reviews of the first edition, the *Critical Review* and *Impartial Review* received *Lessons* favourably; the *Scots Magazine* simply quoted passages from the satirical parts of the work; and the *Monthly Review* criticised both the premise on which the work was based and the history of English liberty which it presented. Without exception, all reviews emphasised the satirical flavour of the work, and the pedagogical trope used by the author. Griffith's ownership of the pro-Pitt *St James's Chronicle* perhaps partially explains the tone of his joint-review, though it may have formed part of a longstanding feud relating to an unsuccessful previous engagement Williams allegedly had with the *Monthly Review*. Almost a decade before *Lessons*, the *European Magazine* suggested that Williams worked briefly in the capacity of reviewer for the *Monthly Review*; 'he [David Williams] was said to be connected with the

Monthly Review, for a few months; but left in such disgust, that he has been ever since evidently set at by the writers of that publication'.<sup>43</sup>

The second edition of *Lessons* with the addition of the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' was subject to greater general criticism, although somewhat ironically the *Monthly Review* was more sympathetic. As has been previously noted, between the first and second edition, Burke's *Reflections* had appeared, and subsequently any attack on Burke was imbued with new found significance and meaning. As argued in Chapter One, *Lessons* was seen as forming part of a wave of pamphlet literature against Burke's conservative rendering of the Revolution in France that included James Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* (1791) and Thomas Christie's *Letters on the Revolution of France* (1791).<sup>44</sup> Burke's breach with Fox and defection to William Pitt meant that any attack on him was also seen as emanating from a position of Whig sympathy. In its review of the sixth edition of *Lessons*, the *Monthly Review* (almost certainly a different reviewer), declared that the author attacked Mr Burke's Revolution-pamphlet 'in a strain of poignant irony which may produce a greater effect than the more serious and elaborate compositions of Mr. Burke's most argumentative opponents; as the sportsman's light fowling piece will kill at a distance which the weighty blunderbuss cannot reach'.<sup>45</sup> The tone of the review was unmistakably more supportive; the reviewer transparently against Burke's recent *Reflections*, and therefore more willing to overlook *Lesson's* other abuses. A spirited defence of *Lessons* in their review of Thomas Goold's 'abusive' *Vindication of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke's Reflections* (1791) confirmed the *Monthly Review's* change in tone.<sup>46</sup> Despite this unexpected realignment, in the main, most reviewers found Williams' extended personal attack on Burke unpalatable. Even his loyal supporter Thomas Morris in his 'Ode to the Unknown Author' subtly rebuked his friend for the added satirical material, lamenting that he did not focus more on the serious subject of constitution making:

But why did'st thou defile thy pen,  
To trace the weaknesses of pow'rful men;  
Thy wit serves only to offend?  
Better to spare the great, and hope the great will mend.<sup>47</sup>

Williams reacted uncompromisingly to what he identified as the main thrust of periodical criticism: that his satire was 'general and indiscriminate' and that *Lessons* should have been 'elementary, and unmingled with satire', by denigrating the process of review writing itself:

Periodical critics are become nearly as numerous as the writers they criticise; and to gratify their readers, they may soon be obliged to draw their weapons against each other. The author's engagements do not allow him leisure to avail himself of their opinions: and he regrets it, because they are generally members of those orders, classes, and professions, against which he has directed his satire; and it might be useful to know their manner of repelling or even abusing.<sup>48</sup>

Despite this confessed disinterestedness, once again, his statement was not entirely genuine, for he was able to pinpoint the sharpest points of criticism very adroitly in the Appendix, responding to critics by suggesting that his real 'transgression' had been to conflate science and politics, not politics and satire.

### (III) Direct rebuttals in print

The paucity of direct responses to *Lessons* that engaged in a sustained way with its content is puzzling. Whereas Burke's *Reflections* spawned a slew of replies, rejoinders, and vindications, *Lessons* only solicited three main responses in the form of Thomas Goold's *Vindication of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (1791), *The Civil and the Ecclesiastical System of England Defended and Fortified* (1791), and Jerom Alley's *Observations on the Government and Constitution* (1792).<sup>49</sup> Despite this deficit, each response was distinctive, ranging from Goold's abrasive,

short, and abusive response in support of Burke, to the more substantial argument-based reply of Alley. All three responses, however, engaged with *Lessons* as part of broader pamphlet replies: Goold's designed as an 'answer to all his [Burke's] opponents', Alley's as a response to 'the aspersions of some late writers, particularly Dr. Price, Dr. Priestly, and Mr. Paine', and the anonymous author of the *Defence* as an answer to 'the libels that have been lately published on it [the Constitution] particularly in Paine's pamphlet on the Rights of Man'.<sup>50</sup> Another shared characteristic was that they all gave *Lessons* disproportionately little attention compared with the other works considered in each publication, despite the author of the latter work insisting that *Lessons* was 'the most formidable' of the works by the 'designing apostles of sedition'.<sup>51</sup> In this, the most comprehensive, but apparently aborted reply, the author repeatedly asserted that he had initially conceived of his work as a specific reply to *Lessons*, 'it was the design of the author of the present work, particularly and elaborately to consider the *Lessons*, as they are an insidious and elaborate work', but in the end he considered that there was a more pressing need to combat the 'frothy libel of the day'.<sup>52</sup> Elsewhere in the text, the writer promised to expand upon the question of who has the right to form laws 'in a future answer to the *self-appointed* instructor of the prince', and that the role of the House of Lords 'as a balance in the Constitution' would be remarked upon when considering a 'work of more lasting, and therefore pernicious influence than any that can be written by Paine'.<sup>53</sup> There is no evidence that this promise was fulfilled.

(i) *A Vindication of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France* Thomas Goold (1791)

In this pamphlet, newly qualified barrister and later-to-be Irish politician Thomas Goold (1766-1846) set out to defend Edmund Burke, the 'sublime author' of *Reflections* and fellow countryman, from ten of the many printed attacks on him, commencing with Mary

Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790) and ending with a consideration of Dr. Priestley's 'various letters to Burke'.<sup>54</sup> In his perfunctory rebuttals, *Lessons* was considered second and dismissed, in stark contrast to the general tone of periodical review commentary, as a 'miserable production' and an 'undigested mass of stupid misrepresentations'.<sup>55</sup> The tone of the critique was so harsh that the *Monthly Review*, continuing its more sympathetic approach to *Lessons* under the editorship of Thomas Holcroft, referred to it as 'abuse' of the Old Statesman and reprimanded the author for his intemperate language, whilst at the same time putting it down to his youth: 'The vindicator writes like a young man and is everywhere in extremes...when a few more years have passed over his head, he will probably find, that the language of extremes is not the language of truth'.<sup>56</sup> The author was also reminded that 'such anonymous abuse of Persons, who, though individuals, are characters publically known and respected, is not very modest or decent'.<sup>57</sup>

Goold, who was living in France at the onset of the Revolution offered no substantial argument against *Lessons* because, he claimed, it was bereft of ideas, 'in vain I searched this book for something like an idea: all I could discover was great ignorance, and gross misrepresentations'.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, he charged the author with 'unqualified abuse of the Royal Highness', and argued that 'a parrot can abuse; a jackdaw can abuse; in such company this Old Statesman would be in his glory'.<sup>59</sup> As has already been shown, this response does not, however, conform to the general sentiment of the review community, Anna Seward's observations, or the two other main replies to *Lessons* which unanimously, if grudgingly, accepted that it was well written, inventive and sophisticated – though detractors viewed the ideas as misplaced, the diagrams not innovative but contrived, and the prose misleading.



Although not helpful as a measure of mainstream reaction to *Lessons*, Goold's three-page critique does reveal some interesting material concerning reading patterns. Firstly, Goold states that he read *Lessons* because he had seen it advertised and 'was naturally led to the perusal of it', not on the basis of a friend's recommendation, or by accident.<sup>60</sup> Secondly, Goold admits that 'the speciousness of its title' led him to believe that the work might be in some way instructive.<sup>61</sup> The final point is Goold's self-reprimand for failing to read the preface of the work, and as a consequence, having his 'unwilling ears...assailed with all the doating garrulity of a predictor and a prophet'.<sup>62</sup> His admission suggests that he may in fact only have read the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*', which was also issued as a separate pamphlet; belying any scholarly expectations of a cover-to-cover reading pattern, and demonstrating that little can be assumed about reading habits.

The *Monthly Review's* review of Goold's *Vindication* was naturally not limited to his comments on *Lessons*, and challenged his definition of a Whig, whilst noting that he considered himself a 'Foxite'. The *Review* played on the transient nature of the term; 'with some, a Whig and Foxite are now synonymous terms. With others perhaps, Whig may mean Pittite. With our author it seems to be equivalent to a Burkite'.<sup>63</sup> In a manner sympathetic to *Lessons*, the review criticised Goold's 'jealous attachment to the constitution, as settled at the Revolution',<sup>64</sup> and offered its own definition of Whig; 'Whiggism with us, means not a servile and bigoted attachment to the constitution as settled at the Revolution, but an independent and liberal attachment to the principles on which the constitution was settled; that is to the principles of civil and religious liberty'.<sup>65</sup>

(ii) *A Defence of the Constitution of England* [anonymous] (1791)

This pamphlet appeared as London and Dublin editions, and represents the most sustained engagement with *Lessons* of all extant replies. Although its main purpose was to examine Thomas Paine's mantra of the 'Rights of Man', it accomplished this through arguing that *Lessons* was the intellectual substance behind Paine's 'Billingsgate' productions, and to which 'those dogmas which Paine declaims with zeal and fury' might be attributed.<sup>66</sup> Unlike Goold's *Vindication*, however, the pamphlet was not written from a Burkite position. From the outset the 'Defender' of the constitution portrayed Burke as a 'furious zealot with more imagination than judgment' whose 'pernicious rhapsody' has 'given occasion to these designing apostles of sedition'.<sup>67</sup> Imbued with this anti-Burke posture the author freely acknowledged that the author of *Lessons* sketched 'with fine satire the characters who mislead him [the Prince of Wales]', and in particular, 'Burke with fine irony'.<sup>68</sup>

The Defender argued that *Lessons* was the most 'formidable and mischievous' of post-revolution, pro-reform, pamphlets because it was well written, scholarly, and unlike Paine's work, adopted an indirect approach: indirect because it canvassed for political reform using an expressly historical lens, evoking the 'just inheritance of English men' of the rights present in the Saxon Constitution 'from the days of the immortal Alfred', and indirect for using the Prince of Wales as a rhetorical mouthpiece to put forth ideas, and in this way 'prepossessing his readers in his favour'.<sup>69</sup> The writer conceded that Williams' sketch of the English Constitution under Alfred had 'the probability and appearance of science and truth', but, conscious of the author's use of rhetoric, cautioned the reader that the strategy was similar to that of the poet 'Chatterton [who] wished to pass off his inventions with instant immortality by ascribing them to Rowley'.<sup>70</sup>

What is at issue for the Defender of the Constitution is the Old Statesman's peculiar interpretation of the 1688 Revolution, which *Lessons* argues, rather than representing the reinstatement of English liberty, was merely the replacement of a monarchy with an autocracy. In stark contrast to Goold's *Vindication*, and unlike review commentaries, the writer of the *Defence* concentrated his discussion on the content of the first nine lessons, and how they lead to the denial of the existence of an English Constitution. Accordingly, whilst he does not venture an opinion on the accuracy of the *Lessons*' delineation of the American Constitution, it is in his view only included to 'stimulate a spirit of discontent and sedition' in England.<sup>71</sup> Directly comparing the stance of Burke with the stance of the author of *Lessons*, the Defender seemed initially more sympathetic to *Lessons*:

Burke is an advocate of divine indefeasible right; and for a Government by compromises of various aristocracies, with arbitrary power in the throne and popery in the church. The writer of the *Lessons* is for Government by organised Constitution; on the idea of which he has certainly bestowed great ingenuity, learning and pains; and his delineations are scientific, and his proofs expressed in brilliant and elegant language.<sup>72</sup>

However, in echoes of periodical criticism of *Lessons*, and consistent with material referred to by Williams' himself in the Appendix to *Lessons*, the Defender accused Williams of transgressing *genre* boundaries for having 'artfully mingled declamation and satire, [in a way] intended to sap the foundation of the present Government'.<sup>73</sup> At this point the Defender introduces the much more malignant Paine: the American *crimp*, spy, saboteur, 'Secretary to the American Congress during the Rebellion', with no 'known place of residence', and a man who 'fights shy', leaving others to suffer the consequences of his outpourings.<sup>74</sup> The writer contrasts him with the principled, reasonable, patriotic, but nonetheless deluded notions of the author of *Lessons*: in short, Paine 'borrows the idea of his master and lowers it by his language

to the level of the vulgar. Thus are the dissertations of Don Quixote rendered pernicious to the peasantry by the commentaries of Sancho Panza'.<sup>75</sup>

The Defender, accepting that real government abuses occur and that certain defects in the overarching constitutional framework exist, such as the 'laws against secretaries which disgrace the Statute books', argued that they can be remedied by and within the existing constitution.<sup>76</sup> He defends the system of honours and preferment, a favourite target of *Lessons*, arguing that rotten boroughs are abuse in appearance only and that the system actually guarantees independence.<sup>77</sup> Whilst the Defender concurs with *Lessons'* argument that clamouring for political advancement and selfish personal interest occurs frequently, especially amongst the Opposition, he perceives general 'indifference and unconcern' by the public.<sup>78</sup> However, amplifying Seward's belief in the existence of a 'great chain of subordination' the Defender holds to a natural order of superiors and inferiors, reinforced by notions of paternalism in which different strata of society have different rights: the rights of the peasantry: to 'comfortable subsistence, and the means of rearing and supporting a hardy and laborious family'; of the artisanal class to 'proper and just returns for their ingenuity'; of proprietors of lands 'the right to the fruits of those lands', but only after maintenance of the peasant and artisan classes.<sup>79</sup> The rights of all humanity from Government are 'protection, security, and equal justice'.<sup>80</sup> Democracy, according to the Defender, is an 'extravagance reserved for modern times', for 'philosophers and their attendant adventurers [who] want to smooth their way to rank and power'.<sup>81</sup>

The Defender summarises his moderate position by arguing on the one hand, that Burke's *Reflections* are 'as illiberal, unjust, and impertinent as the invective of Mr. Paine against the Revolution in England', and that he extols the merits of the English Constitution too highly,

imbuing it with 'supernatural' qualities.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, Horne Tooke and members of the Revolution Society hold that politics have strayed too far from the constitutional settlement of 1688/9; whilst the author of *Lessons* and his apostle Paine deny its very existence.<sup>83</sup> The Defender argues that the constitution is not broken enough to require the 'tinkering' of a Price, nor is it a 'phantom' as 'asserted by the self-appointed instructor of the prince'.<sup>84</sup>

The *Defence* is important because it ideologically separates Williams and Paine from the radical reformers associated directly with the Revolution Society, in a way that other replies did not, and because it distinguishes between *Lessons* and *The Rights of Man* in terms of intellectual substance, style, and originality.

(iii) *Observations on the Government and Constitution of Great Britain*  
Jerom Alley (1792)<sup>85</sup>

The final response to *Lessons* falls between Goold's *Vindication* and the anonymous *Defence*. Like Goold's work, it sought to vindicate both the Government and Constitution of Great Britain from the 'aspersions of some late writers', especially Priestley and Paine.<sup>86</sup> Stylistically however, it is quite different, and more classical in its composition. *Lessons* is referred to only once directly in a footnote but Alley transparently alludes to Williams on a number of occasions, as one of the 'instructors to the public' and 'Old Statesmen'.<sup>87</sup> As with the Defender, the author of *Lessons* is linked to, but more favourably estimated than Paine, and Alley recognises Paine's claim that England has no constitution, which can only be legitimately derived from consent of the whole body was borrowed, unacknowledged from *Lessons*. The doctrines advanced by Williams and Paine are, in his view, especially dangerous and vapid because they have 'not merely attributed depravity to the English Government [which would

thus be a matter of interpretation over degree and remedy], but maintained the nullity of the English Constitution'.<sup>88</sup>

The title page of the pamphlet informed the reader that Alley is also the author of *Historical Essays on the Lives of William the Third, and Henry the Fourth*, thus foregrounding his scholarly and learned credentials, and preparing the reader for his frequent use of historical examples. The historical perspective is similar to *Lessons'* appeal to the mythic Saxon Constitution discussed in Chapter One, and ultimately attempts to evoke the authority of the past. The Civil War regicide is therefore seen as representative of the consequences of despotism, whilst the Commonwealth period is indicative of the dangers of 'levelling' principles. Though neither eulogistic in Burke's cause, nor condemnatory, it adopts a pragmatic stance towards the Revolution controversy and the health of the English Constitution, arguing that 'from metaphysical premises they [reformers] deduce metaphysical conclusions, which, even when legitimate, have no reference to the real state of the world'.<sup>89</sup> Alley further claimed that his pamphlet 'replied to doubtful theories, by established facts'.<sup>90</sup> In a sense his starting point is where the Defender leaves off, arguing *après* Montesquieu, that the British constitutional system supports mixed government, is sustained by a separation of the powers of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary, and allows a perfect equipoise to be maintained. Some examples given of the checks on monarchical despotism are the monarch's reliance on the House of Commons to raise taxes, and the monarch's right to pardon but not to recriminate. Alley argues, contrary to *Lessons*, that freedom and representation are not synonymous terms, 'twin-born', in Alley's phraseology, and that it is possible to have 'freedom without representation and despotism with democracy'.<sup>91</sup>

Like Burke, Alley also considers that the Constitution was not born in a state of perfection, but through the slow, incremental accumulation of centuries of experience and wisdom, the Constitution has grown stout and robust.<sup>92</sup> This notion is expressed by the metaphor of a venerable tree:

...nothing shall tempt us to hazard experiments on the parent Stock  
which has so long spread out its shelter to the liberty of nations,  
and sustained the political wants of a great people with such  
inestimable fruits.<sup>93</sup>

#### (IV) Reaction in America

Reaction to *Lessons* in America was largely governed by the printing in New York of a cheap sixth (first American) edition by Francis Childs and John Swaine in July 1791. This was a reprint of the Dublin (fifth) edition of *Lessons*, though re-typeset, with much tighter line spacing, almost halving the total number of pages, from the one hundred and seventy-five pages of the Dublin edition to just eighty five pages, bringing it firmly back within the pamphlet bracket.<sup>94</sup> These changes allowed the publisher to lower the price, from the 4s 6d for the equivalent English edition, to just 2s 3d, making it much more widely accessible.<sup>95</sup> In a footnote to his article on Thomas Paine's readership, Seth Cotlar argues that Childs and Swaine were market savvy with their inclusion of an 'Advertisement' at the front of *Lessons* which linked it very firmly with Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, thereby tapping the enormous demand for Paine's works, in the same way Symonds and Ridgway linked *Lessons* with Burke's *Reflections*.<sup>96</sup> Cotlar also suggests that without such an explicit connection, works like *Lessons* may have struggled to circulate at all in America:

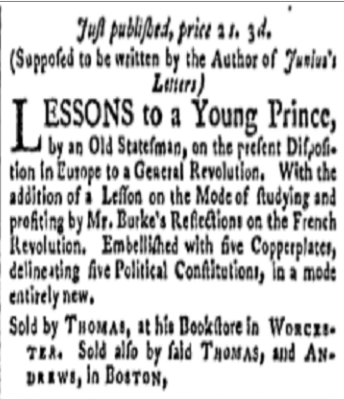
This is just one example [the American edition of *Lessons*], of how American printers capitalized on Paine's fame in order to sell the works of other European Radicals. The result was that American democrats quickly became familiar with a wide range of European

texts which, had they not been linked to Paine's political project, would never have found a market of American Readers.<sup>97</sup>

Whilst Childs' and Swaine's 'Advertisement' served this function, in some ways their choice of words was unfortunate. Their argument that 'the quiet and unmolested, and unmenaced



publication and circulation of the book [*Lessons*], Mr. Paine's Rights of Man, &c. through Great Britain', proved 'that a Revolution has already been effectuated on the minds of the



people there', was horribly exposed with the arrest of *Lessons'* publishers Symonds and Ridgway in 1791 and 1793 respectively, ostensibly

Fig. 3.1 (left) Advertisement for *Lessons* by Berry and Rogers, *Daily Advertiser*, vol. VII (8/9/1791). Fig. 3.2 (right) Advertisement for *Lessons* by Thomas, *Massachusetts Spy*, vol. XX (8/25/1791), From *Early American Newspapers*, Digital Edition, published by Readex (Readex.com) a division of NewsBank inc. and the American Antiquarian Society (americanantiquarian.org).

for publishing and selling the second part of Paine's controversial

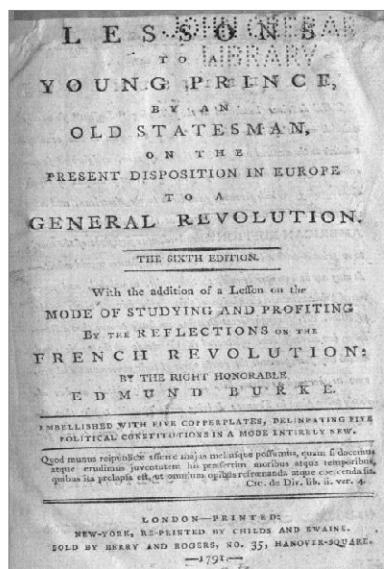


Fig. 3.3 Title page of the American edition of *Lessons* (1791). Image courtesy of Special Collections, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, Kansas University Libraries

work.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Two, contrary to Childs' and Swaine's assertion, Williams did consider that *Lessons* had been 'menaced'.<sup>99</sup> Yet, Cotlar is right to focus on the publisher's acute awareness of the political and cultural conditions prevailing in their own country. Another example of this sensitivity is the omission from the American edition of van Assen's engraving of the Prince of Wales that appeared opposite the title page from the second English edition onwards. Naturally, in light of recent political events, American readers would have viewed such an engraving



detrimentally, whereas in the English edition it was a rhetorical asset.<sup>100</sup>

Finally, this concept may, or may not, explain a hitherto un-noted anomaly in the advertising and sale of the American edition of *Lessons*. An early, perhaps the first, advertisement in the *Daily Advertiser* (New York) on 9 August 1791 for the booksellers Berry and Rogers, included in the title an extra, unlisted, 'lesson on the American Revolution'.<sup>101</sup> No known copy of *Lessons* with this extra lesson is extant, and it is not included in Dybikowski's bibliography of the works of David Williams. However, an advertisement for *Lessons* in September by the Massachusetts bookstore owner Thomas did not include this extra lesson and is identical to the title page of all known copies. There are two possible explanations: perhaps it was part of a marketing ploy by the booksellers Berry and Rogers who were merely referring to the existing Lesson VII 'The American Revolution', bringing it to the attention of readers. However, several things go against this explanation; firstly *Lessons* were being sold for 3s, whereas Thomas was selling copies for 2s 3d, thereby implying that Berry and Rogers' version contained something extra. Secondly, Berry and Rogers' advertisement was designed as the actual title page of *Lessons*, suggesting that it had been copied. It is therefore more plausible that the extra lesson did exist, but whether it was written by Williams, or by another hand and appended to the lessons is impossible to determine. Figures 3.1. – 3.3 show the Berry advertisement (Fig. 3.1), the Thomas advertisement (Fig. 3.2), and the actual title page of the American edition of *Lessons* (Fig. 3.3).

