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Authorship and the Role of Anonymity and Pseudonymity in David Williams' *Lessons to a Young Prince*

Peter Robinson

As the events of the French Revolution reached their peak, David Williams (1738–1816), former dissenting minister-turned-deist, educator, and political reformer, published the pamphlet *Lessons to a Young Prince* in which he alerted the Prince of Wales to the benefits of political misanthropy. Although a transparent attack on party politicking, the work laid out an alternative constitutional vision for England, well received in reforming circles. Nonetheless, the advent of the Revolution changed the way *Lessons* were read by contemporaries and led to the addition of a substantial extra lesson which responded to Edmund Burke's rather lurid account of the excesses of the *sans-culottes*. However, unlike many of his other works and despite their wide readership, *Lessons* were never owned by Williams, appearing anonymously in their first edition, and subsequently in all other editions under the pseudonym 'Old Statesman'. This article seeks to explain Williams' decision to remain uncoupled from his work and argues that its rhetorical function far exceeded its use as a means to avoid censorship.

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 pathos of anonymous writing in England between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, signalling the end of ‘courtly conventions of anonymity’¹⁾ and marking the beginning of a reversal in attitudes towards the use of anonymity for scientific and literary works. Scientific works, Foucault argues, previously derived authority from their association with learned men, but this gradually gave way to the desire to disassociate the particularity of the author from the universal credentials of scientific discourse. In the other direction, literary works which had stronger traditions of anonymity developed a powerful ‘cult of the author’, their subjectivity celebrated as distinctiveness. However, for Sher, whilst Foucault’s general point concerning the ‘author-function in literary productions’²⁾ 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’. Throughout the eighteenth century, the vast majority of Scottish authors (some seventy-five percent) wrote to be ‘known by their reader’,³⁾ 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 before the twentieth century in the English-speaking world, anonymity was ‘at least as much the norm as signed authorship’.⁴⁾ Whilst Sher is careful to point out that when political pamphlets are taken into account, in totality the claims are more accurate, his larger point is that literary anonymity has a long tradition – as long as writing itself – and that the use of anonymity is transient, 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 not usually a decision made light-heartedly, and potentially sheds light on authorial intent, reflexivity, and projected audience. 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 are cognizant of literary conventions and trade lore, but who cannot escape the immediacy of their material and thought environment.

The preponderance of the use of anonymity in late eighteenth-century political pamphlets, a *corpus* within which *Lessons* take their 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'.⁵⁾ 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,⁶⁾ or else ensures that the identity of the author is a deliberately 'open secret', was prevalent in the late eighteenth century, and raises questions about authorial intention which are directly relevant to *Lessons*. On the other hand, true anonymity, which occurs only when a text genuinely appears without any meaningful indication of authorship, is more problematic because it is often incorrectly assumed that this is the same as permanent anonymity, when in fact 'true anonymity' need only last as long as is intended. However, this categorisation of different types of anonymity, though useful, can only be made meaningful for a particular text when coupled with appreciable historical evidence, including clear evidence of authorial intent, which can often only be identified through analysis of reader response. It is therefore incumbent upon historians to show that if, for example, the anonymity of a work is identified as conforming to Foucault's

‘guise of an enigma’⁷⁾, contemporaries did actually view the absence of the author as enigmatic. Significant divergence between authorial/publisher intention 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 sheds considerable light not only 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 which seem to complicate Sher’s thesis.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, authorship of *Lessons* was only an attribution-by-convention, though they were frequently misattributed. It is the central argument of this article that their misattribution is due to the cautious and evasive language used by the author, but also, the activities of their publisher and distributor, Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway, who issued a series of misleading advertisements. The anonymity of *Lessons* is particularly important to analyse because it triggered efforts by contemporaries to associate them with a person, and the 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 capacity 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 adopted in his 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 suddenly lies with its originator, not, as Barthes argues, its ‘destination’.⁸⁾ A third result of anonymity is that the reader tries to develop a surrogate for the ‘missing author’ so that the text is identified 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, which can be used to pose alternative questions of a text, such as why a body of ideas are attributed to a certain person or ideological position. In light of the importance of anonymity to the meaning of a text, my argument starts by removing any lingering doubt about David 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 they were truly anonymous as they 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 1790,⁹⁾ and all subsequent editions under the pseudonym ‘Old Statesman’. This subtle transition from anonymity to pseudonymity is significant. As the *Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1818* accurately recorded, they were ‘never publicly avowed’¹⁰⁾ by David Williams. They were not, for example, mentioned in his posthumously published autobiography *Incidents*, and never appeared under his name. It was not until midway through the twentieth century that his name sake Prof. David Williams subjected them to any sustained research, categorically affirming that there was ‘no question’¹¹⁾ about his authorship, although he offered little evidence to support this. Concrete proof finally emerged in the form of a series of letters written by David Williams to the Girondin 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, and further proof-positive emerged during research for this article in the form of a list of ‘New Publications’ for James Ridgway appended as back matter to a work by Henry Yorke, *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].¹²⁾ Its 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 their title page there