Only one pre-review of the American edition has been located which appeared in the *Daily Advertiser* (New York) on the 8 July 1791. This review contained several interesting features. Firstly, its American focus, with two thirds of the two-column review dedicated to discussing the author's 'interesting chapter on the American Revolution, in which, however, are several

positions, which may appear *strange* to some Americans'.<sup>102</sup> The central notion that freedom was not won by Americans, but gained through mistakes and English ineptitude, appeared to the reviewer as original. The second argument that appeared new was Williams' argument that the circumstances under which the federal system was constructed (conflict with English) led to the retention of a certain character, interest and will, whereas in France, much more homogeneity existed.

By-and-large, American readers only read the American edition of *Lessons*, which meant that they usually read them later than their English counterparts. However, this was not universally the case, for according to his literary diary, the president of Yale College, Ezra Stiles, read *Lessons* on the 31 May 1791, though disappointingly offered no comment.<sup>103</sup> Elihu Palmer's relatively late citations of extracts from *Lessons* in his short-lived periodical *Moral Prospect*, or *View of the Moral World*, further highlights the problematic nature of trying to categorise reading practices and reader-response to *Lessons*, something which the publishers also had to contend with.<sup>104</sup> Whereas Childs and Swaine had, in their advertisement, emphasized the political aspects of the work and its connection with Paine, the deist Palmer seized upon the few parts of *Lessons* that related to religion, which apparently reflected 'Sublime Sentiment'.<sup>105</sup> It is unsurprising that such a passage as 'I mean by the word God, the God of all nature and of all worlds – of whose existence no mind can doubt without being involved in inextricable absurdity, but in search of whom overstretched ideas burst, and thought rolls back on darkness', would have resonated with the editor of the *Temple of Reason*.<sup>106</sup> Supporting the idea that *Lessons* had extensive reach and influence in America, Zephariah Swift cited them several times to support his pamphlet *The Security of the Citizens of Connecticut Considered* (1792), picking up on Williams' Rousseau-like insistence that 'the only skill or knowledge of any value in politics, is the art of governing all by all', and later the idea that 'by uniting himself

to the whole, [a person] shall nevertheless be obedient only to himself, and applying them very specifically to the particular political situation in Connecticut.<sup>107</sup>

An advertisement for the sixth edition of *Lessons* dated 4 March 1791, boasted that they 'circulated throughout Europe'.<sup>108</sup> In fact, they were going further afield, advertised in Bombay, along with Mackintosh's *Vindicae Gallicae* (1790) where they out-priced them by 1 rupee.

(V) *Lessons* in a reading context: Anna Seward

Periodical reviews and pamphlet replies to *Lessons* provide a good range of evidence showing how career pressmen and literary critics viewed it, but shed little light on how *Lessons* was actually received by the wider public. Important questions remain about the demographic reach of *Lessons*, and what kind of response it solicited. The scanty nature of the evidence is unhelpful, but where it occurs, some interesting aspects are revealed. A particularly noteworthy response to *Lessons* appeared in a letter written by the poet and biographer Anna Seward to Mrs Knowles on 19 May 1791 in which she not only highly praised *Lessons*, but also provided her readers with a brief history of her thinking and reading about the events in France, revealing that her views were not entrenched and fixed, but responded dynamically to her reading.<sup>109</sup> Her moderate political stance is important because it was seldom represented in published pamphlets, which by their very nature were polemical. The letter, although brief, provides insight into the thinking of a well-educated, provincially based woman, connected with literary and political circles, but not an active participant, and her ability to connect and evaluate the ideas expressed by leading authors. If typical, it shows that *Lessons* was not read in isolation, and was judged against other works. It also shows how, despite Williams' original

intention, by 1791, *Lessons* was firmly embedded within what might be collectively called 'Revolution literature'.

Halfway through letter XXIV, Seward reminded her correspondent, 'You inquire after my opinion on the momentous event, which draws to itself the anxious eyes of all Europe', and proceeds to dedicate the rest of her letter to a reply.<sup>110</sup> She begins by outlining a moderately conservative stance, 'I soon began to apprehend that its [the Revolution's] deliverers were pushing the levelling principle into extremes more fatal to civilized liberty than an arbitrary monarchy, with all its train of evils'.<sup>111</sup> Despite having first read Helena Williams' *Letters from France* (1790), whose emotive writing 'rekindled' her 'enthusiasm for the cause', it failed to convince her that France possessed the political leadership, 'sufficiently exempted from selfish ambition' which, in very Burkean language, was needed to safely guide the 'new and hazardous experiment; in which all the links were broken in that great chain of subordination which binds to each other the various orders of existence'.<sup>112</sup> Apparently, next on her reading list was Burke's *Reflections* (1790) which she responded to critically, especially the 'Quixotism about the Queen of France', and his interpretation of the 1688 Revolution which, he argued, affirmed the 'King of England's right to reign despite the will of his subjects', yet, despite these criticisms, to Seward the system he outlined seemed safer: 'I saw also a system of order and polity, elucidated and rendered interesting by every appeal to the affections of the human bosom; and it appeared more consonant to human nature, as it is, and less injurious to the public safety than the levelling extreme into which France has rushed.'<sup>113</sup>

The first reply to Burke that Seward read was Sir Brooke Boothby's *A Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1791), which she found, pleasingly refuted his 'asserted legality of our King's claim to the crown, independent of the suffrages of his people', but which still left

her apprehensive about France's political future.<sup>114</sup> Admitting that Joseph Priestley's 'disingenuous manoeuvrings about Christianity' irritated her so much that she did not read his response to Burke, it was Paine that she turned to next.<sup>115</sup> Her assessment of Paine's *Rights of Man* was, in common with many other opinions, that although vulgar in style, it did successfully prove that Burke had misrepresented the facts of occurrences in France. Nevertheless, she was also critical, perceiving that whilst Paine produced a 'perfect code of laws', on which 'a perfect form of government might be established' this relied on human nature being 'disinterested, wise and virtuous', whereas she believed in the fallibility of man.<sup>116</sup> Lastly, she turned, full of praise, to *Lessons*. Unlike Paine's *Rights of Man*, the author of *Lessons* matched Burke's elegant style, but unlike Burke, was 'a miracle, a political writer without party prejudice'.<sup>117</sup> Seward's praise of *Lessons* is consistent with her opinions expressed towards the other works, but it is also clear that she identified herself with the author, whose views concurred with her own because she was at a similar distance from the events: well informed, politically aware, distrustful of human nature, but optimistic that France might 'prove a pattern, hereafter, of public virtue and public happiness, to the whole world'.<sup>118</sup>

Other contemporary references and responses to *Lessons* were more eclectic and fleeting, usually used in the affirmative, to support a particular point with a direct, sometimes lengthy, quotation. For example, in *Justice to Judge* (1793), a tract sharply critical of the suspension of *habeas corpus* in 1792 by the Pitt Administration and judicial partiality in general, the alleged author Hughes, cited in a footnote a passage from *Lessons* that described judicial negligence towards defendants.<sup>119</sup> *Lessons* was therefore invoked as a source of authority. Elsewhere, a number of writers supported *Lessons'* emphasis on recovering or restoring ancient Saxon rights to the people and the principle (however mythic) of graduated election, which proved safer ground than proposing new representative forms. In *Observations on the Life and*

*Character of Alfred the Great* (1794), the probable author Daniel Isaac Eaton, not only correctly identified Williams as the author of *Lessons*, but provided him with a glowing eulogy, describing him as a man 'whom posterity will rank among the most illustrious philosophers that have adorned human nature', whilst referring to his diagram of the British Constitution under the reign of Alfred favourably, and suggesting that it conveyed 'a clearer idea of the subject than any verbal description'.<sup>120</sup>

#### (VI) Williams' Response to criticism (Appendix)

Williams was not oblivious to criticism of *Lessons*, and from the second edition, as already noted, showed signs of wanting to confront it. By the sixth edition, he was ready to do so fully, in the form of a twenty page-long Appendix.<sup>121</sup> Although denying that he had time to take notice of the periodical reviews, analysis of Williams' brief but rangy defence of *Lessons* indicates that it was primarily the reviews that he was responding to, and was simply unaware of any of the direct rebuttals discussed in Section III.<sup>122</sup> Williams identified five main complaints against *Lessons*: firstly, that he had indulged in satire which was 'general and indiscriminate'; secondly, that he had 'seriously hurt the friends of liberty by blending religion with despotism'; thirdly, that he was too singular, and would be better off associating with like-minded people; fourthly, that his attack on Burke was 'contemptuous'; and finally, that the satire was the 'offspring of disappointment'.<sup>123</sup> Noticeably absent was any recognition of criticism surrounding his interpretation of the constitutional footing of Government in England, or his controversial interpretation of the 1688 Revolution which separated him from other reformers such as Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley, both of which were the focus of three of the four main pamphlet-form replies to *Lessons*.

Williams defended himself against the first and fourth charges by arguing that public figures are legitimate targets of criticism because it is to them that the public looks for guidance in times of political turmoil, not the much celebrated constitution; 'Englishmen may boast of the Constitution in their writing and in conversation: but when difficulties arise, or disasters are apprehended, where do they direct their hopes? To men—never to the Constitution'.<sup>124</sup> However, this justification seems to run counter to the general argument of *Lessons*. If personality and individual characteristics determine the direction of political events, making the satirization of the key players valid – as Williams claimed – then his emphasis on the role of the Constitution in moderating political action is undermined.

The second claim, that *Lessons* attacked the Dissenting community – long perceived as friends of political reform – is not rebutted on the basis of a false premise. Williams simply amplifies his critique of the Dissenters, challenging the view that they represented genuine advocates of parliamentary reform. Even their support of the American cause during the Revolutionary war evaporated in Williams' view. In other words, they supported the cause, only when it was a cause, but not in the aftermath. In a retaliatory gesture, Williams asserted that his mixing of politics with religion was nothing more than Churchmen, across doctrinal lines, were doing everyday, citing in particular the sermons given by the Established Church on the 30 January, and at the Dissenting Church on the 5 November as political.

In response to the suggestion that he would be better off joining a party or sect, or like-minded individuals, Williams revealed that he had tried communicating with potential collaborators, but 'every attempt of the kind' was 'unsuccessful' because they were all 'actuated principally by their own interests'.<sup>125</sup> This defence reiterated that he had not been refused a position or preferment, and that *Lessons* was not the vengeful result. What is particularly striking about

the Appendix is that it responded to criticism in the same register as the ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ and did not revert back to the earlier lessons; making no attempt to respond to criticism of his Alfredian system of graduated representation.

It has been argued that reader-response to *Lessons* was incredibly diverse and involved the subtle interplay of a plethora of factors; which edition they read, when and where readers read, what their interests were, how they responded to the different genres, whether they were ‘in the know’, or cold readers, and so forth. On balance, *Lessons* was considered one of the more able replies to Burke, with the majority of pamphlet replies recognising Paine’s intellectual debt to it, and the writer’s greater ability. Only a few commentators touched upon his system of political representation. Reaction to the satirical nature of the work was mixed, generally either condemnatory, or enraptured, just as the diagrams were either clever or contrived. Countries that had already been touched by revolution adopted *Lessons*’ maxims with open arms. Friends both supported and lamented. Few outright ‘defenders’ emerged because, as one able reviewer astutely noted, it alienated all potential candidates in the Dissenting community with its deism, in the reform movement with its denial of the 1688 moment, and the Opposition, which it criticised as self-interested. In this light, Noorthouck’s comment that it ‘seems pretty clear that no sect or party will espouse him’ appears perceptive.<sup>126</sup> The trope of independence came at the price of obscurity, creating a paradox: *Lessons* sold well and widely, was seen as compositionally strong and learned, even by its critics, but attracted little contemporary comment, and has been regarded until recently by modern historiography as one of the more obscure Revolution-inspired texts.

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<sup>1</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, p.161-162.

<sup>2</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jacques Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* It does not seem to dawn on Williams that lack of support for *Lessons* was a natural consequence of its anti-Party, anti-partisan stance. This may well be why it has less visibility in contemporary sources than other, comparable works.



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<sup>5</sup> The *Critical Review* listed the first edition of *Lessons* at 2s. 6d. Ridgway advertised subsequent editions at 4s. 6d.

<sup>6</sup> [Anon], *A Defence of the Constitution of England, Against the Libels that Have Lately been Published on it; Particularly in Paine's Rights of Man*, Dublin: P. Byrne, J. Moore, J. Jones and others (1791), p.3.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, New York, 8 July (1791), vol. VII, issue 1992, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> The three poems were, 'Parody of Sternold and Hopkins: A Psalm on the Defeat of the Coalition' pp. 165-167; Ode in honour of the Unknown Author' by Thomas Morris, pp. 171-175; 'Impromptu Addressed to the Unknown Author of *Lessons* to a Young Prince', by Philo-Mentor [pseu.], p. 176.

<sup>9</sup> Rev. Jerom Alley, 1760-1827, an Irish poet and pamphleteer, Rector of Drumcar, Armagh. Educated at Trinity College Dublin [from *A Compendium of Irish Biography* 1878]. In addition to *Observations on the Government and Constitution of Great Britain*, Dublin: William Sleater (1792), he also wrote, *A Review of the Political Principles of the Modern Whigs: In a second Letter Addressed to the Right Honorable Lord Sheffield*, London: J. Debrett (1792). Interestingly, almost a decade later, H.D. Symonds published his *A Vindication of the Principles and Statements in the Strictures of the Right Hon. Lord Sheffield, on the Necessity of Inviolably Maintaining the Navigation and Colonial System of Great Britain*, London: H.D. Symonds (1806). The attribution is based on stylistic similarities with his other writings and his retailing the pamphlet, [Anon] *Observations on the Life and Character of Alfred the Great*, London: sold by D.I. Eaton (1794).

<sup>10</sup> See, Sylvia Bowerbank, 'Seward, Anna (1742-1809)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25135>, accessed 1 Aug 2010]. Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795 was an American Congregationalist minister, educator, and president of Yale College (1785-1795). Stiles corresponded with Franklin and Jefferson regarding their electricity experiments.

<sup>11</sup> *Leçons à un jeune prince, sur la disposition actuelle de L'Europe à une révolution générale. Cet ouvrage, adressé par son auteur au Prince de Galles, est traduit de l'anglais*, Londres [Paris]: chez Simmons et chez Baudouin (1790). A note by the translator indicates that he was aware of the new edition of *Lessons* with the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke' Reflections', but felt that the content of the existing *Lessons* should be considered without awaiting the translation of the extra lesson.

<sup>12</sup> Review of first edition, *Critical Review*, 70 (1790), p. 455; *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.63-67; *General Magazine and Impartial Review*, 4 (1790), p.507-10; *Scots Magazine*, 53 (1791), p.22-23; of second edition, *Critical Review*, I (1791), p. 230-31; *New Annual Register or General Repository of History, Politics and Literature for the Year 1790* (1791), p. 237; of third edition, *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.346; *Annual Review*, 9 (1791), p. 452-54.

<sup>13</sup> For analysis of the advertising of *Lessons*, see Chapter Five, Section III.

<sup>14</sup> John Noorthouck, (1732-1816), worked in the publishing industry from the age of seventeen when he was apprenticed to his father, Harman Noorthouck, a bookseller. Upon release from his apprenticeship 5 December 1769, he moved to London. Noorthouck made contact with Ralph Griffiths, publisher of the *Monthly Review*, and worked for the review until his resignation on the 3 October 1793. See Myers, R. 'Noorthouck, John (1732-1816)' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004, online edition, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20246>]. Ralph Griffiths, (c1720-1803), journal editor and bookseller. Griffiths started work in the book trade with the bookseller Jacob Robinson. In the late 1740s he began his own publishing venture and became notorious for publishing John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1749) for which he was prosecuted for obscenity. In June 1749 he published the first number of the *Monthly Review* that, by 1785, attained sales of 6,000-7,000. See, Antonia Forster's 'Griffiths, Ralph (1720?-1803)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, September 2004, online edition, May 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11621>]. Dybikowski credits the review to Ralph Griffiths.

<sup>15</sup> *Critical Review*, 70 (1790), p. 455

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- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>17</sup> *General Magazine and Impartial Review*, 4 (1790), p.507.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 508.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* The relevant page references in *Lessons*, 1, are Charles Fox pp. 6-7; Edmund Burke p. 14; Sheridan p. 9.
- <sup>20</sup> *General Magazine and Impartial Review*, 4 (1790), p. 510.
- <sup>21</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.63.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> *Scots Magazine*, 53 (January, 1791), p.22-23
- <sup>28</sup> This latter name strongly indicates that the reviewer suspected that *Lessons* was by Williams and is a transparent reference to his activities at the National Convention in France which he observed in 1792.
- <sup>29</sup> It is plausible that the adoption of the pseudonym 'Old Statesman' from the second edition onwards was a direct response to this attempt at ridicule. See Chapter Two for other explanations.
- <sup>30</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.65.
- <sup>31</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 47.
- <sup>32</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.65.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *General Magazine and Impartial Review*, 4 (1790), p.507.
- <sup>36</sup> *The World*, 13 Oct. (1790) issue: 1179.
- <sup>37</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, pp. 116-117
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* This claim is relevant to questions about *Lessons*' intended audience. The translation of chapter epigraphs was designed to alter *Lessons*' audience, making them more accessible to the masses.
- <sup>39</sup> Nicholas Boneville, *De l'esprit des religions*, Paris (1792).
- <sup>40</sup> Thomas Morris, 'Ode to the Unknown Author of Lessons, *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 172.
- <sup>41</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6: David Williams to Jacques Pierre Brissot, 27 September 1790.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>43</sup> *The European Magazine, and London Review; containing the literature, history, politics, arts, manners and amusements of the age, by the Philosophical Society of London*, London: J. Fielding, John Debrett, and John Sewell, vol. II, (1782), p. 136.
- <sup>44</sup> James Mackintosh, *Vindiciae Gallicae. Defence of the French Revolution and its English admirers, against the accusations of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke; including some strictures on the late productions of Mons. de Calonne*, London: for G.G.J. and J. Robinson (1791). Thomas Christie, *Letters on the Revolution of France, and on the new constitution established by the National Assembly: Occasioned BY The Publications Of The Right Hon. Edmund Burke, M. P. And Alexander de Calonne, Late Minister Of State*, Dublin: printed for P. Wogan, P Byrne, W. Sleater and others, (1791).
- <sup>45</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.346.
- <sup>46</sup> *Monthly Review*, 5 (1791), p. 76-81. The reviewer admonishes Goold, 'such anonymous abuse of persons, who, though but individuals, are characters publically known and respected, is not very modest or decent' (p. 77). Only the second edition of Goold's *Vindication* has been traced which bears his name: it is supposed that the first edition appeared anonymously.
- <sup>47</sup> Thomas Morris, 'Ode to the Unknown Author', in *Lessons*, 7, p. 162.
- <sup>48</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 7, p. 161.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Goold, *A Vindication of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France, in Answer to All his Opponents*, Dublin: P. Wogan, P. Byrne, W. McKenzie and others (1791). [Anon], *A Defence of the Constitution of England, Against the Libels that have Lately been Published on it; Particularly in Paine's Pamphlet on the Rights of Man*, London: R. Baldwin (1791); [and the Irish edition] Dublin: P. Byrne, J. Moore, J. Jones and others (1791). Jerom Alley, *Observations on the Government and Constitution of Great Britain, including a Vindication of Both from the Aspersions of some Late Writers, Particularly Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, and Mr. Paine; in a Letter to The Right Honourable Lord Sheffield*, Dublin: William Sleater (1792).

<sup>50</sup> Goold, *Vindication*, title page; Alley, *Observations*, title page; [Anon], *Defence of the Constitution of England*, title page.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3; p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* p. 12; p. 26.

<sup>54</sup> Relatively little is known about Thomas Goold. The *Dictionary of National Biography* states that he was born of an Irish protestant family and was admitted to the Irish bar in 1791; *Vindication*, p. 2; p. 98.

<sup>55</sup> The works Goold critiqued in order: Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790); [David Williams] *Lessons to a Young Prince* (1790), p. 9; Major John Scott, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, in reply to his "Reflections on the Revolution in France & ec"* (1790); [Anon], *Short observations on the Right Hon. Edmund Burke's Reflections* (1790); Richard Price, *Preface and Additions to the Discourse on the Love of our Country* (1790) & Appendix; Joseph Towers, *Thoughts on the Commencement of a New Parliament* (1790); Capel Loft, *Remarks on the Letter of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1790); George Rous, *Thoughts on Government* (1790); [Anon] *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1790); *Letters to the right Honourable Edmund Burke* (1791).

<sup>56</sup> *Monthly Review* (May, 1791) pp. 76-81, probably written by Thomas Holcroft. Goold was twenty-five years old at the time of the publication of his *Vindication*, and had just been admitted to the Irish Bar, p. 81.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p. 77.

<sup>58</sup> Goold, *Vindication*, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 7-8.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> *Monthly Review* (May, 1791) p. 78.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> An allusion to the vernacular used by workers at the fish market at Billingsgate, London. Also an allusion to the 'fish women' of Paris, a phrase used by Burke to describe the vulgar female mob. *Defence*, p. 6.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 2-4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3-4. Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) was an English poet who passed off much of his work as being written by a medieval monk, Rowley. The literary controversy surrounding this fraud reached its peak only after the poet's death. Williams is accused of using the same strategy – as coming out of the mouth of the Prince of Wales, but the comparison appears mistaken. Chatterton passed his works off as genuinely by Rowley, in *Lessons*, it is clear to the reader that the speech pp. – pp. is not actually made by the Prince of Wales.

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- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* p. 6.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.
- <sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8; p. 37. See Chapter Four, Section III, for an account of the imprisonment of *Lessons'* publisher and distributor Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway.
- <sup>75</sup> [Anon], *Defence*, p. 11.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34-35
- <sup>79</sup> *The Letters of Anna Seward Written between the Years 1784 and 1807*, Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co (1811) vol. 3, p. 75.
- <sup>80</sup> [Anon], *Defence*, p. 54.
- <sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* p. 56.
- <sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58-59.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* p. 159.
- <sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* p. 48; p. 60.
- <sup>85</sup> Jerom Alley (1760-1826). For a brief description of Alley see, Alfred Webb, *A Compendium of Irish Biography*, Dublin: M.H. Gill & Son (1878), pp. referred to as a minor poet and author.
- <sup>86</sup> Jerom Alley, *Observations on the Government and Constitution of Great Britain, including a Vindication of Both from the Aspersions of some Late Writers, Particularly Dr. Price, Dr. Priestley, and Mr. Paine; in a Letter to The Right Honourable Lord Sheffield*, Dublin: William Sleater (1792).
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 'Hear, then, a man, of greater ability and of the same party. "The King", insists the author *Lessons* to a Young Prince, p. 13 Dub. Ed. – "may give an individual the leas in his counsels, but (should he be unfit for that appointment) not all the throne would support him in the situation' (p. 37); p. 39; p. 74.
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* 40.
- <sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* p. vi.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29; p. 24.
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* p. 66.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>94</sup> Dybikowski errs in stating that it is based on the second edition, *On Burning Ground*, p. 316. See, *Daily Advertiser*, New York, 7 July (1791), vol. VII, issue 1992, p. 2, 'Now in the press in this city, and in a few days will be republished from the Dublin edition, a work lately written in England, and entitled "Lessons to a young Prince, by an Old Statesman, on the present disposition in Europe, to a general revolution"'.
- <sup>95</sup> Advertisement for the American edition of *Lessons*, *The Worcester Magazine*, Worcester: Massachusetts, vol. xx, issue 963, p. 4. I have not been able to find the list price for the Dublin edition, but given the quantity of pages, it is likely to have been similar to the English edition.
- <sup>96</sup> However, this was not a hollow claim by the publisher, for such a connection was already widely made by readers; see Section IV of this chapter. Seth Cotlar, 'Thomas Paine's Readers and the Making of Democratic Citizens in the Age of Revolutions, pp. 135-136 note 13, in *Thomas Paine: Common Sense for the Modern Era*, (eds.) Ronald F. King & Elsie Begler, San Diego: San Diego State University Press (2007).
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* p. 136.
- <sup>98</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, 'Advertisement'.
- <sup>99</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.

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- <sup>100</sup> For a brief discussion of the rhetorical function of the van Assen engraving see Chapter Two, Section IV.
- <sup>101</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, New York, 9 August (1791), vol. VII, issue 2019, p. 4; 17 August, vol. VII, issue 2026, p.3; 20 August, vol. VII, issue 2029, p.3.
- <sup>102</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, New York, 8 July (1791), vol. VII, issue 1992, p. 2.
- <sup>103</sup> Ezra Stiles, *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, New York: Charles Scribner's (1901), Franklin Bowditch Dexter (ed.), 3, p. 419. Given that the American edition was still at the press in July 1791, Stiles must have read one of the English or Irish editions.
- <sup>104</sup> Elihu Palmer (1764-1806) was an American author and deist. In 1803, he founded the newspaper *Prospect, or View of the Moral World*, New York: Elihu Palmer (1803-6), which continued until his death in 1806. In his first message to the public he transparently scorned Thomas Paine since, 'a rancorous spirit of malignity can never serve the cause of truth or virtue – the friend of both should investigate without fear, discuss with tranquillity, and decide with firmness' (p. 2). He also ended the message by indicating the international ambition for the paper, inviting 'communications from scientific or thoughtful men in any part of the world... which will find insertion in this paper' (p.2).
- <sup>105</sup> *Prospect, or View of the Moral World*, p. 54.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>107</sup> Zephaniah Swift (1759-1823) a lawyer, judge, and politician based in Windham, Connecticut. See, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, available at <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/> [accessed 21 August 2010]. [Zephaniah Swift], *The Security of the Rights of Citizens in the State of Connecticut Considered*, Hartford: Hudson & Goodwin (1792) pp. 96-102.
- <sup>108</sup> *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, London (4 March, 1791), issue. 5570.
- <sup>109</sup> *Letters of Anna Seward*, p. 77-78.
- <sup>110</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75.
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>113</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 75-76.
- <sup>114</sup> Sir Brooke Boothby, *A Letter to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, London: J. Debrett (1791); *The Letters of Anna Seward*, p. 76.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* p. 76-77.
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* p. 77.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>118</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78.
- <sup>119</sup> [Hughes], *Justice to a Judge. An answer to The Judge's Appeal to Justice, in proof of the Blessings enjoyed by British Subjects. A letter to Sir Wm. H. Ashurst, Knight; in reply to his Charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex, in the court of King's Bench, Nov. 19, 1792*, London: J. Ridgway (1793). *Ibid.* 'Counsels are often in collusion with the attornies, called pettifoggers; favour their evidences, and abuse those who are unprepared, with a degree of profligate impudence and unprincipled villainy, which the judges should correct with more determined severity, if they wish to preserve reverence for the laws, and respect for those who administer them' (p.14).
- <sup>120</sup> [Daniel Isaac Eaton?], *Observations on the Life and Character of Alfred the Great*, London: D. I. Eaton [distr.] (1791), p. 11. Eaton's account is partisan. He was in Newgate Prison for three months prior to his trial and acquittal for seditious libel on the 7 December 1793, where he met *Lessons'* publishers Symonds and Ridgway who were serving sentences for the same offence.
- <sup>121</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, pp. 161-182.
- <sup>122</sup> The writer of *The Civil and the Ecclesiastical Systems of England Defended and Fortified*, London: Longman (1791) believed attention to press criticism was something of an obsession with the author of *Lessons* describing his 'anxiety about what the news-paper critics have said of his performance' (p. 7).

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162; p. 163; p. 181.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* p. 177.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.* p. 168.

<sup>126</sup> *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p.63.

~ Chapter Four ~

*Lessons'* Publishers: Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway

The Whig-Dog!

*Monthly Review*, 4, 1791

(I) Introduction

It has been argued in the first three chapters that *Lessons* was read in particular ways as a result of the political context in which it was published, but this was also due to its anonymity and the substantial addition of the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*', which significantly changed its register. However, in this, and the following chapter, it is argued that the charge that *Lessons* was intellectually (if not financially) Whig-sponsored, satirically immoderate, and politically out of touch with reality, cannot be understood without considering the roles played by its publisher and principal distributor in its composition, revision, and sale, and the presence of a well-informed readership familiar and conversant with the publishers' other political productions, activities, and reputations.

Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway, the main publisher and distributor of *Lessons*, played key roles in its composition, editing, sale and reception. The following two chapters suggest that they were instrumental figures in fostering and maintaining the rich political and literary *milieu* in which Williams participated, and from which he drew many of his political sources, casting doubt on the notion that polite and plebeian dissent were mutually exclusive.<sup>1</sup> Both men made and oversaw direct, meaningful, but unacknowledged textual interpolations in the third edition, but more importantly, affected the way *Lessons* was received through a carefully orchestrated advertising campaign.<sup>2</sup> As Chapter Two has shown, the importance of this role was heightened by, in Freudian terms, the transference of its readers' desire for unity

of text and author to unity of text and publisher, in the absence of an author.<sup>3</sup> However, due to the paucity of historical research on either Symonds or Ridgway, in order for this argument to be sustained, their careers and political beliefs need to be considered before direct analysis of their relationship with David Williams is possible. Providing this background is the purpose of the foregoing chapter.

## (II) From Whig and Opposition Pamphleteers to Radical Agitators

### (i) Overview

In his review of the sixth enlarged edition of *Lessons* which appeared in the *Monthly Review*, the classicist and historian John Gillies followed a persistent tendency in contemporary criticism to read (and to dismiss) *Lessons* as ‘another Whig tract’, despite its appeal for the non-partisan consideration of alternative political constitutions and trenchant disavowal of any Party interest.<sup>4</sup> In his dismissal of the author of *Lessons*, Gillies even enlisted the support of the not-so-long departed Samuel Johnson who after cursorily perusing the work, tossed it to one side exclaiming ‘The Whig-dog!’<sup>5</sup>

Frustratingly few personal details are known about either Henry Delahay Symonds or James Ridgway, but what is clear is that they were both highly motivated publisher-booksellers, deeply politicised, and it is argued, *politicising* men.<sup>6</sup> Like so many of their contemporaries in the book trade, they were utterly committed to the cause of press freedom and the dissemination of political tracts encouraging political reform. Nevertheless, their political affiliations and orientation appear to have changed considerably between the years 1788 and 1792, a critical period which spans the entirety of their publishing association with David Williams’ *Lessons*. As it is argued, for the two publisher-booksellers these years represented a period of rapid ideological transition from mainstream ‘Opposition’ publishers and booksellers



to full-blown political radicals, developing literary associations with such ‘trailblazers’ as Thomas Paine, William Godwin, and John Cartwright, in addition to maintaining longstanding ties with some of the most popular satirists of their age: Peter Pindar (John Wolcot), Anthony Pasquin (John Williams), and David Williams heading the field.<sup>7</sup> Both publisher-booksellers were also active in the wider reform movement, taking prominent roles in numerous societies including the London Corresponding Society (L.C.S.) and the Society for Freedom of the Press, and associating with the Society for Constitutional Information and Friends of the People. Finally, both shared a lengthy period at His Majesty’s pleasure in Newgate prison convicted of seditious libel. Rejecting early but murky associations with the Whig faction led by Charles Fox, which were at their strongest during the ‘Regency Crisis’ (1789-1790), in favour of greater independence in the choice of works and authors they published, by the final quarter of 1790 they belonged to the top tier of self-confident publisher-booksellers printing and disseminating vast quantities of pamphlets critical of both Administration and Opposition in the wake of the French Revolution controversy, along with other soon-to-be Newgate *alumni*, Daniel Isaac Eaton and William Holt.

## (ii) Historiography and bibliography

Although neither publisher-bookseller appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, evidence obtained from a sweep of popular press productions in the late eighteenth century indicates that Ridgway had the higher profile of the two men as an active publisher-bookseller.<sup>8</sup> This was probably due to his fashionable shops, first at 1 York Street, St James’s Square, and later at 170 Piccadilly – two locations not traditionally associated with the book trade, and suggestive of both independence of mind and growing commercial confidence.<sup>9</sup> Symonds on the other hand, concentrated more exclusively on publishing from his premises in the old book-quarter of Paternoster Row and received little contemporary

comment: his death in 1816, unlike Ridgway's, was not mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.<sup>10</sup> However, in common with many publishers of the period, the pair colluded on numerous publications covering a wide range of genres: political, historical, geographical, religious, fictional, whilst not balking at the scandalous and obscene. Although broad, their output was nevertheless characterised by its provocative nature, from the salacious to the seditious, covering all the major scandals and contentious political issues of the day: typically defending John Wilkes, Warren Hastings and John Horne Tooke.

Despite being in a *de facto* partnership throughout the 1790s, Symonds and Ridgway seldom shared an imprint, a decision born of prudence: if one publisher was imprisoned for libel or seditious libel, then the other would superintend their partner's business, and *vice versa*. This has important implications for *Lessons*, for although their title page indicated that they were exclusively published by Symonds, early advertising for the first edition made it clear that Ridgway actually held what amounted to a silent share in them, and that they were also supported by a number of other London booksellers prepared to run the risk of distribution.<sup>11</sup> Tellingly, it was predominantly Ridgway who was responsible for advertising *Lessons*. Symonds' and Ridgway's relationship was further strengthened, their public profile greatly enhanced, and their democratic convictions radicalised when in 1791 Symonds was incarcerated in Newgate prison for seditious libel, the offence: publishing the second half of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, and still further when they were both up before Lord Kenyon at the King's Bench on the 8 May 1793 for the same offence of seditious libel, this time for publishing the anonymous satire *The Jockey Club*, Paine's *Address to the Addressers*, as well as his *The Rights of Man Part II*. Together with their mutual memberships of many of the leading radical reform clubs and societies related to press freedom and constitutional reform, with which Ridgway was particularly involved, to all intents and purposes they formed a

symbiotic partnership of like minds.<sup>12</sup> Their business relationship throughout the 1790s and early years of the nineteenth century remained strong – strong enough for Symonds to bequeath his stock and copyrights to Ridgway upon his death in 1816, although it was Messrs. Sherwood, Neely, and Jones who ‘succeeded’ him.<sup>13</sup>

In 1854, some sixteen years after Ridgway’s death in 1838, an anonymous correspondent ‘R.R.’ wrote in *Notes and Queries*, ‘The Ridgways have been the great Whig pamphlet publishers for more than two-thirds of a century.’<sup>14</sup> The superlative was not hyperbole, but the correspondent’s classification of James Ridgway as ‘Whig’, whilst perhaps more accurate for the early and later phases of his career, does not accurately reflect his political position in the 1790s when *Lessons* was published. The importance of James Ridgway in the world of political pamphlet publishing was, however, beyond dispute and fully recognised by his contemporaries: ‘scarcely any books are read but Political Pamphlets, the fashionable Booksellers are Stockdale, Jordan, Debrett and Ridgway’, one contemporary noted in 1793, whilst even a hostile source conceded that in the 1790s his imprint was worth between 1,000 – 1,500/ to a work in the sales that it would generate.<sup>15</sup> Symonds and Ridgway were publishers of some of the most important and bestselling political works in the final decade of the eighteenth century. In his choice of publisher and distributor David Williams had evidently chosen well, but, it is argued, this was not accidental. In the late 1780s, Symonds and Ridgway were associated with the Opposition Whigs of Charles Fox, a connection supported by the *Monthly Review*’s review of *Lessons* which alluded to it being in the same vein as many other Opposition tracts published by them, an observation which raises an important question: did readers come to *Lessons* pre-conditioned to read them in a particular way as this would suggest? Adding support to this hypothesis, Lucyle Werkmeister’s work on eighteenth-century newspapers implies that during the late 1780s Ridgway was in the pay of Charles Brinsley

Sheridan and the Prince of Wales' faction, yet hard evidence is scant due to the very nature of the transactions.<sup>16</sup> Thus, making the case for Symonds' and Ridgway's influence on Williams, his composition of *Lessons*, and how it was received is difficult because of the lack of primary documentation – there is no smoking gun – but it is argued that a case can be supported through sheer weight of accumulated evidence. The *Notes and Queries* correspondent 'R.R', ended his letter to the editor by ruefully noting that, 'a reference to their [Ridgways'] accounts', which would 'throw light on many literary obscurities', might still be had.<sup>17</sup> Ralph A. Manogue repeated this appeal for archival material one hundred and thirty years later in the March 1984 issue of *Notes & Queries*. Apparently, Manogue's appeal yielded some success, culminating in two important articles, 'The Plight of James Ridgway, London Bookseller and Publisher, and the Newgate Radicals, 1792-1797' which appeared in the *Wordsworth Circle* (1996) journal, and 'James Ridgway and America', published in the same year in *Early*



Fig. 4.1 John Stockdale, the Bookselling Blacksmith. Image courtesy of Special Collections, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, Kansas University Libraries

*American Literature*. The former article became the basis for Iain McCalman's description of Ridgway, and to a lesser extent Symonds in 'Newgate in Revolution: Radical Enthusiasm and Romantic Counter Culture' which was later reproduced and extended in the anthology, *Newgate in Revolution* (2005). From the titles alone it is easy to see the perspective from which these two booksellers have been viewed by modern historiography, and a brief review of biographical snippets on Ridgway finds him variously described as 'radical', 'Whig-radical', and 'Jacobin'. In fact, so important was James Ridgway in the world of political

pamphlet publishing, that the writer of the obituary for James Leech Ridgway, his son, which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1863 could not help passing comment on his father,

who had been 'so earnest and zealous a champion in his advocacy of Liberal opinions, in the days "when George the Third" was King, that he suffered more than one political prosecution, and was on one occasion imprisoned in Newgate on a charge of seditious publication'.<sup>18</sup> Although this later, Victorian political vocabulary reflected the etymology of the term Whig to denote a political entity (though they are by no means synonymous), the general interpretation of the writer was much the same as those three quarters of a century before. By the early 1790s Ridgway on many occasions referred to his own opinions as 'liberal', but always in the lower case, deliberating divesting them of their association with party. The writer for the *Gentleman's Magazine* was therefore simply wrong to equate the political associations of the son with those of his father when he stated, 'he [James Leech Ridgway] was for the greater part of his life connected as a publisher with the leading members of the Liberal Party, as his father had been before him'.<sup>19</sup>

Generalisation of this kind is insufficient and misleading. In order to build a more accurate and nuanced picture of Symonds and Ridgway without a *cache* of their papers, recourse to their other publications and careful analysis of the many scattered references and anecdotes in newspapers and review publications is required. The first contemporary reference of which particular notice should be taken is an article about Ridgway's rival publisher John Stockdale in the single issue *Intrepid Magazine* (1784), entitled 'History and Character of Stockdale, Bookseller', written by the Rev. William Hamilton and published by J. Ridgway. The article represents an inflammatory attack on the reputation and character of John Stockdale. While there is every reason to approach this source with caution as it is a highly positioned piece in a feud between the related-by-marriage booksellers, many of the biographical details provide us with fascinating insights into the origins of the rivalries between key London booksellers and publishers of this period, and more importantly, their political connections.<sup>20</sup> In a caricature

attached to the article, Stockdale is seen in a blacksmith's shop, apron-clad, hammering a thickly bound tome – an allusion to his origins as a blacksmith's son [Fig. 4.1].<sup>21</sup> A very ass-like horse is tethered to the left of the scene adding further ridicule. The caption reads, 'John Stockdale: The Bookselling Blacksmith, one of the King's New Friends', a transparent allusion to his patronage by the Crown.

The article alleges that Stockdale started in the trade working under the well-known publisher and writer John Almon, as manager-porter, and later as manager of the distribution of his newspapers. Ridgway himself, brother-in-law of Stockdale, was sent for from Cheshire, to work under Stockdale's supervision. The article further alleges that the barely literate Stockdale was so uneducated that he relied heavily upon his brother-in-law to complete even the most rudimentary of tasks: 'during the period that his brother-in-law, Ridgway, lived with him, there was not a single form or receipt he was not first obliged to make out for him, and when Stockdale came to copy it he was obliged to tell him the letters into the bargain'.<sup>22</sup> Later, a scheme was hatched, whereby Stockdale defrauded Almon by keeping money given to him to pay distributors of the papers, delivering them himself, amassing enough money from the enterprise to set up a small press on his own, taking many of Almon's customers with him.<sup>23</sup>

Ironically, in light of John Almon's well-known political connections with the Opposition, and Ridgway's later association with the Prince of Wales, in his article Hamilton berated Stockdale for his reliance on patronage by the Crown, a charge which finds support in the entry for Stockdale in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>24</sup> Contemporary accounts portrayed Stockdale as a most unsavoury character, not above inducing prosecutions of rival booksellers such as in the case of O'Brien's fictional claim of piracy by popular publisher Debrett which, maliciously intended, had no substance at all and was designed to put him out of business

when it was he, rather than Stockdale, who succeeded to John Almon's press. This attack was accompanied by a press campaign, working on the principle that, 'by lessening the number of a competitor's friends [he would] increase his own'.<sup>25</sup> Crucially, the Hamilton article allows us to date the beginning of Ridgway's own publishing venture. Given that Stockdale's infamy towards Almon is described as being about 'ten years back' in 1784, and later when Hamilton describes Ridgway's relationship with Stockdale, he is described as a 'younger beginner', Ridgway likely started his own activities in the early 1780s, by then familiar with the Whig-leaning clientele of Almon's shop which was, according to Alexander Stephens, frequented regularly by David Williams.<sup>26</sup> This timeline also agrees with 'R.R.'s' statement, writing in 1854, that the Ridgways had been operating for two-thirds of a century, and Ian Maxted's research which indicates that Ridgway was publisher of the *London Courant* from 1782 onwards, operating out of 116 The Strand.<sup>27</sup>

There is no such source for Symonds who we know more about in death than life from his Will dated 18 December 1815.<sup>28</sup> He is however, listed by Maxted as trading in Stationer's Alley in 1784, shortly after earning his freedom by redemption from an apprenticeship on 2 December 1783, also the year of his marriage to Jane Glover.<sup>29</sup> There is no evidence of where Symonds or Ridgway obtained the capital to start their businesses, or when the two first met, but clearly they shared the experience of nursing fledgling publishing and bookselling businesses in an already highly competitive and saturated market. It is a testament to the skill of Ridgway in particular that by the time he published *Royal Recollections* for David Williams in 1788, along with Stockdale, Jordan, and Debrett, he was the most well-known publisher of pamphlets in England.

In the years preceding Ridgway's imprisonment for seditious libel he was viewed by contemporaries as a tacit supporter of the Foxite Whigs, and many of the writers associated with his publishing house wrote openly for the Whig press, although not exclusively, and many were not averse to satirical attacks which traversed the political divide. By and large, Williams' writings that were published by Ridgway in the late 1780s were much more measured in their criticism of Fox than of Pitt and fit into this pattern well.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, as Deborah Rogers has shown in *Bookseller as Rogue: John Almon and the Politics of Eighteenth-Century Book Publishing*, John Almon, who co-published four of Williams' works, the final one being the *Nature and Extent of Intellectual Liberty* in 1779, was by 1786 firmly in support of the Opposition, and receiving subsidies from them.<sup>31</sup> Outlawed and on the run in France for the period 1786-1792 for libels on Pitt, any further publishing association with Williams was made all but impossible. This represents a plausible explanation of why Williams' next works went under Ridgway's imprint, indicating a relatively smooth transition from Almon to Symonds and Ridgway as Williams' main publishers, with no seismic ideological upheaval. David Williams and Ridgway had undoubtedly first met in Almon's shop sometime in the late 1770s.

### (III) Legal Difficulties, Disputes, and Radicalisation: the changing political faces of Symonds and Ridgway (1789-1797)

In the murky world of late eighteenth-century book publishing and selling, it was commonplace for printers, publishers and booksellers to face writs for alleged libels, prosecutions for treasonous or blasphemous material, and all sorts of legal tricks and claims by rival publishers. The trails left by litigation surrounding such legal disputes and nefarious activities are important because they give the deliberately opaque connections between alleged political patrons, publisher-booksellers, and authors some visibility. In the case of Ridgway, four legal disputes within a decade, the third directly involving Symonds and the fourth David Williams, and one literary dispute, are diagnostic of their changing political



allegiances and increasing radicalisation. Ridgway's activities on behalf of the London Corresponding Society brought him to the particular notice of the authorities, and he was subject to the observations of the Government spy Lynam, who reported regularly about his movements and actions.