can now be no doubt that David Williams was the author. It is a different matter entirely however, to establish whether absolute anonymity was ever really intended by the author, or indeed whether anonymity existed in practice. 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 'escape[ing] the vulgar eyes [of criticism]'.¹³⁾ But, whether authorship of *Lessons* was widely known to eighteenth-century readers matters because, as this article shows, it was a decisive factor in determining how the ideas they contained were delivered.

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.'¹⁴⁾ A brief survey of early periodical reviews and reaction to *Lessons* suggests that he largely achieved this aim, and that in the first year and a half in which they circulated, from autumn 1790 to December 1791, authorship was in the most part genuinely 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'.¹⁵⁾ Although the *Critical Review* hinted in its review of the first edition, produced within two months of *Lessons*' first appearance, that from the 'characteristical part' they thought they could 'recognize the author from a

former production',¹⁶⁾ they were not certain enough to unmask him. However, by the time of their review of the second edition, deemed necessary because of the addition of the large and controversial 'Lesson on the Mode of Studying and Profiting by the Reflections of the French Revolution by the Hon. Edmund Burke', 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.¹⁷⁾ The review began astutely, 'The Old Statesman has long been employed giving lectures [...] on "political liberty"'.¹⁸⁾ However, six other reviews which appeared between November 1790 and December 1791, 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'.¹⁹⁾ The author of the most direct reply to *Lessons* yet uncovered, which appeared in 1791, *Defence of the Constitution*, possibly by the Rev. Jerom Alley, 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*'.²⁰⁾ 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 the work was completely misattributed, as in the case of the contemporary reader whose copy of the 1791 Dublin edition held at the National Library of Wales bears the note, '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'.²¹⁾

On the surface at least, *Lessons* were 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. The existence of an advertisement placed by their publisher Henry Delahay Symonds in the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* dated 4

March 1791 is further evidence that the work was often misattributed and that their 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'.²²⁾ The advertisement also informed the reader that 'the Second and Sixth editions only have had his revision; and he has added an Appendix, which may be had for 6d. by the purchasers of former editions'.²³⁾ 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*²⁴⁾ and *A Plan of Association*²⁵⁾ to connect him with *Lessons*. Secondly, anonymity was further mitigated by the extensive advertising prospectuses for books published and distributed by Henry Delahay Symonds and James Ridgway which 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 by David Williams headed by *Letters on Political Liberty* (1782).²⁶⁾ The organisation of advertisements and grouping of texts within them also offer clues as to how the publishers considered the ideological and political content of their inventory. In the above case, the publisher claimed to have organised the list 'in [the] order [in] which those ideas of free societies have been gradually developed which now agitate Europe',²⁷⁾ 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 still used by leading internet

booksellers today.²⁸⁾

From this perspective, *Lessons* seem to fall better into Sher's category of 'mitigated anonymity', in which the author, in co-operation with his publishers, revealed enough hints throughout the text and promotional material for the attentive reader to make the connection and identify the author, as many leading reviewers did within a year and a half of publication. *Letters on Political Liberty*²⁹⁾ and *A Plan of Association* transparently referred to in *Lessons* were clearly two of his 'former efforts,'³⁰⁾ whose fate and inefficacy he was now anxious to avoid with *Lessons*, however much he avowed otherwise.

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 shows, he was in frequent and intimate contact with his publishers throughout the period.³¹⁾ 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 he intended to gradually uncloak himself and then to strengthen his authorship credentials over a period of time, and was in this sense merely flirting with anonymity. His *Letters on Political Liberty* provide the precedent for this. Such an interpretation is given further weight by the fact that the period of 'true anonymity' which *Lessons* experienced was relatively short-lived. In 1792, Captain Thomas Morris who was intimately acquainted with David Williams went some way to dispelling any uncertainty which remained when in his *General View of*

*the Life and Writings of the Rev. David Williams*³²⁾ he stated that it was likely that Williams was the author. Despite his reluctance to affirm authorship outright, the presence in the sixth and seventh London editions of *Lessons of Morris*' 'Ode in Honour of the Unknown Author of *Lessons to a Young Prince*',³³⁾ gave the suggestion further credence in the eyes of contemporaries. 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.³⁴⁾ Later, perhaps sharp-eyed readers would also have seen the slip by the publisher³⁵⁾ in the 'New Publications' list referred to earlier, which appeared in 1793.