(i) Ridgway's suppression of a pamphlet: *Withers vs. Ridgway* (1789)

Lucyle Werkmeister has argued that throughout the late 1780s and early 1790s, Ridgway had a close relationship with the Prince of Wales and his supporting Foxite entourage. However, this was always troubled, as examination of his publication of *A Speech to the Whig Club* in 1792 demonstrates. Dissatisfaction with Fox's lack of political boldness in advocating parliamentary reform culminated in his separation from the Whig Party in favour of independent radical reform movements which were characterised by a distrust of Party. However, this transition did not occur instantaneously or permanently. Available evidence suggests that even as late as 1789, just a year before the publication of *Lessons*, Ridgway was still on a cordial footing with Carlton House and Fox's Whigs, and was in all probability receiving some form of pecuniary advantage from the association. Indeed, even after Ridgway's output turned more decidedly anti-Fox, they were socially on cordial terms.<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, analysis of the titles bearing his imprint as publisher or exclusive bookseller indicates the existence of a decisive watershed, with a massive preponderance of works between 1788 and 1789 representing criticism directed towards the King, the Government, or its ministers whilst at the same time often extolling the activities of the Opposition. Two titles, which have been identified as fitting into this broad trend, are indeed by Williams, *Royal Recollections* (1788) and *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions* (1789). The former was an extremely popular satire on George III, and the latter represented an attack on the Administration and careerism of William Pitt.<sup>33</sup> Both richly satirical works only lightly

referred to the Opposition, while lambasting and lampooning all the key ministers of the day, including Edward Thurlow, Charles Jenkinson, Henry Dundas, and William Pitt.<sup>34</sup> The Prince of Wales and Charles Fox were mentioned only briefly, and only criticised mildly for their lack of political gumption. The second, less successful satire published a year later was entirely dedicated to attacking Pitt and his ministry. This is not proof that Williams was knowingly involved in what amounts to a concerted campaign against the Crown and Administration by Ridgway and Symonds, but it is interesting that the tenor of his work fits well with the general pattern of their publications at this time, and illustrates how this pro-Opposition publishing *corpus* began to alter significantly from 1790 onwards. Increasingly, the focus of the works issued under their imprints were more evenly distributed between parties, as well as exhibiting a trend towards issue-related publication, and the promotion of the concept of liberty, which transcended, or rather was increasingly defined as independence from Party.

In 1789 however, whilst still on cordial terms with Carlton House, Ridgway was careless – careless enough not to fully screen a publication to which he lent his name.<sup>35</sup> Philip Withers had approached him with a request to lend his imprint to a pamphlet entitled *History of the Royal Malady to which is added Strictures on the Declaration of Horne Tooke* (1789). Generally sympathetic to the treatment of John Horne Tooke (a fellow member of the Revolution Society), it is difficult to see why Ridgway acceded to the request, but apparently he did so, without reading the pamphlet. Unbeknown to him, however, it contained a claim that the Prince of Wales and Mrs Fitzherbert were married, or soon to be so, at a time of acute political sensitivity when the question of the regency was being hotly debated. Ridgway's friendly connection with the Prince of Wales made this oversight particularly embarrassing. Soon after taking supply of the pamphlet, realising his error, Ridgway contacted Withers and informed him that he could not put his name to the piece for fear of upsetting those for whom he had the

'Highest Friendship and Respect'.<sup>36</sup> At a meeting attended by Ridgway and Withers, emissaries of the Prince of Wales threatened the author with prosecution and immediate imprisonment if the pamphlet was sold anywhere, unless certain revisions were made. The whole incident was recounted in a follow-up pamphlet by Withers, *Alfred or a Narrative of the Daring and Illegal Measures to Suppress a Pamphlet Intituled Strictures on the Declaration of Horne Tooke* (1789), in which he acknowledged that Ridgway had had no part in the composition of the former pamphlet, and indeed knew nothing of its contents. Such a declaration meant that Ridgway was safe from a prosecution induced by Carlton House, but to ensure this he never returned the pamphlets to Withers, who in turn, accused Ridgway of acting as a *de facto* censor. Such action may be seen as firm evidence of the extent of Ridgway's political allegiances, and is powerfully suggestive of strong ties of patronage that he did not wish to sever. Withers issued a writ against Ridgway for refusing to release to him the pamphlets for which he had paid to be printed. The author not only interpreted Ridgway's actions as sensibility towards his patrons but went further, suggesting that he had been bribed, 'it is absurd to imagine that a bookseller would venture to detain property, in violation of law, equity, and the practice of the trade, were he not well paid and well supported'.<sup>37</sup> Withers was later even more explicit, 'I dare not suppose that Mr. Ridgway is in habits of the sincerest friendship with the Prince of Wales, Mrs Fitzherbert; and as I have mentioned, with Mr Fox, Burke, Sheridan and Lord North, I suppose they are his friendships, and to their protection I sincerely recommend him'.<sup>38</sup> Thus, in what became an ironic twist, Ridgway was accused of being a censor of the freedom of the press, when there was, and would be, hardly a more outspoken advocate of the right of free expression in print. Ridgway's political colours were, it seemed, pinned firmly to the mast in support of what *Lessons* would describe only a year later as a 'needy and profligate cabal'.<sup>39</sup> Presumably, with the regency crisis at its height, everything was to be gained by a close alliance with the Prince, but with Fox's subsequent mismanaging of the projected regency and

the temporary remission of George III's suspected *porphyria*, such a patron no longer held the same attraction, particularly since everybody's eyes were by 1792, firmly on events in France.<sup>40</sup>

- (ii) Dissatisfaction with Charles Fox: *A Speech at the Whig Club; or a Great Statesman's own Exposition* (1792)

Whether or not Ridgway did receive funds from supporters of Charles Fox in the late 1780s, as Almon had before him, is difficult to determine, but in any event the arrangement was short-lived. It is also difficult to say categorically whether this reflects the confidence of a maturing businessman better able to support himself through direct sales, or whether it was a genuine movement in his political beliefs. In *The Business of Books* (2007) James Raven recognizes the difficulties involved in making such a determination between raw commercialism and benign altruism in the book trade, pointing out that 'Regency and Victorian chroniclers of the book found it necessary to defend their heroes from charges of vulgar commercialism by illustrating their personal virtues, not their business operations'.<sup>41</sup> As he also notes, booksellers were in the ideal position to 'create a mythology – and a demonology – of their trade'.<sup>42</sup> Profit motive was clearly a major impetus behind both Symonds' and Ridgway's publishing activities, a fact reflected by their determined and sophisticated marketing of *Lessons*.<sup>43</sup> A contemporary satirical pamphlet entitled *A Speech at the Whig Club; or a Great Statesman's own Exposition* (1792), picked up on this very point, neatly encapsulating Ridgway's two publishing criteria: was it anti-government and pro-liberal, and would it sell?<sup>44</sup> This hints at awareness by contemporaries of his shift in emphasis towards non-Party-based democratic reform. The pamphlet alleged that Ridgway had re-published and adulterated, without consent, the contents of a speech by Opposition leader Charles Fox given to the Whig Club on the 4 December 1792, which had first appeared in *The Sun*, advertising it

for 'two-pence'. This sum induced the anonymous author of the satire to pen the following ironic lines:

What! All this speech for Two-pence? 'Tis portentous,  
That such a Patriot Bookseller should mar things!  
And is the greatest Statesman Heaven has sent us,  
Thus hawk'd about the streets for twice four farthings?

The ironic attack on Ridgway's mercenary enterprise which, it should be noted, also mocked Fox's credentials, continued:

Ridgway! Me thinks, for such a Sage Oration,  
Extremely base and paltry such a Price is...  
Poets are poor---yet gladly would I pay,  
Twice two-pence and twice that for such a treat:  
A dinner may be bought another day;  
But such a speech as this we seldom meet.<sup>45</sup>

The reference to 'Patriot bookseller' had a double meaning: it was both an allusion to the newspaper, *The Patriot*, of which he was co-proprietor, and a generic term of abuse used predominantly by country Tories to describe advocates of parliamentary reform. The satirist added in two footnotes that the retail price of the speech was two-pence, yet the wholesale price was three half-pence, and more importantly, that 'There appears to be something particularly apposite and becoming about the selection of **this person**, as the publisher of this speech [my emphasis]'.<sup>46</sup> However, Ridgway's re-published version of the speech was not verbatim as he claimed, for he had inserted in the text a 'toast' allegedly given by Fox on that very occasion. This 'toast' significantly altered the way the foregoing contents of his speech was likely to be read, making the line that Fox was apparently pursuing accord much better with his own principles. Naturally, this unauthorised addition was seized upon by readers, and an exchange of published letters ensued, appearing in various newspapers, reprinted, and

attached to the satire. It was hoped that bringing them before the public would 'shed further light on the issue'.<sup>47</sup>

Firstly, on the 10 December 1792, a letter to the *Morning Chronicle* stated that Mr. Fox's speech, 'concerning the declaration of his principles, respecting the present crisis in public affairs, and a reform in the representation of the people, spoken at the Whig Club, Dec 4 1792', as published in Mr Ridgway's pamphlet, had 'grossly misrepresented' what passed at that meeting.<sup>48</sup> Far from, 'declaring his principles on a reform of parliament', he had uttered no opinion on the matter, though the letter added ambiguously 'his sentiments remain the same as ever'.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the writer claimed that whereas Ridgway's pamphlet stated that Mr Fox had given a toast to 'Equal liberty to all mankind', this was not true, and that no such toast had been given whilst either he, or the Duke of Portland, or any members of the Society were in the room.<sup>50</sup> Since the publication of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man*, less than a year earlier, such a call had taken on new significance. The toast had in fact been, 'The cause of liberty all over the world' which was a standard toast used by Fox on many occasions in public.<sup>51</sup> Clearly Ridgway was massaging the text in a way which was more agreeable to his own 'liberal sentiments', demonstrating the level of his frustration with Fox's political impotence and equivocation. There had been no objection to the *Morning Chronicle's* reporting of the event by the Duke of Portland – but the objections were solely to the additions in the pamphlet, which were 'equally insidious in their tendency both to his Grace and Mr. Fox'.<sup>52</sup> Less than two years earlier in the Withers Case as it has been shown, Ridgway had been prepared to illegally seize papers on behalf of Carlton House, yet his political convictions were now bold enough to defend his ground by failing to recall the pamphlet, and writing a curt response to his critics. This response was published the next day in the *Morning Post*, and read in entirety:

Sir,

When the character of an individual who aspires to the honest fame of Independence and Impartiality, has been unjustly attacked, it is a Duty which he owes to himself and society, to vindicate it from aspersion. As the editor of the *Morning Chronicle* has thought proper to state my Publication of Mr Fox's Speech as Insidious in its tendency to Mr. Fox, I beg the public to compare Mr. F.'s speech, as published by me, and also as published in the *Morning Chronicle* of the 4<sup>th</sup> December, and they will find they literally and exactly agree. It will then remain on them to determine on whom the charge of insidiousness may be properly fixed—on one who was eager to announce the **real and liberal sentiments of Mr. Fox**, or him who now seeks, by a subsequent denial of the authenticity of the speech, and his own statement of it, in order to deprive Mr Fox of that comportion of Public Favour to which his manly conduct has deservedly entitled him [my emphasis].<sup>53</sup>

The reply to this letter was also swift and laced with irony. Ridgway had indeed 'copied' the main text from the *Morning Chronicle*, an act charitably conceded to have been of benefit to the nation in putting the speech into a format more durable than a newspaper.<sup>54</sup> However, what was objectionable was that he had added a 'toast' that Mr. Fox did not give. The conclusion drawn by the *Morning Chronicle* was that this was deliberately intended to compromise Mr. Fox, and to subject the 'Gentleman and his friend in insidious calumny'.<sup>55</sup> The correspondence ended with the Editor of the *Morning Chronicle* confessing that he had hoped that Ridgway, aware that he had been 'imposed upon', might correct the pamphlet.<sup>56</sup> But, the formerly 'dutiful' Ridgway no longer held any qualms about offending such a Whig luminary as the Duke of Portland, and was prepared to suffer the consequences.

In a list of the political affiliations of newspapers drawn up by a contemporary, John Williams, both the *Morning Post* and the *Morning Chronicle* were described as being in favour of Mr. Fox, yet, as the above evidence shows, this did not mean that they were in total accord and it is the fractious nature of the Opposition which many contemporaries argued kept Pitt in power. It

shows that precise and personal loyalties were much more local than is often imagined, with infighting amongst rival factions.<sup>57</sup> This case also casts significant doubt regarding Ridgway's uncritical allegiance to Fox and Carlton House by 1792, and suggests that viewing publishers in a polarised and static way is perhaps unhelpful when drawing conclusions about ideological connections between patrons, publishers, and authors that were dynamic and fast-changing. In this example, Ridgway clearly attempted to place Mr. Fox in a position whereby the public appellation for his 'toast' meant that he could not easily retract it. Mr Ridgway was thus not above political manoeuvring, and is shown to be an astute political operator. He was not alone in showing frustration at Fox's unwillingness to commit to principles of parliamentary reform which many within his own party urged him to do. Despite this, there remains the lingering suspicion that Ridgway was deliberately used by the Fox camp to test the political temperature to various ideas through his pamphlets, without the attendant risks of directly avowing them. Such a strategy was risk neutral: having assessed the response of the public and members of parliament to the ideas, they could be either avowed, or strenuously denied. Thus, whilst Ridgway's publications were staunchly anti-administration or anti-government, to denote them unproblematically as 'Whig party' productions or 'Opposition tracts' (a label applied to *Lessons*) pure and simple, is to misunderstand the political fractures within the Whig movement itself, as well as the transformation of Ridgway's own politics; and from a party-political standpoint *Lessons* must be considered chronologically as a publication at the heart of this transition.

(iii) Prosecution for seditious libel: *The King vs. Symonds and Ridgway*  
(1791-1793)

Although nothing ultimately came of the *Speech at the Whig Club* incident, it signalled the start of a series of high profile events involving both Ridgway and to a lesser degree, Symonds. Apparently, they no longer felt such a close affinity with Carlton House, and scarcely four years



after Ridgway's confrontation with Withers, both were languishing in Newgate Prison for a series of political libels, not dissimilar to the kind that Ridgway had avoided through his political connections and 'illegal measures' in the Withers case. He was sentenced on the 8 May 1793, alongside his associate and friend Symonds, who was already serving two years imprisonment for selling 'Part Two' of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*. Both pleaded guilty by default to three counts of seditious libel. Entering a plea that was essentially no contest, Ridgway was noted as having pleaded mitigation for a lighter sentence. The Attorney General accepted that 'he had made every retribution in his power', especially by pleading guilty to the charges, thereby preventing a public trial, which was potentially a vehicle for disseminating the mischievous doctrines contained in the works.<sup>58</sup> The Attorney General further accepted that he had a wife and three children to support, that another publisher had already published *The Rights of Man*, and that he was not the author of any of the works for which he was being prosecuted. In a further effort to secure leniency, Ridgway's counsel offered to give up the name of the author of *The Jockey Club* in what would have amounted to a gross breach of radical solidarity.<sup>59</sup> However, although accepting the mitigation, the Attorney General found it 'incumbent upon him to bring offenders to justice' and the corresponding judgement was severe.<sup>60</sup> Ridgway was convicted of three counts of seditious libel for publication of *The Jockey Club*, a rather crude satire on the chief political personages of the day, notably including a chapter on the Prince of Wales; Paine's *A Letter Addressed to the Addressers*, and finally the second part of his *The Rights of Man*.<sup>61</sup> His sentence was two years imprisonment for the first libel, a 100*l* fine and further year in prison for the second libel, and the same sentence for the third offence, totalling four years. In addition he was bound over on a surety of 500*l*, for five years' good behaviour. Symonds, already serving a sentence of imprisonment for selling the *Rights of Man*, was given another term of imprisonment of one year and fined 400*l* for *A Letter Addressed to the Addressers*, and a further fine and imprisonment of 100*l* and one year

respectively for his part in the publication of the *Jockey Club*. Finding themselves incarcerated in Newgate, Symonds and Ridgway were not, however, alone, for their prosecution formed part of a concerted campaign against booksellers and authors in the period following the French Revolution, designed to reign in the popular press and anti-government, democratic, 'Jacobin sentiment'.

Two years after Withers' charge that Ridgway was a 'press censor' acting for the Opposition, both he and his partner Symonds became martyrs for the cause of press freedom. This martyrdom was long-lived.<sup>62</sup> Almost seventy years after his imprisonment, the *Gentleman's Magazine* indicated that Ridgway had been a victim of Pitt's 'Terror'.<sup>63</sup> In *Justice to a Judge* (1793), Ted Hughes used Symonds' and Ridgway's detention, apparently without bail, prior to trial, as an example of the illegal judicial suspension of the writ of *habeas corpus*, 'in defiance of the boasted liberality and justice of the maxim, which says, that our laws presume every man be innocent, till his guilt be made manifest'.<sup>64</sup> Later, to reinforce his point, Hughes proceeded to cite, appositely, a lengthy passage from 'Lessons to a [Young] Prince' on the injustices inherent within the English legal system. The extract, mentioned in Chapter Three, appeared from the second edition onwards and was one of the few contemporary citations of *Lessons* to focus on Williams', and *Lessons* in particular, portrayal of the judicial system. Nevertheless, it is fitting that it was Williams in particular who was quoted on matters of judicial integrity, in defence of its own publishers' right to equality of judgment:

Counsel are often in collusion with attornies, called pettifoggers; favour their prepared evidences, and abuse those who are unprepared, with a degree of profligate impudence and unprincipled villainy, which the judges should correct with more determined severity; if they wish to preserve reverence for the laws, and respect for those who administer them.<sup>65</sup>

The case of the booksellers' imprisonment was of sufficient importance for the talented young engraver Richard Newton, at the behest of his patron William Holland, to produce an etching some two feet in length, entitled, 'The Promenade in the State Side of Newgate' featuring twenty-two portraits of what have been collectively dubbed the 'Newgate Radicals'.<sup>66</sup> The figures with an asterisk beside their names were merely 'visitors', but those actually interned included, number fourteen Henry Delahay Symonds, and number fifteen James Ridgway. The etching is dated 5 October 1793. John Barell's article, 'Radicalism, Visual Culture, and Spectacle in the 1790s', describes the political effect of this image, which helped both to codify a 'group' of self-conscious radicals, and to shape public opinion. As he argues, in many ways, a new form of Jacobin-style Radicalism required a new means of expression. These very large prints were only produced in small numbers, and were well beyond the means of most members of the public towards whom they were nevertheless aimed.<sup>67</sup> Booksellers were in fact responsible for the emergence of a new form of political expression, that of displaying large political prints in their shop windows. In the period of Pitt's incarceration of book-trade luminaries, interneers responded by using new and other well-tested means of expression. The effect of these prints was so great that they were regarded by the Administration as a 'serious social and political problem – a great and public nuisance'.<sup>68</sup> Barell sums up the visual rhetoric of the etching and an earlier version:

These are not in the heroic vein appropriate to men facing transportation or a trial on a capital charge: as Ian McCalman has argued, these images depict 'British Jacobin civility, symbolically representing the fine manners and morals of radical *philosophes* under the most testing and uncivilized circumstances'. *Soulagement* is a variation of Hogarth's definitive image of impolite sociability, the drunken debauch. A Midnight Modern Conversation: the point is to show that the political prisoners caught up by Pitt's 'terror' exhibit

the very opposite of the appallingly impolite behaviour of Hogarth's drunks. The Promenade derives from its own first version.<sup>69</sup>

Details of the case against Ridgway and Symonds were also widely and actively disseminated by them, much in the way that John Almon documented his own trial before Lord Mansfield in *The Trial of John Almon* (1770) following his conviction for selling a copy of *Junius's Letter to the King*. Whilst their actions did not shatter the mould of prison-dissident literature, the sheer breadth and intensity of the media they employed in what they considered a just cause, presented a considerable challenge to the suppression attempts of the ruling authorities. A brief account of their internment is mentioned in *The Proceedings in Cases of High Treason, under a Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer* (1794).<sup>70</sup> However, they also found support for their cause amongst printers and publishers with whom they had little or no previous association: for example, *The Chronologist of the Present War* (1795) published by the small-scale Paternoster Row-based printer J.W. Myers recorded their plight sympathetically.<sup>71</sup>

Both men served their full terms, the *Morning Post* and *Fashionable World* recording Ridgway's release on the 6 May 1797 with little ceremony. Symonds' release is unrecorded. Conditions in the prison were not terrible, although the existence of rampant 'Gaol Fever' which claimed the lives of several high-profile detainees was a constant threat and became a political issue with which Symonds and Ridgway – ever willing to challenge the Administration – became embroiled.<sup>72</sup> The controversy ran for several months and centred on a report by Dr. Lettsom who visited Newgate on the 7 November 1793 investigating the deaths of Lord George Gordon and Thomas Townley Macan. His affirmative report was suppressed, and the fever's existence denied by the authorities.<sup>73</sup> To Symonds and Ridgway, this represented a gross failure of Government in its duty to ensure the welfare of prisoners and their visitors. On the 16 November 1793, Ridgway and Symonds wrote to the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*

testifying to the existence of gaol fever as diagnosed by Dr. Lettsom, who had attributed the death of Lord Gordon and Macan to 'an infectious gaol fever, of the worst kind...[in the] same class with Yellow Fever, and nearly related to it'.<sup>74</sup> Several months later, in 1794, a fellow Newgate inmate, Thomas Lloyd published a pamphlet *Address to the Grand Juries of the City of London and County of Middlesex* (1794), which mentioned both Ridgway and Symonds. After describing his bad treatment in prison, Lloyd suggested that the cause of it was that he was not prepared to bribe his gaoler; he writes, '...had I been content to pay the extortionate demands of a mercenary Jailer, as others were, he never would have removed me ONLY, for signing a certificate, in common with John Frost, James Ridgway, and Henry Delahay Symonds, respecting Dr. Lettsom's declaration of the existence of the Jail distemper, raging in this place, the later end of last October, and the beginning of November'.<sup>75</sup>

It seems, however, that Symonds and Ridgway did not suffer any ill health effects from their imprisonment. They later published Dr. Lettsom's *Hints Designed to Promote Beneficence, Temperance, and Medical Science* (1797), which intriguingly and somewhat unsuitably reprinted in entirety David Williams' *An Account of the Institution of the Society for the Establishment of a Literary Fund*.

It is also clear from other testimony that, although they did not have direct supervision of the technical aspects of the publications that were printed and distributed in their name during imprisonment, Symonds and Ridgway did still maintain some degree of control of their business affairs, taking possession of manuscripts and arranging for further publications. In 1851, an article in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, described the case of Mr Southey (the politician and poet), whose friend Mr. Lovel visited Ridgway at Newgate, and recalled it particularly distinctly, despite the lapse of time, because he was 'never on any other occasion

within the walls of Newgate'.<sup>76</sup> Lovel bore the manuscript of a poem written by Southey whilst at Oxford, full of 'young ardour for liberty and equality' for which he was seeking a publisher.<sup>77</sup> Ridgway allegedly undertook to publish it, but in the end did not. Further testimony to Ridgway and Symonds' ability to continue working and publishing whilst in prison, which covered the period during which the sixth and seventh editions of *Lessons* were being edited, comes in the form of an extract in *The Political Progress* (1795), which stated that 'At London, a new edition was printed by Ridgway and Symonds, two booksellers, confined in Newgate, for publishing political writings. They sell the pamphlet and others of the same tendency, openly in prison'.<sup>78</sup> The final remark tellingly added, 'it is next to impossible for despotism to overwhelm the divine art Printing'.<sup>79</sup> It is their activities in Newgate, the connections they made, and the now personalised sense of injustice that mark a real turning point in their careers, but the other cases already discussed indicate that movement in this direction preceded their imprisonment which merely accelerated the transition. What is extraordinary about both men is that even when bringing attention to their own plight they were able to express it through radical means. When in 1794 Symonds, Winterbotham, Ridgway and Holt jointly issued a half-penny Conder token [Fig. 4.2] with a picture of Newgate Prison on the obverse and the phrase 'payable at the residence of Messrs Symonds, Winterbotham, Ridgway & Holt' on the reverse, they were not only bringing public attention to their plight, but the very act of issuing a token represented a protest against Regal Power which had long been concerned with legislating against the use of tokens which had proliferated during spasmodic periods of minted currency scarcity.<sup>80</sup>



It is however, in the end, Symonds' and Ridgway's incarceration that settles the lingering question of Williams' authorship

Fig. 4.2 Conder Token issued 1794 (image courtesy of Vern McCrea)

of *Lessons*. In a list of 'New Publications' printed by James Ridgway appended as back matter to another piece of prison literature, Henry Yorke's *These are the Times that Try Men's Souls*!, contrary to all other extant back matter which list *Lessons* anonymously, or by the second edition using the pseudonym 'Old Statesman', it is clearly stated, 'Lessons to a Young Prince by the **Rev. David Williams**, Sixth Edition enlarged' [my emphasis].<sup>81</sup> Given that extant copies of the first American and sixth English editions continued to bear the pseudonym on their title pages 'Old Statesman', this must surely have been a slip by the printer, especially since, as discussed in Chapter Two, it contravened the explicit statement at the beginning of *Lessons* that the printer and publisher were unaware of the author's identity and that a 'price' on anonymity had likely been settled. This can only be explained by the fact that at the time Symonds and Ridgway did not have direct supervision of their businesses, given that they were interned in prison, and it is surely no coincidence that the running-title of the same list stated that this was the, 'First Year of [their] Imprisonment at Newgate.'<sup>82</sup> Whilst evidence suggests that in common with many bookseller-internees of the 1790s, Ridgway and Symonds were not in circumstances of absolute deprivation, and were still able to superintend to their businesses to some degree, although indirectly, Ralph Manogue goes further and suggests that their time in Newgate was the catalyst for their further radicalisation. Always advocates of a free press and inclined to liberal opinions, it was in prison that Ridgway [and Symonds] 'connected with all the leading radical bookseller-publishers and major reform societies of the day'.<sup>83</sup> The argument advanced by McCalman that imprisonment in fact had a positive effect on their businesses is strengthened by a slew of publications produced in various partnerships with other incarcerated bookseller-publishers and writer-inmates, including Daniel Holt, William Winterbotham, John Thelwall and Horne Tooke. Ridgway at least was associated with the London Corresponding Society, the Society for Constitutional Information, Friends of the People, and Friends of the Liberty of the Press.<sup>84</sup> An unrelated article in the *Britannic*

*Magazine* stated that 'Mr Wall, during the time of his confinement, previous to his trial occupied the **apartment** which was formerly the residence of Mr. Ridgway' [my emphasis].<sup>85</sup> It appears therefore, that they were afforded the same sort of treatment given to 'gentlemen debtors', which fits with them being described as 'stateside' of Newgate. The 'outing' of Williams as author of *Lessons* was therefore an accidental consequence of the publisher's imprisonment, although it proved to be of little consequence because by this stage, Thomas Morris had already attributed authorship of *Lessons* to him. By 1798, it was widely surmised amongst the literati that Williams was the author.<sup>86</sup> Whatever the reason for the error, it had little contemporary impact (except perhaps the failure of the *History of England* commission), though a year earlier and the repercussions may have been much more unwelcome.<sup>87</sup> Nonetheless it is of considerable importance in the publishing history of the work.

Symonds' and Ridgway's imprisonment in 1791 and 1793 respectively raises questions about their moral character as publisher-booksellers, and suggests that above and beyond the profit motif, their political beliefs were largely in accord with the views of the authors they chose to publish. In the absence of detailed financial records for the period, it is difficult to draw meaningful conclusions concerning whether their businesses flourished financially during incarceration in the way that their output markedly increased as Michael Davis *et al* suggest, or whether imprisonment had a negative impact on their businesses, as both Ridgway and Symonds claimed.<sup>88</sup> In the end, this is not quite the paradox it seems. Whilst imprisonment on the one hand provided rich fertile ground for recruiting authors, for obtaining material relating to state prosecutions which was very much in demand, and fostered what McCalman has called 'a forum for political expression and cultural resistance', on the other hand, day-to-day superintendence of their businesses was impossible, and this, coupled with the expenses of the trials and maintenance in prison, resulted in the accumulation of large debts.<sup>89</sup> So much so,



that on the 3 January 1795, Symonds, Ridgway and Holt, drafted a letter intended for 'general circulation', appealing for financial assistance to alleviate their suffering, in which they detailed their crippling expenses and outlined the effect imprisonment was having on their businesses, complaining of 'daily feeling the severe and calamitous pressure of a long, distant and ruinous separation from our business, our families, and our friends at large'.<sup>90</sup> At the same time, the letter illustrated the fraternal bond forged between the three publishers, dating the letter 'our second year of imprisonment'. The letter further intimated that the publishers considered their imprisonment as a hazard of their occupation, and appealed for benevolence on the basis of no criminal intent, and that it was unfair that their families should be left destitute for whatever misdemeanours they may have performed. Most tellingly, they affirmed that they believed they were 'suffering in a public cause'.<sup>91</sup> In total, the publishers claimed that the whole experience had cost them 1,700 pounds, and after their full terms had been served, an aggregate of 3,800 pounds each, especially punishing since they had 'now in some measure suspended' their businesses.<sup>92</sup> George Dyer, who reproduced this letter in his *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence* (1795), also argued that Ridgway's was an especially acute case, intimating at the same time that the letter had been suppressed, only reaching Major Cartwright. Whilst conceding that the connection between imprisonment and radical martyrdom might in some cases 'raise the reputation and extend the profits of a bookseller', this was not the case with Ridgway, his situation 'singularly hard' and meriting 'distinct consideration'.<sup>93</sup>

Either way, their activity during imprisonment fits well with Burrow's and Barker's study of late eighteenth-century publishers in which they argue that the risks for publishers were great indeed, and that 'dedication to publishing in such circumstances often required considerable prudence, occasional courage, and ideological commitment'.<sup>94</sup> It is inconceivable that either

man was unaware of the risks that attended the selling or publication of the works for which they were convicted. Yet, Symonds' and Ridgway's convictions underpinned their advocacy of a free press, a cause which resonated and connected them firmly, but not identically, with Williams, who also advocated press reforms and the protection of intellectual liberty. The author-publisher relationship itself, though complex is almost always brokered by mutual advantage, a contract which assumes that publishers carefully selected their authors, and authors, once established, chose their publishers. Dybikowski notes that Williams' emphasis was not so much on freeing an already 'half-free' press from censorship, but in preventing its corruption by the use of government and party funds – theoretical freedom from political culture, not literal freedom from litigation and judicial harassment. He held deep-seated reservations about the effect of unrestrained freedom of speech in which there was little defence against real libel. What Williams advocated was 'truth' as a defence against the charge of libel, but also more robust mechanisms to deal with genuine cases of libel when they arose. Dybikowski summarises Williams' position: 'Williams never believed that an unencumbered intellectual liberty implied the absence of protection for those libelled. As matters stood however, defences against libel were weak'.<sup>95</sup>

(iv) Liberty of the Press: use and abuse, *Ridgway vs. Mrs Billington*

In many ways the activities of Symonds and Ridgway, mercantile and opportunistic, often insensitive and abandoned, but underpinned by broad ideological allegiances, and always fiercely defensive of their right to print and distribute works freely, encapsulated the dilemma that Williams wrestled with for most of his life: how to maintain a completely unfettered press, whilst protecting individuals from libels.<sup>96</sup> For Williams, on occasion it was hard to distinguish the tyranny of booksellers and publishers from the oppressive and despotic actions of Government. It was on this very point that Symonds' and Ridgway's opinions diverged with

those of Williams, leading to vastly different interpretations of the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688. For the publisher-booksellers, it was the 'Glorious Revolution' that ushered in a period of press freedom when the Licensing Act was allowed to lapse in 1695, and publications no longer required registration and licensing at Stationer's Hall prior to their distribution within the realm. By contrast, for Williams, this absence of licensing led to licentiousness within the book-trade, and the general mediocrity of literature. A more extreme view of the power afforded booksellers as a result of relaxation of censorship was given by one of Ridgway's own stable writers John Williams (alias Anthony Pasquin) who claimed that booksellers held the 'literati in chains', and urged them to disregard the impact their writing had on the personal reputations which many of their works attempted to destroy – all in pursuit of courting the reading public.<sup>97</sup> Ridgway was by no means immune from this visceral and base behaviour. For example, on the 7 January 1792, *The Times* reported that the famed actress Mrs Billington had served a Bill of Indictment before the Grand Jury against Mr. Ridgway for writing what were termed 'extortionary letters', on the 'subject of suppressing certain memoirs of the Lady, intended for publication'.<sup>98</sup> In this case, it was not a matter of libel, but a matter of publishing ethics; whether it was right for the publisher to print the letters against the wishes of their author. On this occasion the case was thrown out, but it highlights the internecine practices of many of the leading booksellers.<sup>99</sup> Ridgway went ahead and published. The title page of *Memoirs of Mrs Billington* (1792) declared that it reproduced several original letters 'now in the possession of the publisher'.<sup>100</sup> The work caused such a stir that contemporary Franz Joseph Haydn noted in his diary, 'you couldn't get a single copy after 3 o'clock in the afternoon'.<sup>101</sup> At first the production of this scandalous, pornographic material appears incompatible with his output as a radical publisher and the polite sociability epitomised in the Newton engraving, leading one contemporary to describe him as a 'scribbling pamphleteer, a griping bookseller' and an 'obscure vendor of Grub Street pamphlets'.<sup>102</sup> However, as Levin

argues, Ridgway's works invariably focussed on important public figures, and the interaction between performers, musicians and artists and elite political figures was an eighteenth-century commonplace.<sup>103</sup> Indeed, pioneering research by Robert Darnton and Lynn Hunt has done much to show that this seeming incompatibility is the result of retrospectively projecting modern conceptions of pornography onto a pre-pornographic literary-scape which only emerged as a distinctly self-conscious *genre* in France at the beginning of the nineteenth century and slightly later in England when it solidified in the context of mid-nineteenth century moralising.<sup>104</sup> In their separate ways, they both show how readers in the late eighteenth century consumed illicit material without the stigmatisation that accompanied its emergence as a 'category of thinking' and which became a symbol of moral corruption and deviancy.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, representation of sexual activity, whether visually or textually, had a long tradition as a form of political humiliation and cultural resistance: embodied by the numerous tales (and engravings) of 'pious' priests defrocked and Lords caught rutting with their maid servants. As Hunt writes perceptively, '[pornography] was linked to free-thinking and heresy, to science and natural philosophy, and to attacks on absolutist political authority'.<sup>106</sup> In England, much like in pre-Revolutionary France, the distinction between different forms of 'suppressed' books was conspicuously absent, suggesting that non-conformity might be interchangeably of a political, religious, or sexual nature.

Despite being aware of 'what a valuable traffic is SCANDAL!', Ridgway argued in the 'Prefatory Address' to the *Memoirs* that his motivation for publishing them was two-fold: as a reaction to the legal and personal threats made against him by agents acting for the Billingtons, and by his desire to show the virtues of a good life through the public 'reprobation of a wretch, who has been the sole cause of alienating, an indulgent husband from an amiable and virtuous wife'.<sup>107</sup>

Ridgway's only ethical concern about the letters was to establish their authenticity for he had 'some credit at stake with the public, and did not want to be informed, what construction that Public would put upon [his] conduct'.<sup>108</sup> In its ethical intensity the case almost anticipated a trial in which both David Williams and James Ridgway were required to provide testimony before Lord Kenyon regarding Thomas Martin's alleged attempts at literary extortion.<sup>109</sup>

(v) Ridgway and Williams as witnesses: *King vs. Martin*

The final legal case, which sheds some light on James Ridgway's publishing ethics and also directly connects him with Williams, is actually a series of legal cases involving the Rev. Thomas Martin. In his appendix to *David Williams: the Hammer and the Anvil*, Jones briefly outlines the relationship between Williams and the Martin family. It has been suggested by Jones that Frances Martin, married to the colourful curate of St Anne's, Soho, Thomas Martin, became David Williams' companion for most of the latter part of his life, and that these circumstance occasioned, not unsurprisingly, considerable rankling in the family. However, the rankling did not create a complete fissure. As Jones outlines, Thomas Martin had long been engaged in a running feud with the St Anne's rector, Dr Richard Hind, concerning who had responsibility for burying non-parishioners. Following his victory in court against Dr. Hind, Martin even went so far as to write *An Address to the Inhabitants of the Parish of St Anne, Westminster* (1777). This is important because it gives credence to the hitherto, un-cited reference to Williams' connection with Thomas Martin in the late 1790s, namely in the curious work *Mr King's Apology, or Reply to his Calumniators: the subjects treated and facts stated* (1798). This work gives a much different account of the quarrel between Dr. Hind and Martin, stating that after he had 'exhausted twenty years of his life in a revengeful quarrel with the Vicar of St Ann's, Soho' Martin 'afterwards resigned the ministry of the gospel for temporal pursuits—had been a half-penny officer, a gambler, a money-monger, a cutler, and a cut-purse'.

Furthermore, it suggests that Martin had been rescued from the Fleet by taking the option of insolvency. The author goes on to suggest that after this, Martin began instituting fictitious debts, and was 'indicted for perjury for doing so'. Whilst indicted, the author accuses Martin of threatening to write a book, *The Life and Adventures of John King* which would charge him with 'every vice that has been committed from the days of Adam', unless he paid Martin 300*l*. The truth behind these allegations cannot be easily ascertained. What is important, however, is that the author discusses Williams' alleged role in the affair. The following quote shows that the author was well informed about the activities of Williams:

David Williams the Mountebank Priest of Margaret Street Chapel, whose intercourse with the family gives him the prerogative of governing, advised me to quiet with him with 300*l*; that I had already experienced what injury calumnies did, whether founded or not—that he was certain the publication was intended, for it had been laid before him to correct; and although it was a balderdash performance, its intelligence and vulgarity adapted it more to common reading.<sup>110</sup>

The writer's particular choice of phrase 'intercourse with the Martins' can only be a reference to Williams' mistress Frances Martin, and that if true, shows that Williams was still on terms with Thomas Martin at this date. The author continues a well-aimed attack on the integrity of Williams:

This David Williams, who had formerly professed to devote his lubrications to the use of his species, had published a system of morals for youth—had striven to ameliorate religion by exposing its abuse—had proclaimed himself a great Apostle of Liberty, and proffered a new constitution for France.<sup>111</sup>

The reference to the 'new constitution' of France is interesting because it was only published in French as, *Observations sur la dernière de la France* (1793). The allegations continue, stating that the book was published and that Williams and Thomas Martin, had sworn under oath in

court that it did not exist, after which perjury 'his friend Martin should have saved his credit by its [the book's] immediate suppression' – something which he apparently failed to do. The book was allegedly published sometime before 1798, but it has not been possible to trace any edition of the work reputed to have been written by Martin in the English Short Title Catalogue.

*The Oracle and Public Advertiser*, reported the presence of both Williams and James Ridgway in court as witnesses for Martin.<sup>112</sup> The former as an 'intimate friend' of Martin, the latter, to deny that he was to print Martin's *History of Swindling* which satirised John King. Ridgway declared that he 'knew nothing of the work' and 'wrote to the printer to have it contradicted'. Williams was less convincing, intimating that he had viewed some writing, but nothing that would constitute a book.

(vi) Membership of the London Corresponding Society (L.C.S.) and the Revolution Society (R.S.)

In Chapter Three, it was noted that while periodical reviews focussed on *Lessons'* satirical nature, pamphlet responses contested its denial of the role played by the 1688 Revolution in forming England's Constitution. It was argued that failure to accord with the views of the majority of the mainstream radical reform movement, many of whom highly venerated the Revolution, contributed to its relative neglect and the alienation of its ideas. In this light, it is interesting to consider Symonds' and Ridgway's involvement with two societies, the London Corresponding Society (L.C.S.) and the Revolution Society (R.S.) both of which looked back at the Revolution settlement favourably. The former, founded by a shoemaker from Stirlingshire on 25 January 1792, as Henry Collins suggests, was remarkable for its working class composition, attracting 'tradesmen, mechanics, and shopkeepers'.<sup>113</sup> Its principle aims were campaigning for universal suffrage and annual parliaments. The Society came to particular

prominence in 1795 with its petition against the Government's proposed Seditious Meetings Act and Treason Act, following the stoning of the King's carriage.<sup>114</sup> In a handbill petition written, printed and distributed by the Society in May 1795, they called on all Englishmen to stop the acts passing, making the 1688 Revolution a prominent rallying point, 'the Bill now pending in parliament, as entirely subverting the constitutional liberties of Englishmen; as tending to accomplish a Revolution directly the reverse of that which seated his majesty's family on the Throne'.<sup>115</sup> Prior to this, in October 1794, the society's founder, Thomas Hardy had been tried for sedition, but found not guilty. Symonds and Ridgway published an account of the trial taken in shorthand.<sup>116</sup> In fact, Ridgway played a prominent role in the Society, as its main printer. Mary Thale, editor of the Society's correspondence, suggests that Ridgway indicated that he was willing to 'print whatever they wanted', which included: *Margarott's Letter to Dundas* (1793), two of Paine's works, and the Society's rules, address and resolutions. Involvement with the Society resulted in Ridgway falling under close government surveillance by the spy Lynam, who reported on his publishing activities on behalf of the Society, and other wider social movements.<sup>117</sup> The Society, however, also supported a non Revolution-centric narrative of English liberty, one that closely paralleled the account given by *Lessons*, describing a much longer ancestry for Englishmen's rights which had been whittled down since Alfred. Ridgway was totally immersed in the Society's activities, and riskily, in light of his recent release from prison, opened his shop up to take signatures for the 1795 petition.

Ridgway and Symonds were also both involved, though not confirmed members of, the Revolution Society, a society founded to celebrate and uphold the principles of the 1688 Revolution. In contrast to the L.C.S., the Revolution Society drew its membership from a distinctly middle class demographic, encompassing clergymen, some MPs, and other gentlemen of their own means. In 1792 it sent a 'congratulatory address' to the National



Assembly in France. It was Ridgway who printed a *Vindication of the Revolution Society against the Calumnies of Burke* (1792) staunchly defending not only the Society's actions, but also the English Revolution. Although a reply to Burke, it also presented a position contrary to *Lessons*, representing the emergence of a cleavage in ideologies. Williams was not a member of either society, and whilst Dybikowski suggests this was probably a financial decision, it seems more likely that Williams' view of the Revolution was incompatible with membership of either society. Ridgway, on the other hand, was seemingly able to traverse the membership demographics of each society membership as a shopkeeper and a gentleman.

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<sup>1</sup> This traditional view has already been broken down to some extent by Michael T. Davis in "'That Odious Class of Men Called Democrats': Isaac Eaton and the Romantic 1794-1795", *History*, vol. 84, issue 273 (1999), p. 91, where he shows that William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge not only wrote briefly for *The Philanthroper*, a popular periodical, but were also the originators of the idea of the journal.

<sup>2</sup> Advertising material for the sixth edition of *Lessons* stated that 'the Second and Sixth editions only have had his [the author's] revision', leading to the obvious conclusion that all additions and revisions for the editions in between were the responsibility of the publisher or his agents. See the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, London (March 4, 1791), issue 5570.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter Two for analysis of the effect of anonymity and pseudonymity on *Lessons*.

<sup>4</sup> *Monthly Review*, London, 4 (March, 1791), p. 346. John Gillies (1747-1836), classical historian appointed Royal Historiographer in Scotland upon William Robertson's death in 1793. His most popular and enduring work was *A History of Ancient Greece*, published by William Strahan and Thomas Cadell, for whom he wrote reviews in the *Monthly Review*. The history was published in two parts, in 1786 and 1806 respectively. See, W. W. Wroth and Rev. I. C. Cunningham, 'Gillies, John (1747-1836)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press (2004).

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10744>, accessed 24 Feb 2009]. See also Richard B. Sher, *Enlightenment and the Book*, pp. 367-368. *Lessons* (1790), 1, 'That I am unknown, is in my favour. By announcing my name, I might put in a claim to the attention and patronage of your Royal Highness' (p. 6); *Lessons* (1790), 2, 'I have no private interest in the trouble I have taken. I feel no ambition to be the competitor of your favourites'; 'I seek not your favour, Sir'; 'in all imaginable fluctuations of parties, my name will never be bought to your royal highness in the lists of candidates' places' (p. 90).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Johnson died on 13 December 1784. The process of Burke's alienation from Charles Fox's Whig faction commenced well before *Lessons* were published, and certainly prior to the controversy surrounding publication of his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). However, in the period from the beginning of 1789 to his final breach with Fox on 15 April 1791, attacks on Burke by the Whig press intensified and with *Lessons*' fierce attack on the personal integrity of Burke, such a reaction from a pro-Administration reviewer such as Gillie is understandable.

<sup>6</sup> There are two main variant spellings: Henry de lay Hay and Henry Delahoy, but the most frequently occurring in contemporary published sources is Delahay, so this spelling has been adopted throughout. The first edition of *Lessons* bore the erroneous imprint Simmons, corrected in subsequent editions to Symonds.