By 12 October 1795 the eccentric antiquarian scholar Joseph Ritson confidently listed *Lessons* as being by Williams in a list of works by that 'volumous writer'³⁶⁾ which he was attempting to procure for his nephew. 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',³⁷⁾ authorship was largely accepted in England by the middle of the decade.³⁸⁾ 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'.³⁹⁾ 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, 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’. 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 relatively subdued responses to *Lessons*. It also partly explains the frequency of poetic responses to the ‘Unknown Author of *Lessons*’ and the relative 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.⁴⁰⁾

(III) Reasons for anonymity

In his discussion of anonymity and the use of pseudonyms Sher identifies several different categories which each had distinct rationales.⁴¹⁾ 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, there were other options 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 ('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'⁴²⁾ – anonymity designed to provoke speculation and intrigue.

When *Lessons* are examined from all three perspectives the strategy behind their anonymity is less clear-cut than Sher's formula 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 they were 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. Close analysis also suggests that *Lessons* offered their author an additional fourth dimension to his anonymity: anonymity as an integral part of the text's rhetoric, mirroring the author'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*. The Rev. Jerom Alley⁴³⁾ for example, albeit without offering evidence, 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. He 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*]',⁴⁴⁾ 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.⁴⁵⁾ 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 Alley 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.

But 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*⁴⁶⁾ which were claimed by Williams and received no attention from the authorities, only two factors can 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.⁴⁷⁾ The characteristic parts of *Lessons* which satirised in particular William Pitt, Charles Fox, Edmund Burke and Charles Brinsley Sheridan, were certainly libellous by eighteenth-century standards,⁴⁸⁾ but they were relatively mild compared with many other pamphlets circulating at the time. Of far greater importance was that they appeared immediately in the wake of the French Revolution which meant they circulated at a time of dramatically heightened government sensitivity about political criticism and dissent. Although a Royal Proclamation against seditious libel was not issued until the 21 May 1792, and Pitt's reign of 'terror', the euphemism for the politically inspired prosecutions of authors and booksellers, did not get into full swing 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 as copies continued to be sold, circulated, and read years after their publication date,⁴⁹⁾ while prosecutions for libel could take several months, even years to materialise, as Crown agents built their case. 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*,⁵⁰⁾ impressed upon Williams the reality of the ongoing threat of prosecution and incarceration. Given that more than one contemporary argued that the ideas contained within *Lessons* were the intellectual substance behind Paine's 'libel on the constitution'⁵¹⁾ in the *Rights of Man*, initial anonymity was an important factor in ensuring the author's freedom from political molestation.

Despite the double protection afforded by anonymity and careful composition, Williams certainly felt some political heat. In a letter to Brissot in Paris 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'.⁵²⁾

The comment was repeated in a note in the sixth edition: ‘Menaces have been used to intimidate the author’,⁵³⁾ and the rumour, ‘industriously circulated, “that the Work is a Libel; and if the Author were known he would be exemplarily punished”’.⁵⁴⁾ The only difference in sentiment was that Williams now attributed this view specifically to Lord Thurlow, the Lord High Chancellor of England, the man who was responsible for conducting political prosecutions, and therefore raising the jeopardy considerably.⁵⁵⁾ 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’.⁵⁶⁾ It seems likely that it was to repair this deficit that the periodical reviews, which did not come under the scope of this ban, carried such unusually lengthy extracts from *Lessons*.⁵⁷⁾ Ensuring his own personal safety was without question one reason why Williams continued to use 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 and received 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 to *Lessons*. 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 going on to deny or to claim them. 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 they were 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 is evidenced by a slew of high-profile detentions, and the second, the fact that his satirical 'chastisement'⁵⁸⁾ 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 prosecution for libel. 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 to the ranks of the Administration.⁵⁹⁾ 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'.⁶⁰ His authorship was therefore not to be widely known or broadcast amongst his peers, and certainly not commensurate with the contemporary sketch of him as a 'solemn pompous pedagogue'⁶¹ 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',⁶² as described by his admirer Citizeness Roland, nor still as 'Mentor to Royal George's Son'.⁶³

There is further evidence to support the argument that Williams was acutely aware of the genre which *Lessons* had slipped into. In another letter to Brissot dated 27 September 1790, he admitted that 'parts of the Lessons wear a satirical form' but insisted that his friend could 'rely on the accuracy & truth of every circumstance & allusion'.⁶⁴ The added 'Lesson on Burke' tipped the balance between satirical part and satirical whole. 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',⁶⁵ such reticence seems well placed. The distinction between a work appearing anonymously 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].⁶⁶ 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 a work might appear anonymously is that it imbues the work with a mysterious air, inducing speculation about the identity of the author, his political affiliations and his intentions – or using Foucault's phraseology, transforming the author into an enigma. 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 Captain Thomas Morris, which first appeared in *The World* on the 2 December 1790 before being attached as an Appendix to the sixth edition of *Lessons*, was carefully calculated to stimulate interest in them 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.⁶⁷⁾