<sup>7</sup> Symonds published ten titles by Wolcot in 1792, the most important being: *A complimentary epistle to James Bruce, Esq. the Abyssinian traveller* (1792); *Instructions to a celebrated laureat; alias the progress of curiosity; alias a birth-day ode; alias Mr. Whitbread's brewhouse* (1792); *The Lousiad, an heroic-comic poem. Canto IV* (1792); *Odes of importance, &c. To the shoemakers. ... The judges, or the wolves, the bear, and inferior beasts, a fable* (1792); *Odes to Kien Long, the present emperor of China; with the Quakers, a tale; to a fly, drowned in a bowl of punch; ode to Macmanus, Townsend, and Jealous, the thief-takers* (1792); *A pair of lyric epistles to Lord Macartney and his ship* (1792); *A poetical, supplicating, modest, and affecting epistle to those literary colossuses, the reviewers* (1792); *The remonstrance. To which is added, an ode to my ass; also, the magpie and Robin, a tale; an apology for kings; and an address to my pamphlet* (1792); *The tears of St. Margaret: also, odes of condolence to the high and mighty musical directors, on their downfall* (1792), though, as Donald Kerr notes, three of them were reprints. For further details on Wolcot's relationship with his publishers, see Donald Kerr, 'Satire is "Bad Trade": Dr John Wolcot and his Publishers and Printers in Eighteenth-Century England', *Cardiff Corvey Articles*, XII.2: (August, 2004), <http://cardiff.ac.uk/encap/journals/corvey/articles/>. Ridgway also published Peter Pindar, but later in 1795, see *The Cap. A Satiric poem. Including most of the dramatic writers of the present day* (1795). Symonds published the following works by John Williams during the period 1788-1794: *The life of the late Earl of Barrymore* (1793); *A liberal critique on the present exhibition of the Royal Academy: being an attempt to correct the national taste* (1794). Ridgway also published Pasquin's, *Shrove Tuesday, a satiric rhapsody* (1791). Co-published by Symonds and Ridgway: *A crying epistle from Britannia to Colonel Mack, including a naked portrait of the King, Queen, and Prince, with notes; political, philosophical and personal* (1794).

<sup>8</sup> The analysis is based on data searches using the ESTC, COPAC, and Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (Gale).

<sup>9</sup> See the entry in 'Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History; The London book trades 1775-1800: a preliminary checklist of members.'

<http://bookhistory.blogspot.com/2007/01/london-1775-1800-r.html>, Ian Maxted. Ridgway was at 1, York Street, St. James's 1789L-1804P; 170, Piccadilly 1805H-1821. See also, Ian Maxted, *The London Book Trades 1775-1800*, Surrey: Gresham Press (1977), p. 188, p. 220. For a description of the 'Row' in the late eighteenth century see, James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2007) where the 'northern extremities' of St James's and Piccadilly are described as 'new (if sometimes transient) fashionable resorts for book and print buyers', (p. 318). See also, James Raven's 'London and the central sites of the English book trade', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, 1695-1830*, vol. 5, eds. Michael F., S. J. Suarez and Michael Turner, Cambridge University Press (2009), Cambridge Histories Online, Cambridge University Press. Accessed, 29 August 2012, DOI:10.1017/CHOL9780521810173.015.

<sup>10</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. ix, p. 666 (June, 1838).

<sup>11</sup> The advertisement for the first edition of *Lessons* ends, 'Printed for H.D. Symonds and Mr. Baldwin, Paternoster Row, the Booksellers in Piccadilly, St James's Street, Pall Mall, The Strand, Fleet Street, Royal Exchange, J. Ridgway, York Street, St James's Square, and Mr. Lewis, Russell Street, Convent Garden', *The World*, London (23 September, 1790), issue 1162. Such syndications with one main publisher and a combination of other copyright holders and booksellers with distribution rights occurred frequently.

<sup>12</sup> For example, James Ridgway was general printer to the London Corresponding Society (L.C.S.); see *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society 1792-1799*, Mary Thale (ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1983), p. 36, whilst Symonds was a member of the Society's committee which decided to have twelve thousand copies of Paine's 'Letter' printed and circulated. See Tooke, John Horne, *The trial of John Horne Tooke, for High Treason, at the Sessions House in the Old Bailey*, London: sold by Martha Gurney (1795), p. 113. For a discussion of Ridgway's activities with the

L.C.S. and connection with David Williams' thought, see section IV of this chapter. It is important to note that although Symonds' and Ridgway's cooperation intensified during imprisonment, their publishing collaboration predated it. McCalman's description implies that the partnership was born in Newgate, which over states its prominence. Further ties were cemented when James Leech Ridgway, Ridgway's eldest son, began working for Symonds, presumably as an apprentice: see James Leech Ridgway's testimony against his former shop porter Dennis Holland for theft of books, Buckler, H., *Central Criminal Court Minutes of Evidence, taken in Shorthand*, London: George Herbert (1836), vol. III, pp. 248-258, 'I served time with Mr. Simmons [sic], in Paternoster-row, and then went into partnership with my brother' (p. 249).

<sup>13</sup> Details of his last Will dated 18 December 1815 can be found at The National Archives, UK, PROB 11/1583/340. Symonds was father-in-law to Samuel Dunbar Neely, of Paternoster Row, bookseller, by the marriage of his daughter, Jane Symonds to whom he bequeathed five hundred pounds for her exclusive use. Ian Maxted, 'Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History: 10 The London book trades of the later 18<sup>th</sup> century' (January, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Died 6 May, 1838, in Piccadilly, aged 83 years, 'Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History: The London Book trades of the later 18th century'. The entry begins, 'Mr. James Ridgway, bookseller, the well-known pamphlet publisher', *Gentlemen's Magazine* vol. ix, 666 (June, 1838). *Notes and Queries*, vol. 10: 267 (1854), p. 465.

<sup>15</sup> *The County Spectator*, Gainsborough: Messrs Mozley & Co (1793), p. 107.

<sup>16</sup> *The European Magazine, and London Review*, (August, 1782), pp. 134-136, alludes to his political connections 'his [Williams'] present time seems to be taken up by secret services in politics, to young and old pupils, and public lectures on miscellaneous subjects' (p.136).

<sup>17</sup> *Notes and Queries*, vol. 10: 267 (1854), p. 465.

<sup>18</sup> 'Mr James Leech Ridgway', *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xiv (February, 1863), p. 243.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* p. 243.

<sup>20</sup> Stockdale married Mary Ridgway, James Ridgway's sister.

<sup>21</sup> [Anon], 'John Stockdale: The Bookselling Blacksmith, one of the King's New Friends' (1784), in *The Intrepid Magazine*, London: Ridgway, vol. 1 (1784), p. 53.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> The *Dictionary of National Biography* suggests that this was in 1781, when John Almon retired to Box Moor, Hertfordshire, selling his business to Debrett. The author has been unable to trace any publications bearing Stockdale's name earlier than this date. For an authoritative account of John Almon, see Deborah Rogers, *Bookseller as Rogue*, New York: Peter Lang (1986). Rogers's thesis notes that from 1780 onwards, Debrett's imprint appeared with Almon's in various combinations, occasionally even as 'successor to Almon', (p. 95). Clearly Stockdale felt a degree of bitterness about this.

<sup>24</sup> Hannah Barker, 'Stockdale, John (c.1749–1814)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2004).

<sup>25</sup> *The Intrepid Magazine*, vol. 1, p. 55.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> At the time of writing Ridgway's two sons were running the business, James Ridgway having died in 1838. Ian Maxted, *The London Book Trades, 1775-1800*, Surrey: Gresham Press (1977), p. 188.

<sup>28</sup> The lack of scholarship on Henry Delahay Symonds and his radicalism has been pointed out by Iain McCalman: 'Symonds remains one of the most neglected of radical publishers of the 1790s', see '“Patriots in Prison”: Newgate Radicalism in the Age of Revolution', in *Newgate in Revolution: An Anthology of Radical Prison Literature*, London & New York: Continuum (2005), p. xxii.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* p. 270; Donald F. McKenzie, *Stationers' Company Apprentices, 1701-1800*, Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society (1978), p. 345.

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<sup>30</sup> The most notable were *Royal Recollections* (1789) and *Authentic Specimens of Ministerial Instructions* (1789), but also the third edition of *Letters on Political Liberty* (1789).

<sup>31</sup> *A letter to the Body of Protestant Dissenters; and to Protestant Dissenting Ministries of All Denominations*, London: J. Almon and J. Wilkie (1777); *Bookseller as Rogue*, p. 99.

<sup>32</sup> 'Report from spy Lynam: LCS General Committee (Government paraphrase), 10 January 1793, in Mary Thale, *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society 1792-1799*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1983), p. 43, 'Ridgway dines with Fox this day'.

<sup>33</sup> *Royal Recollections* went through eleven separate editions within the first year of sale and thirteen editions in total.

<sup>34</sup> Lord Chancellor, 1778-1792. Baron Thurlow of Thurlow, 1786-1806. Charles Jenkinson, Secretary of War, December 1778-1781. Influential with the King and Lord Bute, and later lampooned by the Opposition in *The Rolliad* for his support of William Pitt. Henry Dundas, Home Secretary, 1791-1794. Viscount Melville, 1802-1811.

<sup>35</sup> Ridgway would have been painfully aware of the vulnerability of bookseller-publishers to political prosecutions. His former employer, John Almon had taken a prominent part in the 'Printers' Crisis' of March 1771 when his reporting of parliamentary proceedings were deemed as gross infractions on parliamentary privilege. Whilst Almon's patron Lord Temple successfully protected him on this occasion, in 1786 he was forced to flee to France for publishing a government-planted libel. However, clearly Almon's assertion that publisher-booksellers did 'not have the time to read every publication', was a feature of the trade.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Withers, *Alfred or a narrative of the daring and illegal measures to suppress a pamphlet intituled, Strictures on the declaration of Horne Tooke, Esq., respecting "Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales," commonly called Mrs. Fitzherbert*, London: P. Withers (1789), p. 33.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p.40.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* p.40.

<sup>39</sup> *Lessons*, (1790), 2, p. 4. A phrase replacing 'but merely by the universal dread of the return of the coalition' (p.4) in the first edition.

<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that porphyria was not diagnosed at the time, and was only seriously suggested as a diagnosis in I. Macalpine and R. Hunter's article, 'The "insanity of" of King George III: a classic case of Porphyria', *British Medical Journal*, (January, 1966), 1: 5479, pp. 65-71.

<sup>41</sup> James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press (2007), p. 212.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* p. 212.

<sup>43</sup> Sue Levin has suggested that profit motive was the prime motivation behind Ridgway's publication of the *Memoirs of Mrs Billington* (1792), 'One cynical reason [why he published them] is that he wanted to make money. Scandalous memoirs sold, and Ridgway published his share', in 'Vice, Ugly Vice: *Memoirs of Mrs Billington from her Birth*' in Stelzig, Eugene (ed.) *Romantic Autobiography in England*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited (2009), p. 58.

<sup>44</sup> *A Speech at the Whig Club; or a Great Statesman's Own Exposition of his Political Principles with Notes Critical and Explanatory*, London (1792).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 22-24.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>49</sup> Interestingly, frustration at Fox's failure to declare for or against anything and to waste political advantage was one of the principle criticisms of him in *Lessons*, 1, – 'if there be an honest man among all the political adventurers and champions of the time, he is Charles Fox', but he is marked with 'national odium', not for dishonesty, but 'for want of abilities, for want of wisdom' (p. 7).

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> The third edition of Ridgway's pamphlet, *The speech of the Right Hon. Charles James Fox: containing the declaration of his principles, respecting the present crisis of public affairs*, London: Ridgway (1792), also repeated this item of correspondence, but with an additional paragraph which read, 'Will any real friend of our Constitution deny, but that an equal representation of the People of England, is an Improvement of which our Constitution is susceptible, which all honest and enlightened men pant after, and which Mr. Fox must therefore have meant (or a thing impossible), could have meant nothing', p. i.

<sup>54</sup> *A Speech at the Whig Club*, p. 21.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* p. 22.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>57</sup> No exhaustive data has been compiled relating to the profitability of bookselling in late eighteenth-century Britain, or how lucrative review journals and magazines were for the publisher. However, if the £1,800 pounds a year paid to one reviewer is indicative, they must have been tremendously popular. John Williams writes, 'In what a bestial community we breathe – where perception is a disadvantage—modesty a weakness—and poverty criminal! So miserably fallen is the faculty of the nation, that the greater portion of the books which are annually published are made or compiled, and not conceived: and if an original work appears, to flash upon the region of dullness, the biliothetic dolts meaning and maliciously confederate to limits its influence', *The Pin-Basket*, p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, (1 May, 1793), issue: 5595.

<sup>59</sup> In the foreword to *Newgate in Revolution*, the editors argue that Charles Pigott's 'anonymity on paper' (p. 2), left his publishers to their fate when prosecuted for seditious libel, which is no doubt why Ridgway offered to name the author of *The Jockey Club* as part of a plea bargain. The trial of Symonds and Ridgway shows that anonymity between author and publisher was near to impossible, and that publishers' knowledge of writers' identities was a commodity that could be redeemed like anything else.

<sup>60</sup> *Lloyd's Evening Post*, (1 May, 1793), issue: 5595.

<sup>61</sup> Charles Pigott, *The Jockey Club, or a Sketch of the Manners of the Age*, London: H.D. Symonds (1792). On the 1793 etching he is pictured as figure no. 12, looking out from Newgate as a visitor. *A Letter Addressed to the Addressers*, London: Ridgway (1792). In, *A Vindication of the Conduct and principles of the Printer of the Newark Herald*, London: Sutton, Nottingham, Gales & others (1794), the author, Daniel Holt lamented the injustice of his punishment for reprinting and selling a work that had already been published by Mr Symonds and Mr Ridgway, who both received the punishment of 1 year in prison and a 20*l* fine, whilst he suffered 1 year of imprisonment and a 30*l* fine, p. 55. This is factually inaccurate. Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man, Part II*, London: Ridgway & Symonds (1791). Ridgway published an account of the trial of Thomas Paine in 1792, *The Trial at Large of Thomas Paine for a libel, in the second part of the Rights of Man, before Lord Kenyon and a special jury*, London: Ridgway [1792?].

<sup>62</sup> The call for the independence of bookseller-publishers was in part only made possible because of the trades' profitability and the entrepreneurial acumen of its participants. Alternative sources of revenue replaced the notion of a single wealthy patron. More and more diverse revenue streams developed which ranged from the emergence of publisher-authors, to literary extortion, receiving Party money, holding large portfolios of publication rights to the works of the most well known writers, current and past, and so on.

<sup>63</sup> 'Mr James Leech Ridgway', *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xiv (February 1863), p. 243.

<sup>64</sup> Ted Hughes, *Justice to a Judge, An answer to the Judges Appeal to Justice, in Proof of the Blessings enjoyed by British Subjects*, London: Ridgway (1793), p. 14. The suspension of the Act of *Habeas*

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*Corpus* (1679) formally passed through parliament on the 7 May 1794. However, systematic violations of the Act had been in effect commonplace since early 1792.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14. The extract appears on page ninety-six, *Lessons*, 2. It should be noted however that this was published before their imprisonment and therefore could not have been written in response to it. There is no evidence that David Williams ever visited Symonds or Ridgway in Newgate Prison, although they were held 'stateside' and accordingly had generous visiting rights.

<sup>66</sup> See Michael T. Davis' review of *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s*, *The Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 45, 1999, pp. 132-134.

<sup>67</sup> Barrel argues that at a half-guinea subscription, they were well out of reach for most people and were probably only produced for the relatives of the loved ones involved in the images. For a good account of the works of Richard Newton, see D. Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

<sup>68</sup> John Barell, 'Radicalism, Visual Culture, and Spectacle in the 1790s', *Romanticism on the Net*, 46, May 2007. <http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/2007/v/n46/016131ar.html>.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *The proceedings in cases of high treason, under a special commission of oyer and terminer, which was first opened at Hicks's Hall, Oct. 2, 1794, and afterwards continued at the Sessions House, in the Old Bailey*, London: J. Ridgway & H.D. Symonds (1794), p. 18.

<sup>71</sup> *The Chronologist of the Present War: Containing a faithful series of the events which have occurred in Europe, from the commencement of the year 1792, to the end of the year 1795*, London: J.W. Myers (1795). Maxted records his first known imprint in 1794, and death on 6 August 1800. See 'Exeter Working Papers in British Book Trade History; The London book trades 1775-1800: a preliminary checklist of members. Names M.' <http://bookhistory.blogspot.com/2007/01/london-1775-1800-m.html>.

<sup>72</sup> For an interesting first-hand account of life in prison during the 1790s, see 'The Diary Thomas Lloyd Kept in Newgate Prison, 1794-96', in Michael T. Davis, Iain McCalman, Christina Parolin, *Newgate in Revolution: An Anthology of Radical Prison Literature in the Age of Revolution*, London & New York: Continuum (2005).

<sup>73</sup> See for example Dr. Hudson's appeal not to be sent to Newgate prison as he was 'given to understand (as he affirmed) on the authority of Dr. Lettsom, that a contagious distemper then raged within the prison'. See, 'Sedition' in *The World*, (Monday 4 November, 1793), issue; 2138.

<sup>74</sup> *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, (16 November, 1793), issue: 20260.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Lloyd, *Address to The Grand Juries of the City of London and County of Middlesex*, London (1794), p.2.

<sup>76</sup> *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 69 (426), (April 1851), p. 399.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* p. 398.

<sup>78</sup> James Thomson, *The Political Progress of Great Britain: or, An Impartial History of Abuses in the Government of the British Empire, in Europe, Asia, and America*, Philadelphia: R. Folwell (1795), p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> Lettsom, *Hints designed to promote beneficence, temperance, and medical science*, London: H. Fry & C. Dilly (1797).

<sup>80</sup> The Crown had not minted new copper coin since 1775 leading to an acute shortage of small coin, especially in the provinces. Though never legal tender, in response to this lack, businesses began issuing their own tokens, redeemable at their outlets. The final decade of the eighteenth century saw a huge proliferation of such tokens, which were also used for advertising, and unlike their seventeenth-century equivalents, to convey political messages. In 1797, the use of tokens was made expressly illegal to support the issue of new coinage. Although issued before the express prohibition of token usage, Symonds' and Ridgway's decision to issue a token did represent a firm statement against the crown prerogative of minting coinage.

<sup>81</sup> Henry Yorke, *These are the Times that Tries men's Souls!* London: Ridgway & Symonds (1793).

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<sup>82</sup> W. Longman in his work on eighteenth-century tokens suggests that William Sherwood, who was at this time only seventeen years old and apprenticed to Symonds was 'largely responsible for carrying on the business when Symonds was sent to prison', *Tokens of the Eighteenth Century, Connected with Booksellers & Book makers*, London: Longmans, Green & Co. (1916), pp. 43-44. *Ibid.* 'Back Matter' (n.p). This running title was noticed by a 'person in an official situation' who perhaps considering it provocative, wrote to the *Morning Post*. Ridgway and Symonds were requested to explain the meaning of this statement, and the reply is quoted by the letter writer, 'Because we wish to call the attention of the Public to our Advertisement, and we mention the fact to caution others against falling into a similar predicament'. This did not convince the 'person in an official situation', who saw it as an opportunistic attempt by the 'Newgate publishers' to bring their plight and situation to the attention of the newly formed cabinet, 'it was not however, to consider of the circumstance, that the Cabinet Council was assembled'. *Morning Post*, London (12 June, 1793), issue 6284.

<sup>83</sup> Ralph A. Manogue, 'The Plight of James Ridgway, London Bookseller and Publisher, and the Newgate Radicals of 1792-1797', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 27 (1996), p.158.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* p.158.

<sup>85</sup> *The Britannic Magazine*, 1794-1807, Vol. 9 of 12.

<sup>86</sup> See for example, *British Public Characters of 1798*, London: R. Phillips (1798), which stated, 'Several anonymous works have been attributed to Mr. Williams...The "Lessons to a Young Prince" and Apology for Professing the Religion of Nature in the eighteenth-century, may possibly have come from his pen...', p. 471, and David Rivers, *Literary Memoirs of Living Authors in Great Britain*, London: R. Faulder (1798), which stated that, 'Mr Williams is also understood to be the author of "Royal Recollections" a most indecent satire upon his majesty, "Lessons to a Young Prince", "An Apology for Professing the Religion of Nature in the eighteenth century", and the pamphlets of Swainson', p. 386. Despite these well informed guesses, enough uncertainty remained for Robert Faulder to list *Lessons* anonymously in his catalogue of books for sale as late as 1797. See, *A Catalogue of An Extensive and Valuable Collection of Ancient and Modern books*, London: R. Faulder (1797).

<sup>87</sup> *Morning Post*, 11 June (1793) issue 6283. See chapter two for a fuller explanation of this point.

<sup>88</sup> George Dyer, *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*, London: Kearsley (1795), pp. 87-90.

<sup>89</sup> *Newgate in Revolution*, p. xi.

<sup>90</sup> McCalman emphasises the positive side of the Newgate experience as a catalyst for a number of publications, however, their imprisonment did prevent them publishing works; whether because of accessibility issues, or else, because of the stigma. Samuel Taylor Coleridge was one such example, see. Lewis Patton's Introduction, in *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Watchman*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul (1970), 'It was the zealous Wade who, with the help of Robert Allen, Coleridge's schoolfellow, took over the London arrangements for advertisements and for finding a publisher. Coleridge had wanted Ridgway, but in the end Parson's was engaged', (p. xxxiv), and the accompanying note, 'James Ridgway was still in Newgate Prison, serving a four-year sentence', (p.xxxv).

<sup>91</sup> *Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*, p. 88.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* It appears that the letter was never circulated. The full letter read: 'Sir, Experiencing all the rigours of confinement, and daily feeling the severe and calamitous pressure of a long, distant, and ruinous separation from our business, our families, and our friends at large, without any prospect of speedy alleviation, we are, at length, reluctantly compelled to throw ourselves on the humanity and benevolence of the Public, and to solicit from the generosity and justice of the British nation, that support which so long a suspension from our commercial concerns has rendered, in some measure necessary. As we consider ourselves suffering in a **public cause** [my emphasis], we think it hard that our families should so essentially become sufferers, who are not guilty of any crime, even if we are. We are not, however, conscious of any criminal intention ourselves. It would be impertinent and unnecessary, Sir, to

trouble you with a recital of the ruinous circumstances attending our trials, convictions, and sentences, as they have already been so often before the public; but we would, respectfully wish to state the severe consequences of those proceedings, and sentences of imprisonment for four years; which, indeed, form our only apology for troubling you with this application. —The expenses incurred by defending the various prosecutions against each individual amount, in the whole, to 800—The loss of business, occasioned by our separation from it; the amount of money that has been expended for maintenance, from the commencement of our imprisonment, to the present time 900 or more. If to these sums is added, the probable amount of maintenance, loss of business, &c, for the remaining period of our respective sentences, the aggregate will be the sum of 3,200 independently of fines, which amount to 500 more making together the heavy sum of 3,800. Destitute of fortune, and dependent on nothing but our own (now, in some measure, suspended) industry, it is impossible, Sir, for us to contemplate this object without anxiously wishing to avert so serious a calamity brought upon us, we conceive, not by any intentionally improper conduct of our own, but by inadvertency, or, perhaps, by the malignity and party spirit of others. Without wishing to arraign the laws of our country, by which we have been convicted, or the justice of the power by which we are now imprisoned, we yet are anxious, respectfully to state, that we were placed in professional situations, and in such circumstances, that even the most cautious prudence could not have saved us from the confinement which we now experience inasmuch, as one of us, is actually suffering imprisonment of two years, for only reprinting a paper, which was first printed and published years before, by some of the most exalted characters of the nation. Thus circumstances, Sir, we respectfully beg permission, to solicit your attention to the peculiar hardships of our situation—Your benevolent assistance will confer honour on, and be ever acknowledged with gratitude, by, Sir, Your Most Humble and Obedient Servants, State Side, Newgate Jan. 3 1795, 2<sup>nd</sup> year of our imprisonment H.D. Symonds, J. Ridgeway, D. Holt [my emphasis]”, pp. 88-90.

<sup>93</sup> *A Dissertation on the Theory and Practice of Benevolence*, p. 96.

<sup>94</sup> Hannah Barker and Simon Burrows, *Press, Politics, and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America 1760-1820*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2002).

<sup>95</sup> *On Burning Ground*, p. 231.

<sup>96</sup> For an extended discussion on Williams’ views on the freedom of the press, see, *On Burning Ground*, pp. 231-234.

<sup>97</sup> *The Pin-Basket*, p. 9.

<sup>98</sup> *The Times*, (7 January, 1792), p.2, issue 2197, Col. B.

<sup>99</sup> For a brief account of the life of Mrs Billington, see Rachel E. Cowgill, ‘Billington, Elizabeth (1765-1818)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2397>, accessed 7 Dec 2009]. Apparently such practices were rife, with authors as well as publishers accused of blackmail. Charles Pigott, author of *The Jockey Club*, the publication for which both Symonds and Ridgway were imprisoned, was referred to as ‘the louse’ for his many attempts to blackmail women prior to its publication.

<sup>100</sup> *Memoirs of Mrs. Billington, from her birth: containing a variety of matter, ludicrous, theatrical, musical, and- with copies of several original letters, now in the possession of the publisher, written by Mrs. Billington, to her mother, the late Mrs. Weichsel: a dedication; and a prefatory address*, London: James Ridgway (1792).

<sup>101</sup> Cited by Levin, Sue, ‘Vice, Ugly Vice: *Memoirs of Mrs Billington from her Birth*’ in Stelzig, Eugene (ed.) *Romantic Autobiography in England*, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited (2009). This is the Austrian composer.

<sup>102</sup> *An answer to the memoirs of Mrs. Billington. With the life and adventures of Richard Daly, Esq. and an account of the present state of the Irish theatre. Written by a gentleman, well acquainted with several curious anecdotes of all parties*, London: for the author (1792), pp. 1-2.

<sup>103</sup> Levin, S., ‘Vice, Ugly Vice’, p. 59.



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- <sup>104</sup> See in particular, Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of PreRevolutionary France*, New York: Norton (1996), and Lynn Hunt (ed.) *The Invention of Pornography: obscenity and the origins of modernity, 1500-1800*, New York: Zone Books (1993), pp. 9-48.
- <sup>105</sup> Hunt, L., *Ibid.* p. 11.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.
- <sup>107</sup> *Memoirs of Mrs. Billington*, *Ibid.* p. xv.
- <sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* pp. iv-v.
- <sup>109</sup> Sources also refer to him as Thomas Martyn.
- <sup>110</sup> King, John, *Mr King's Apology. Or Reply to His Calumniators, the Objects Treated and Facts Stated*, London: Wilkins (1798), p. 34-35.
- <sup>111</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.
- <sup>112</sup> *Oracle and Public Advertiser*, (Saturday, 24 Feb 1798); issue 19866, col. 2.
- <sup>113</sup> Henry Collins, 'The London Corresponding Society', reprinted from *Democracy and the Labour Movement*, London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd (1955), p. 104-134, quotation, p. 111.
- <sup>114</sup> The Seditious Meetings Act outlawed political meetings of more than fifty persons. The Treason Act was based on the elapsed Treason Act of 1661, and outlawed any attack, intended attack, or imagined attack on the King's person.
- <sup>115</sup> 'London Corresponding Society [handbill petition]', London (1795).
- <sup>116</sup> *The Proceedings in Cases of High Treason, under a Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer, which was First Opened at Hicks's Hall, Oct. 2, 1794, and Afterwards Continued at the Sessions House, in the Old Bailey*, London: J. Ridgway and H.D. Symonds (1794).
- <sup>117</sup> Lynam's reports included, 'Ridgway & Low to Print Ten thousand of L—C—Society's Rules, address & resolutions' (p. 61) 'Ridgway to publish a speech of Sherridan's, corrected by Mr. Sherridan—this not to be made public', (p. 47) 'Ridgway Publishing one more of Paynes work's, to come out 26 Jan' (p. 47) 'Mr. Williams of Smithfield applied to Margarot for & has a roll to get signatures he will get 500. Ridgway has one' (p. 44).

~ Chapter Five ~  
Direct Publisher Influence on *Lessons*

(I) Introduction

David Williams corrected only the second and sixth editions of *Lessons*: all other changes to the text were therefore the responsibility of the publisher or his employees.<sup>1</sup> Although the major and noted additions to *Lessons*: the ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’, and the large Appendix to the sixth edition were by Williams, the third edition had textual changes that significantly altered its impact. Symonds or Ridgway are the most likely to have changed the text, but Symonds’ clerk and son-in-law William Sherwood may also have played a role. What these hitherto un-noted, though small additions and changes were, and how they changed both the meaning of the text and its reception is another aspect to consider when assessing publisher-influence on *Lessons*. The changes ranged from the correction of typographical mistakes to phrasal changes and paragraph insertions, all designed to sharpen its satirical nature. A remark in Williams’ autobiography *Incidents* hints at his acquiescence to such ‘little interpolations’, as does the retention of these changes when he revised the sixth edition.<sup>2</sup> However, despite making material changes to the text, the greatest direct impact the publishers had on the way *Lessons* was received was the complex and sustained advertising campaign that they launched, mainly, though not exclusively, taking the form of newspaper advertisements and booklists which created a meta-narrative into which *Lessons* was embedded, an aspect explored in Section III of this chapter.

(II) Textual interpolations: publisher interference with *Lessons*

Williams did not correct the third edition of *Lessons*, and editing the proof was therefore the responsibility of its publishers, which provided the opportunity for Symonds and Ridgway to directly influence the work through interpolation. Changes between the second and third

editions fell into three categories: typographical, grammatical, and formatting corrections; changes to vocabulary and small phrasal changes; and finally, the addition of full sentences and in two cases, paragraphs. Analysis of these changes shows that the first nine *Lessons* only received a handful of corrections, all of which belonged to the first category – the insertion of a missing letter, the removal of a stray full stop, and so on. The ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ however, not only included numerous corrections (more than sixty-five separate changes) in the first category, but also significant phrasal changes, and several additional paragraphs and sentences. This pattern of editing is not surprising, given that the first nine lessons had already been through one careful revision by Williams himself in the second edition, but this was the first occasion that the ‘Tenth Lesson on Burke’s *Reflections*’ had been revised and corrected. The first category is not in itself useful for charting the development of ideas or their attribution, but does demonstrate that despite being speedily prepared for the press, the third edition of *Lessons* received careful editing and was proofed in entirety.

The first noticeable change was the use of inverted commas around words that Williams used sarcastically or ironically. This method clarified the author’s intention, but hints that the publisher was trying to make the work more readable, suggesting a change in their target audience, a notion consistent with the gradual translation of Latin and Greek chapter epigraphs into English from the second edition onwards.<sup>3</sup> An example of this device is an ironic passage, in which Williams described how Burke’s *Reflections* caused him to suspend his reliance upon fact and reason and to “‘piously” sink ‘into the bosom of intuitive incredulity’.<sup>4</sup> Elsewhere, the same change was made to describe Burke’s “‘holy” zeal”, “‘righteous” reputation”, and “‘unparalleled” work’.<sup>5</sup>

The main thrust of the interpolations was to make *Lessons* more vehemently and overtly anti-Burke, more Painite in tenor, showing less linguistic restraint, made possible by both the intensification and crystallisation of pro- and anti-revolutionary rhetoric. This effect was accomplished in many ways, but especially by subtle changes in vocabulary or phrasing. For example, Burke's 'creative imagination in the satire of France', became in the third edition 'creative imagination in his atrocious description of France'.<sup>6</sup> Other similar changes included: 'brands the horrible sacrilege' to 'brands with infamy the horrible sacrilege'; and the views of an 'artful boy' became a 'brutal boy'.<sup>7</sup> The extra abuse was bawdy and topical, mixed with *ad hominem* attacks; Burke is described as exhibiting the 'mystic genius of our political Swedenbourg', and readers are alerted to the fact that 'the good man has been thirty years, climbing its [the Constitution's] lofty towers, and dragging up knights of his family for its defence'.<sup>8</sup> Given that, as argued in Chapter Three, it was the satirical and abusive nature of *Lessons* that provoked the most criticism from commentators, these tone-altering interpolations are significant. The publishers' interventions created a more robust and libellous tone, exemplified by the addition of three paragraphs at the end of the 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' which described Burke's language as 'rumbling, noisy, and inharmonious', and claimed that 'the author's emotion throughout is not the emotion of a great and good mind: it is that of Milton's fiend contemplating the innocence of our first parents and the possible happiness of their race'.<sup>9</sup>

In contrast to the ratcheting-up of the abuse of Burke, one small textual change signified a desire to be more deferential towards the Prince of Wales, perhaps signifying the publishers' lingering political sympathies. The imperative tone 'your royal highness will observe', of the second edition was replaced with a more persuasive tone 'your royal highness is particularly requested to observe'.<sup>10</sup> In the area of religion, minor edits indicate a more staunchly deistic

leaning and religious toleration, with the addition of the phrase criticising established religions, 'for they do not worship the same gods: and the deities of modern religions do not recognise and acknowledge each other'.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting addition made by Symonds and Ridgway is the account of Williams' meeting with Burke when canvassing support for the Royal Literary fund. Dybikowski implies that it was an insertion by Williams, but this note was inserted by the publishers. Although demonstrably included because of the negative light in which Burke is placed, the structure of the note itself, written in the third person, corroborates the fact that it was not written by Williams. Upon seeking support for the literary fund, it was the 'gentleman who conveyed the message thought him insane'.<sup>12</sup> The various interpolations and edits did not run contrary to either Williams' overall message, or personal feelings, but were less cautious, more 'Grub-Street' in tone.

### (III) Advertising *Lessons*

It has been argued that the literary and political *milieu* in which Williams composed *Lessons* was heavily influenced by the activities of Symonds and Ridgway. More concretely, it has been shown that direct alterations to the text of the infamous 'Tenth Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' increased their polemical style, and thereby reactions to it. Furthermore, the case has been made that the reception *Lessons* received was influenced by reader familiarity with the publishers' political sympathies and book inventory. Despite the fact that as Chapter Four argues, the political sympathies of Ridgway and Symonds were changing and in a sense unstable during this period, these changes were neither absolute nor particularly transparent to readers, long-standing reader-associations of patronage were not easily ruptured. The inclination of readers to connect the transparent political sympathies of a publisher with his

published work, and direct textual interventions, significantly affected the way *Lessons* was received. However, the easiest and, it is argued most effective, way to control the way *Lessons* was read, was through advertising material. Through a controlled, progressive, and at times dishonest marketing strategy, Symonds and Ridgway were able to frame the context in which *Lessons* was read. Analysis of the advertising associated with *Lessons* indicates that both publisher and author were acutely aware of its audience.<sup>13</sup> It is argued that *Lessons* was as much a commercial success because of the way it was packaged and marketed, as by anything particularly original or stimulating about its contents which, as Chapter One and Chapter Two demonstrate, did not contain anything substantially original. James Tierney in his article on book advertising in the period c1730-1769 points out that newspaper advertisements often provide information that is unavailable elsewhere, adding in a note that the sequential nature of newsprint makes it invaluable for detecting trends which are often the result of conscious practices on behalf of booksellers and/or authors.<sup>14</sup> Evidence of reader response to this advertising is scarce but, the author of the pro-Burkean reply to *Lessons*, Thomas Goold, read it on the basis of seeing it advertised and being intrigued by the 'speciousness of its title'.<sup>15</sup>

#### (i) Newspapers

The marketing of *Lessons* began on the 23 September 1790 when an advertisement in *The World* announced, 'This day, at Twelve o'clock will be Published, price 2s. 6d., *Lessons to a Young Prince by an Old Statesman on the Present Disposition in Europe to a General Revolution*'.<sup>16</sup> Thereafter the newspaper marketing campaign continued in various forms for two years, covering three main newspapers, and approximately thirty separate issues, using six different advertising formats.<sup>17</sup> In addition, *Lessons* was advertised by more than fifteen 'New Publications' lists as well as through eight reviews in periodicals.<sup>18</sup> This reflected the full range of marketing media available to the eighteenth-century publisher besides word of mouth

and marketing undertaken on their own retail premises. Marketing *Lessons* meant not just bringing the work to the attention of as many readers as possible (the profit motive), but reaching new readers and managing the context in which they appeared (impact management).

As with all books, the way *Lessons* was received was influenced by **who** read it, because this greatly affected **how** they read it. The advertising campaign surrounding *Lessons* was intensive and sustained, but also reflected natural peaks and troughs, broadly in line with the announcement of new editions (clusters of advertisements in close succession), and the seasonal nature of the book trade.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, each new edition usually resulted in not only a spate of advertisements, but in a new style advertisement, which either emphasised the extra material added (as in the second and sixth editions), or more interestingly, assigned the advertisement a new rhetorical role, reflecting changes in the way *Lessons* was sold and supposed to be read. For example, the advertisement for the third edition adopted a similar visual format to the advertising of *Royal Recollections*, listing the personages who were mentioned in the work in the style of a cast list or *dramatis personæ*. The impression was therefore given that it was a work mainly comprised of character sketches, which in fact only formed a very small part of the work. This particular form of advertisement, which first appeared on the 29 November 1790, was repeated on two further occasions, on the 8 and 11 of December, verbatim.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, advertising for the first edition had struck a more erudite tone, emphasising the innovative use of 'scientific' diagrams to explain political constitutions and their avoidance of pandering to 'ambitious factions', and the 'feudal and superstitious tyranny against the most indisputable and most valuable rights of Mankind'.<sup>21</sup> This advertisement was similar to that of the third edition of Williams' *Letters on Political Liberty* with which it was sometimes advertised.<sup>22</sup> There is some correlation between the popularity

of *Lessons* and the way it was marketed as a satirical volume rather than a piece of serious political thought, which was ironic, given that it was this fusion of satire and substance which most reviewers objected to.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the overall rhetoric of the advertisements, their size (measured in lines), can also be used to judge the relative popularity of the work at different points in time and, whilst imperfect, reflect its changing fortunes.<sup>24</sup> Adopting this

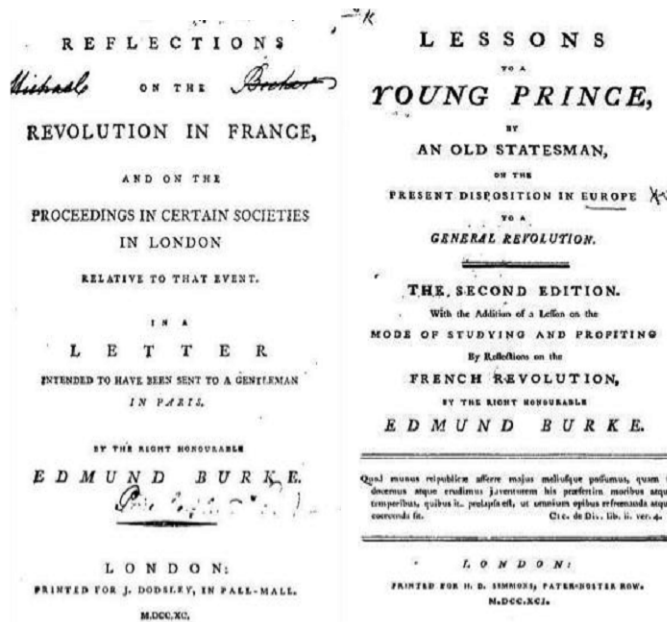


Fig. 5.1 Title pages of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 1790 (left), *Lessons to a Young Prince*, 1791 (right). © The British Library Board

method, as might be expected for the launch of a new work, the first advertisement for *Lessons* which appeared on the 23 September 1790 and an identical one on the 1 October was large and contained twenty-nine lines in total. It announced the broad *modus*

*operandi* of the work, its scope and the motivation behind it, in addition

to standard details such as price and place of sale. However, it is the advertising for the second edition which reflects the point at which real sales traction began, and this was probably due to the success of the additional 'Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' which responded to his hot-of-the-press *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). The first advertisement for the second revised edition began with a modest twenty-five lines (16 November, 1790), but grew incrementally to forty-one lines (29 November, 8 and 11 December, 1790), and reached a peak of fifty-nine lines for the sixth edition, which contained a large Appendix (4 March, 1791). After this, advertising for the seventh edition began tailing off with thirty-two lines (15 & 16 September, 1791), and was eventually absorbed into lengthy lists of books advertised by Ridgway.<sup>25</sup> Taking this as a broad measure of the currency and popularity of *Lessons* as a



commercial product, it can be considered that it had a total life span of approximately three years, during which, it was sought after, with its peak of popularity between December 1790 and March 1791. These advertisements also show that new editions appeared rapidly in order to keep pace with demand, with the fourth and fifth editions not even advertised, presumably because they were rapidly sold out. *Lessons* clearly sold well, but did not achieve the volume of sales or circulation of Thomas Paine's *Letter* with which it was compared.<sup>26</sup>

Besides the quantitative data that newspaper advertising offers, the qualitative data sheds much more light on Symonds' and Ridgway's overall advertising strategy for *Lessons*, conducted in collusion with Williams. The title page of the second edition that contained the additional 'Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' is of critical importance as a form of advertising in itself, and which, it is argued, was the key behind *Lessons*' broad circulation. Analysis of the title page provides clear and unequivocal evidence of a meticulously planned, highly sophisticated, and well-executed advertising operation, which fed parasitically off the phenomenal sales success of Edmund Burke's *Reflections*, which was sandwiched by editions of *Lessons*.<sup>27</sup> The title page of the second edition of *Lessons* reads in full: 'LESSONS TO A YOUNG PRINCE, BY AN OLD STATESMAN, ON THE PRESENT DISPOSITION IN EUROPE TO A GENERAL REVOLUTION. THE SECOND EDITION. With the Addition of a Lesson on the MODE OF STUDYING AND PROFITING By Reflections on the FRENCH REVOLUTION, **BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE**' [capitalisation retained from original, my emphasis]. It is argued that this title was deliberately manipulated by Symonds to give the impression that the work was by Edmund Burke, in a ruse that continues to confuse and trick even today.<sup>28</sup> The feat was achieved through a number of means. Firstly, visually, Edmund Burke's name appeared at the bottom of the title page in a manner identical to its appearance on the title page of *Reflections*; large capital letters (only the words 'YOUNG PRINCE', were in a larger font), with double spaces in

between the letters using exactly the same type face, font size and means of address (The Right Honourable) [Fig. 5.1]. With these visual devices in place, readers' attention was naturally drawn to the name Edmund Burke, believing him to be the author. Secondly, the wording of the title cleverly permitted three possible readings; the first that 'Reflections on the French Revolution [is] by Edmund Burke'; the second that the 'Mode of studying and profiting by Reflections on the French Revolution [is] by Edmund Burke'; the third, that Burke himself is the 'Old Statesman', and therefore author of the entire pamphlet. Any doubt about the title page's intention to deceive is removed when the chapter heading of the additional 'Lesson X' (page 100) is considered. This subtly reworded the title to remove the possibility of multiple readings and ambiguity, becoming, 'On the Mode of Studying and Profiting by **Mr. Burke's** Reflections on the Late Revolution in France' [my emphasis]. The subterfuge was further reinforced by a newspaper advertisement which accompanied the second edition and was disingenuously headed 'Defence of Mr. Edmund Burke', which promised to lift the veil from the cabal at Carlton House, listing a number of key personalities including Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan, Mrs. Fitzherbert, Capt. Paine and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cornwall, with whom Mr. Burke had recently broken ties.<sup>29</sup> Sowing more seeds of confusion, another advertisement placed just thirteen days later was headed, 'Reply **of** Mr. Burke' – not 'Reply **to** Mr. Burke' – again, intimating that the work was written by Burke, although 'Mr. Burke' was now included in an expanded list of people explicitly mentioned in *Lessons*. The different, often contradictory messages that the publishers of *Lessons* were giving off in different advertisements, often in the same newspapers, makes their behaviour appear schizophrenic. The first advertisement for *Lessons* emphasised that they constituted 'a full answer to everything that has been spoken, and everything that can be written by Mr. Edmund Burke, against the emancipation of Civil Societies from Feudal and Superstitious Tyranny'.<sup>30</sup> Yet, as has been shown, subsequent advertisements of the second edition attempted to pass it off as a work either in favour of

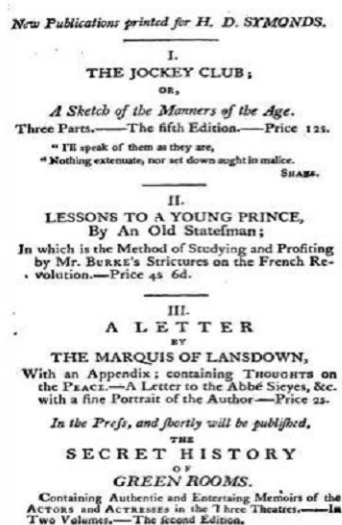
Burke's position regarding hereditary monarchy, or else actually by him. At the same time, new publications lists emphasised how the author abhorred Burke as a 'selfish, designing, hypocritical sophist'.<sup>31</sup> The inconsistency must have been noticed by some readers, but evidently few made the direct connection, and those likely to pass comment were too well schooled in book advertising practices, or too well informed, to swallow the spurious claims. But, given this, what purpose could this contradictory advertising hope to serve? The most plausible answer is that by passing *Lessons* off as Burke's it could piggyback on the phenomenal sales success of his *Reflections* and thereby significantly increase its own sales. Another explanation, which by no means precludes the first, is that by purporting to be by Burke, or at the very least a tract sympathetic to his political position; it became the perfect Trojan horse, entering the minds of incautious readers through the back door. This is especially possible given the London trades' book Diaspora to the provinces, where readers were likely to be less *de jour* with their knowledge of the literary and political scene. The irony of a 'chastisement of Burke' potentially being purchased and read by people imagining that it was by him must not have been lost on either Williams or his publishers. It was the ultimate *coup de grace*, a commercial success achieved by tapping into the aura surrounding Burke's highly successful, if much maligned work, whilst at the same time ideologically devouring its host. By the time the reader reached the last and most substantial 'Lesson on Burke's *Reflections*' it was too late, for they had not only purchased the work, they had also been exposed to its contents, often unwillingly, as Thomas Goold's testimony, encountered before, revealed. Whilst those conversant with the review periodicals were less susceptible to this ploy, how many readers commenced reading only to find out that *Lessons* was not what it purported to be, it is of course impossible to say.

(ii) Booklists and back matter

The second main way that *Lessons* was advertised was through 'New Publications Lists' issued in a variety of forms for Symonds and Ridgway between 1790 and 1793, sometimes as small eight-page catalogues, other times appended as back matter to their other publications. On the most immediate level, they add further testimony to the claim that a strong business relationship existed between the two publishers, since they were regularly issued as joint advertisements, usually as 'New Publications Printed for James Ridgway York-Street, St James's Square: and H.D. Symonds, Paternoster Row, London'. With no individual imprint allocation for each work listed, it was thus asserted that they belonged to a single stable or 'brand', recognisably radical, reform-minded, and after a while, Newgatonian. It mattered little what the actual imprint of an individual title was. For example, one extant list of 'New Publications Printed for H.D. Symonds' listed Williams' *Royal Recollections* (1788), even though they only ever bore Ridgway's imprint.<sup>32</sup> In the late eighteenth century, the meaning of a publishers' imprint was complex and often misleading, lending credence to the notion that *Lessons* was in reality a direct collaboration between Symonds and Ridgway. Further collaborative advertising permutations resulted in Ridgway carrying 'New Publications Lists' for H.D. Symonds in the back matter of works published solely by him, and *vice versa*. As noted by Manogue, this type of collaborative effort visibly accelerated (though did not start) during their imprisonment when, as Iain McCalman points out, feelings of solidarity merged with the practical considerations of managing a business whilst 'stateside'.<sup>33</sup>

Advertising *Lessons* in book lists was a very different act than placing single newspaper advertisements and required a different strategy, which in turn resulted in markedly different advertisement contents. Whereas the audience for newspaper book advertisements was broad,

and by the 1790s far reaching, encompassing a wide range of literary genres, new publications lists were publisher-bookseller specific. Lists would be made available at book shops to take away, usually free, but sometimes with the payment of a small fee, and circulated in coffee houses and clubs. The situation with lists as back matter was slightly more complicated because they could be included in the original printing of a work (usually continuously paginated), or else bound in with a work separately (usually unpaginated, or paginated separately), thereby making it difficult to ascertain whether it was the reader or the publisher who united a particular text with a particular book list advertisement.<sup>34</sup> In the case of *Lessons*, this is important to determine because, the majority of extant lists which advertise *Lessons* are bound as back matter to works by Thomas Paine, indicating that the publisher considered it likely that *Lessons*' political perspective would resonate with Painite sympathisers, supporting Williams' assertion that he provided the intellectual substance to Paine's fiery rhetoric.<sup>35</sup> Book list publishing also presented Symonds and Ridgway with other problems, the most striking being how to decide the amount of words given to each publication in their list, and how to arrange their inventory. Yet, they also presented the opportunity to achieve advertising synergy, vertical and horizontal assimilation, and of promoting to the reader an integrated reading list – a satisfying menu of complimentary texts. Like the sommelier, the bookseller was



expected to select the correct books for his client's political tastes based on an extensive knowledge of their content, and to offer additional, complimentary texts.

Fig 5.2 Different advertising strategies: 'New Publications' lists for H.D. Symonds (left) and James Ridgway (right). © The British Library Board

When Symonds and Ridgway advertised *Lessons* in newspaper book lists that tended to be towards the end of its marketable life, it was no longer the only item being advertised. *Lessons* therefore became part of a broader rhetorical framework that united the whole list. Crucially, Ridgway's booklists were characteristically descriptive, guiding the discerning reader through the various works on offer. Close analysis of surviving lists indicates that although Symonds and Ridgway held a shared political ideology, as far as advertising was concerned they had very different styles [see Fig. 5.2]. Symonds numbered his items in a list with Roman numerals and did not add any personal commentary to the publication's details. Ridgway, on the other hand, left his lists unnumbered and adopted a thematic approach, usually indulging in lengthy and polemical commentaries uniting, as he saw it, various works on the list on the basis of the genesis of their ideas, therein creating a web of radical ideas through small linguistic interpolations and suggesting that full comprehension of a specific work was possible only by reading works which had preceded and influenced it. Whereas there does not appear to be any obvious organising principle behind Symonds' lists, Ridgway's lists were usually grouped thematically and by author. This indicates that he was familiar with the concept of what would in the modern book-trade be called vertical and horizontal integration. Thus, *Lessons* was advertised next to other works by David Williams (horizontal assimilation), observing a chronological sequence.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, in cases where *Lessons* was the only work by Williams advertised, thematic grouping resulted in it being placed next to works by Thomas Paine, the Marquis de Condorcet, and Jean Pierre Brissot, a decision allowing the reader to conveniently locate it on the political spectrum, and implying a similar political perspective. At the top of one 'New Publications' list, Ridgway himself declared that, 'The following political Publications are in the order in which those ideas of free societies have been gradually developed which now agitate Europe, and menace despotism, civil and ecclesiastical'.<sup>37</sup> The list itself was headed by Williams' *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782), followed by his *Lessons*, thereby

asserting that it was the progenitor of Paine's and Brissot's political thought.<sup>38</sup> Unlike newspaper advertisements, booklist advertising tended to focus less on *Lessons*' engagement with Burke, and more on wrestling with the constitutional fall-out from the French Revolution. By contrast, on the few occasions when Ridgway combined the mediums of booklist advertising and newspaper advertising in lists appearing in *The World*, they were organised strictly by genre: 'Biography', 'Miscellaneous Articles', and 'Royal Literature', the latter category under which both Williams' *Royal Recollections* and *Lessons* were advertised, significantly altering the basis on which it was marketed by emphasizing its satirical aspects.

The details of the textual content of the advertisements have been deployed within other sections of the thesis, most notably in Chapter Three on *Lessons*' reception. However, it is clear that Ridgway, with the support of Symonds, conducted a sustained advertising campaign for *Lessons* which exemplified the use of what James Raven has identified as new 'customer-tempting devices' which 'reached new levels of sophistication' during the period.<sup>39</sup> Whilst it is not possible to definitively assess the impact of the title page manipulation, the different tropes used to promote *Lessons* in various advertising formats, and the different media through which they were promoted, the basis of the conditions on which they were bought and sold have been explored. It is also difficult to ascertain the degree to which Williams was himself involved in the process of directly marketing *Lessons*, but active complicity is the likeliest scenario.<sup>40</sup> Claims that the publishers did not know the author have already been debunked in Chapter Two. Some hints supporting active participation in *Lessons*' advertising are evident in correspondence between Williams and Jacques Pierre Brissot, especially the linguistic similarity between phrases in letters that are used verbatim in advertisements. In his letter to Brissot dated 24 November 1790, Williams wrote of his pleasure in bestowing some 'chastisement' on Burke, a phrase echoed in a 'New Publications

List' of 1792.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, in the same letter, Williams complained that the Treasury had banned all extracts of *Lessons* being published in the 'venal papers', a comment that suggests interest, if not familiarity with how *Lessons* was being advertised, reviewed, and received.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, London, March 4 (1791), issue 5570.

<sup>2</sup> Williams remarks, 'some of the most popular and most saleable [works] were taken from me, transcribed with some little interpolations, *Incidents in My Own Life which have been Thought of Some Importance*, (ed.) Peter France, Brighton: University of Sussex Library (1980), p.55.

<sup>3</sup> The epigraphs were from Tacitus, Cicero, and Longinus, and indicative of Williams' Dissenting education. Their translation and 'imitation' in English in later editions of *Lessons* suggests that Williams, or his publishers, were trying to access a similar audience to Paine.

<sup>4</sup> *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 122.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 123; p. 124; p. 125.

<sup>6</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 129; *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 129.

<sup>7</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 146; *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 146.

<sup>8</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 2, p. 133 and *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 133; *Lessons* (1790), 2, p.135 and *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 135.

<sup>9</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 158-159.

<sup>10</sup> *Lessons* 1790), 2, p. 122; *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 122.

<sup>11</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> *Lessons* (1790), 3, p. 139.

<sup>13</sup> Without any data for the number of copies of *Lessons* sold, the number of editions printed, and the time span over which they were printed is the best indication of their commercial success.

<sup>14</sup> James Tierney, 'Book advertisements in mid-18<sup>th</sup>-century newspapers: the example of Robert Dodsley', in Robin Myers and Michael Harris, *A Genius for Letters: Booksellers and Bookselling from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, Delaware: Oak Knoll Publishing (1995).

<sup>15</sup> Goold, *A Vindication of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke's Reflections*, Dublin: P. Wogan, P. Byrne, W. McKenzie and others (1791), p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> *The World*, (23 September, 1790): issue 1162. This is interesting because the title page of the first edition was anonymous.

<sup>17</sup> This figure for publications lists is based on searches of 'back matter' listed on Gale's Eighteenth Century Collections online database, and probably underestimates the figure by a third. The last newspaper advertisement for *Lessons* which I have been able to trace is a small four-line advertisement in *The World*, (10 September, 1792). Advertising in the form of 'New Publications' appended to the back of books or as small catalogues continued to advertise *Lessons* as late as 1799. These were (in order of appearance) *The World*, the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, and the *Morning Chronicle*.

<sup>18</sup> Since Ridgway or Symonds did not directly control these reviews they have been dealt with in Chapter Three: Critical Reaction and Reader Response.

<sup>19</sup> As Tierney notes, the key book publishing and selling season was the autumn and winter months, reflecting the separation between town and country season. For example, no advertisements have been found for the period April-August.

<sup>20</sup> *The World*, (29 November, 1790), issue: 1220; (8 December, 1790), issue: 1228; (11 December, 1790), issue: 1231.

<sup>21</sup> *The World*, (23 September, 1790); Issue 1162.

<sup>22</sup> James Ridgway had obviously bought the rights to this work as it was first published in 1782 by J. Bell.



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<sup>23</sup> Measured by the speed of the appearance of new editions of *Lessons*. See Williams' own appraisal of responses to his work in the Appendix to *Lessons*, from the sixth London edition onwards, pp. 161-182.

<sup>24</sup> It has not been possible to find out what the cost of advertising in the three newspapers that might have had some bearing on the size or frequency of advertisements.

<sup>25</sup> Such as, 16, 21, 22, 28 November, 9, 14, 24, 27, 29 December (1791), 10, 13, 19, 20, 21, 25 September (1792).

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Paine, *Letter Addressed to the Addressers on the Late Proclamation* (n.p., n.d.) Part of the reason for the sales success of Paine's *Letter* was that the Society for Constitutional information (of which Ridgway and Symonds were members) had undertaken the printing and distribution of 15,000 copies. Williams' decision not to join this Society – was possibly as Dybikowski notes, due to the high expense of membership, but much more likely due to the ideological disagreements over the meaning of the 'Glorious Revolution'.

<sup>27</sup> Research suggests *Reflections* sold in excess of 17,500 copies within the first year of publication, not including the highly successful French translation that sold 2,500 copies in the first month.

<sup>28</sup> These misattribution errors generally fall in to two categories: those compiling library catalogues (common); writers who have actually read the *Lessons* (relatively rare). For an example of the former see, *Catalogue of the Books, pamphlets, newspapers, maps, charts, manuscripts and etc in the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Boston: John Eliot (1811), p. 12. For a good example of the latter, see 'A Prophecy in Jest', in *Notes and Queries*, June (1863), Series 3, vol. III, p. 197, 'Writing of the American constitution, Burke has said "But I think the whole wants the unity, the harmony, capacity of common judgment and general will, which would have resulted from a general organization of the republic into one body; and that in time the various characters and interests of the American states will disunite and alienate them"' (*Lessons to a Young Prince*, p. 68), Charles Wylie'. The recent facsimile reprint of *Lessons* by Kessinger Publications is wrongly attributed to Edmund Burke.

<sup>29</sup> *The World*, (16 November, 1790), issue: 1209.

<sup>30</sup> *The World*, (23 September, 1790), issue: 1162. Correspondence between Brissot and Williams suggests that he was aware that Edmund Burke was writing an account of the French Revolution, and this advertisement suggests that *Lessons* were designed to pre-emptively counter what he would say. As chapter one shows however, *Lessons* did not originate as a response to Burke's political philosophy.

<sup>31</sup> 'New Publications, Printed for James Ridgway, York Street, St James's Square; and H.D. Symonds, Paternoster Row, London. Appended to, Thomas Paine, *Miscellaneous Articles*, London: Ridgway (1792), p. 35.

<sup>32</sup> Appended to the British Library's copy of Thomas Paine's *Two Letters to Lord Onslow*, London: Ridgway (1792).

<sup>33</sup> Several entries in the prison diary of Thomas Lloyd written between 17 February 1794 until the day of his release 2 January 1796, indicate that whilst in prison Ridgway was the supplier of paper and stationery to inmates; 'Wrote to Ridgway & an answer, promised to send me paper &c. tomorrow' (p. 85) & written to Ridgway for paper, but not got it' (p.85), 'The Diary of Thomas Lloyd Kept in Newgate Prison, 1794-96', in *Newgate in Revolution: An Anthology of Radical Prison Literature in the Age of Revolution*, London & New York: Continuum (2005), pp. 81-112. Iain McCalman, "'Patriots in Prison': Newgate Radicalism in the Age of Revolution', in *Newgate in Revolution: An Anthology of Radical Prison Literature in the Age of Revolution*, London & New York: Continuum (2005). The term 'stateside' referred to the side of Newgate prison designated for the confinement of prisoners convicted for sedition and libels against the state, and was separated by a courtyard from the 'felons side' which included murders, thieves, arsonists, and other criminals.

<sup>34</sup> This situation is sometimes made easier when the advertisement is separately paginated, indicating that it was intended for distribution on its own, and bound in with a variety of works.

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<sup>35</sup> The works by Paine featuring 'New Publication Lists' advertising *Lessons* were: *A Letter Addressed to the Abbe Raynal*, London: J. Ridgway (1792); *A Letter to the Earl of Shelburne*, London: J. Ridgway (1791); *Miscellaneous Articles*, London: J. Ridgway (1792); and the third and fourth editions of *Two Letters to Lord Onslow*, London: J. Ridgway (1792). For similarities between the political thought of Paine and Williams, and an assessment of contemporary comparisons between the two men see, chapters one and two.

<sup>36</sup> This grouping by author included anonymous works, and so provides a rich source of evidence to help attribute works to David Williams, as well as other authors.

<sup>37</sup> 'New Publications Printed for James Ridgway, York Street, St. James's Square', appended to [William Cuninghame], *The Rights of Kings*, London: J. Ridgway (1791).

<sup>38</sup> A notion accepted by at least one hostile contemporary who satirised David Williams as Don Quixote, attended by Thomas Paine as Sancho Panza.

<sup>39</sup> James Raven, *The Business of Books: Booksellers and the English Book Trade*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2007), p. 270.

<sup>40</sup> Dybikowski has attributed various promotional materials regarding Dr. Velnos Vegetable Syrup to Williams, also published by Ridgway, and it is therefore not impossible that he also contributed to the advertising material for *Lessons*. See, *On Burning Ground*, pp. 310-311.

<sup>41</sup> A.N., Ms. 446AP6: David Williams to Jacques Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.

<sup>42</sup> In response to this ban the *Scots Magazine*, 53. (January, 1791), pp. 22-23, published uncharacteristically lengthy extracts from *Lessons*.

## ~ Conclusion ~

### (I) Introduction

This thesis had the underlying goal of understanding why the fast-selling political pamphlet, *Lessons to a Young Prince* (1790), by David Williams, has been consistently misattributed, often misread, and largely written off by modern historiography as a rather insignificant reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections* (1780), despite some interest by contemporaries. *Lessons'* main themes were, critiquing parliamentary jobbing and corruption, discussing constitutional systems, and satirizing self-interest.

Part I of the thesis provided a general *précis* of *Lessons*, and showed how it went through a metamorphosis between the first and second editions, changing from what was ostensibly a pedagogical project, a sequel to *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789) that instructed the Prince of Wales, to a fully-fledged reply to Burke's *Reflections*. This change, it has been argued, ultimately obscured the preceding original nine lessons which from then on, received little contemporary comment. However, evidence shows that Williams not only acquiesced to this change in scope, but promoted it, defending his actions in the Appendix to the sixth edition. The final section of Chapter One highlights the problems associated with trying to project intended readerships, suggesting that in the case of *Lessons*, the best way to access this is through advertising because it is a specific medium through which bookseller and book consumer communicated.

Part II of the thesis exposed *Lessons* to a new set of readings in the light of its publishers' activities and was able to fill a lot of gaps in the bibliographical record.

## (II) Specific conclusions

A range of techniques and approaches have been used throughout the four main chapters of Part II, which were unified by the themes of publisher-influence and reader-response.

Chapter Two focused on the anonymity, and latterly the pseudonymity of *Lessons*, its function and effect on readership. It concluded that whilst there was some risk associated with publishing *Lessons*, both in terms of prosecution and the fear of negative review, this was insufficient as an explanation. The introduction of a pseudonym to the title page from the second edition onwards performed a rhetorical function, which further supported the message within the text. More importantly, however, this anonymity was shown, through primary sources, to be largely only fictional or literary: fictional but maintained by a collective effort, including the author, publisher, and his literary friends. Anonymity was sustained over a long period of time, through newspaper insertions which alluded to the mysterious nature of the author, odes and poems which were sent in to the author from enraptured readers, and an advertisement thanking Gentlemen for their forbearance when accused of authoring *Lessons*. The chapter also showed how the pseudonym 'Old Statesman' traded off both its Platonic association and contemporary meaning to draw concrete reader reaction, especially in the periodical reviews. The chapter ended by arguing that the author and publishers pursued a deliberate policy of increasing *Lessons*' appeal through the concept of enigma. However, just as the absence of an author could enhance the appeal and demand for a work, an overdose of enigma – the absence of the author for too long – could lead to a complete lack of interest.

Chapter Three focused on critical reaction and reader-response to *Lessons*. In this chapter periodical review commentary was analyzed, as well as the three main pamphlet

responses to *Lessons*. This analysis showed overwhelmingly that the way *Lessons* was delivered, in a satirical style, mattered to contemporaries and affected the way they read it. The chapter also looked at ephemeral readings of *Lessons* in non-review sources, though usually a critical setting. The unlisted reference to *Lessons* in the diary of Anna Seward, demonstrated how *Lessons* was not read in isolation, but in most cases formed a portfolio of themed readings. Critic Thomas Goold indicated in his attack on *Lessons* that he failed to read the preface (cover to cover), whilst Seward's list of reading was not in the order that they were released, reminding us that our basic assumptions regarding the physical act of reading might not always be correct. While researching the chapter it seemed apparent that a distinction should be made between comments on *Lessons* and citations of *Lessons*: which sought it as an authority. The chapter concluded that reader-response was genuinely mixed, but limited.

The fourth and fifth chapters turned very specifically to the publisher and distributor of *Lessons* Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway. In the initial research it was originally planned to map their political ideas against those expressed by Williams. However, it soon became apparent that so little was known about either of them, that the first goal of this part of the research was to build up their profiles. A large body of previously unread material was examined, and showed that their political associations changed as they matured as businessmen booksellers and became acquainted with the thinkers they published. Their time spent in Newgate Prison for seditious libel was formative, though had limited impact on their relationship with David Williams.

From a bibliographical perspective the thesis confirmed Williams' authorship of *Lessons*, through a book advertising list, and learnt of the possible existence of a previously

unknown variant American edition with an additional 'lesson on the American Revolution'. Advertising material for the American edition of *Lessons* also provided valuable dating evidence for the publication timeline of *Lessons*.

### (III) Limitations of the thesis

Despite deriving a number of firm conclusions based on the interpretation of concrete research, the thesis does have a number of limitations. The most important problem was the determination of publisher-influence which relied upon the analysis of textual changes, off-the-cuff remarks, deduction, and inference. Without the existence of the publishers' correspondence it is difficult to argue towards their influence, but through various lines of approach, the thesis puts a strong case forward. I think the thesis has proved that they were important figures in the promotion and sale of *Lessons*.

The overall structure of the thesis was both a strength and a limitation. The highly detailed lens applied to a range of print media in Part II gave opportunities of making connections that were hitherto not transparent. However, on the other hand, the narrative that was constructed on the basis of the assimilation of scattered textual remnants, at times threatened to read too much into casual connections. We do not know, for example, that Williams was closely involved in the advertising strategy for *Lessons* that developed, or whether that was solely the responsibility of Ridgway and Symonds. Nevertheless, the thesis has shown that by paying attention to the material culture of the book and conducting careful cross textual readings, significant meaning and value can be added to the actual text itself.

#### (IV) Further extensions and other avenues of research

There is undoubtedly more scope for research on James Ridgway and Henry Delahay Symonds, who remain possibly the most elusive, but important, of all eighteenth-century pamphlet publishers. The thesis intimates that they had personal, almost familial connections with David Williams, and these avenues would be worth pursuing. The effect they had on *Lessons* has been shown, I think, convincing, but widening the scope to look at their other publications over this period would also provide interesting material.

Secondly, the thesis suggests that *Lessons* was read differently in America and France. The argument presented suggests that in America, *Lessons* was very favourably received, but how it was used in America remains to be studied. In France, although a French translation appeared just months after the original English edition, it is difficult to know whether the ideas they contained were of interest to the constitution framers, or whether Williams' direct political involvement was more desired. Further study into the reception of *Lessons* – rather than Williams – in France ought, with advantage, to be added to this study.

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