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].⁶⁸⁾ In other words, he did not want to be named as the author of the deistical attack on the Christian Church whose full title read, *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 suggests 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,⁶⁹⁾ let it always be by my full & plain Name David Williams – without any epithet of Reverend & etc' [my emphasis]. Having abandoned the profession of Dissenting Minister in the early 1770s he was clearly anxious to distance himself from the title's connotations.⁷⁰⁾ This sensitivity over address was also detected by a correspondent to 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...'⁷¹⁾

The application of 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, shows them to be interdependent. Williams' anonymity was designed to take advantage of all three. Before reaching any final conclusions, 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 effects of anonymity were upheld by the use of a pseudonym that was not recognised by contemporaries in the way that, for example, Peter Pindar⁷²⁾ was known to be the alias of John Walcott, or Anthony Pasquin as the alias of John Williams. It was in fact the only occasion when David Williams used a pseudonym for any of his works, thereby strongly suggesting that it was designed to serve a particular purpose. It is argued that this purpose related to the way that Williams wanted to frame himself within the *Lessons*. The choice of pseudonym, 'Old Statesman', was used to emphasise the author's benign 'disinterestedness'⁷³⁾ and the absence of desire for personal aggrandisement, mirroring one of the central messages of the entire work which was, as one reviewer put it, 'the subject of [political] favouritism'.⁷⁴⁾ Pseudonymity drew a stark contrast between the author's 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. Its effectiveness rested on a simple rhetorical play: since the author was unknown, he could not be accused of courting acclaim or recognition by a particular faction. It is true that the complete anonymity of the first edition had this rhetorical effect too, but importantly the introduction to the title page of the *nom-de-plume* 'Old Statesman',⁷⁵⁾ conveyed to the reader a sense of the author's experience, wisdom and gravitas, whilst reminding him that he had, 'not been a spectator

only of the incidents of this age.⁷⁶⁾ The author, although unknown, was not *persona non-grata*. This epitaph formed part of a carefully orchestrated rhetorical ploy and demonstrated willingness to manipulate reality. David Williams was at this time only fifty-two years of age, hardly ‘old’, even by eighteenth-century standards. Nor was he in the true sense of the term a statesman.

Lessons represented an extended critique of the party system, of ‘pocket boroughs’, and preferment paid for by both royal households and great aristocratic families, and showed that Williams was at pains to deny that *Lessons* were an attempt to curry favour with the Prince of Wales to whom they were addressed.⁷⁷⁾ Indeed, so aloof and independent is the ‘Old Statesman’ that he views political corruption not as simply part of the system, but rather, as essential to the system which is what *Lessons* in part try to overhaul. The effectiveness of this effort to uncouple authorship as fully as possible from its association with 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 pseudonym ‘Old Statesman’ which implied both intellectual and financial independence. The image projected by the author, which the pseudonym helped to convey, was not of the furtive author sniping at a distance – a radical agitator – but of a disinterested, would-be preceptor of the Prince of Wales whose strong sense of public virtue and duty were motivation enough for his services. Pseudonymity was a statement that the work should be taken seriously despite its satirical elements. Several leading reviewers took the bait, describing the author as ‘Mentor’, ‘Sage’, and ‘Preceptor’.

However, the careful manipulation of the terms on which *Lessons* were presented to the public extended beyond the title page. The addition of the pseudonym in the second edition was accompanied by the addition of an

engraving of the Prince of Wales by van Assen⁷⁸⁾, prominently positioned opposite the title page, cementing the overall impression of respectability, and that it was officially sanctioned. However, as *the Monthly Review* noted, 'sufficient hints are given, not only by a portrait, as a frontispiece, but through the whole course of the *Lessons*, who is the Telemachus'.⁷⁹⁾ Close comparison with a very similar profile portrait contained in the eight-volume 1791 Edinburgh edition of Smollett's continuation of Hume's *History of England*⁸⁰⁾ published a year later, I argue, shows that the van Assen engraving deliberately made the Prince appear more youthful, almost boy-like, with puppy fat and knavish locks, thus heightening the impression that he, the Young Prince, could still be 'lessoned' by Williams, the 'Old Statesman'.

This did not so much represent a change in strategy from the first edition, rather an amplification of the existing one. From the outset, Williams decried any motive behind his publication but that of a 'public nature',⁸¹⁾ 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',⁸²⁾ rather than as a genuine effort to maintain the secrecy of his identity. 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'.⁸³⁾ By casting himself as the 'Old Statesman', Williams portrayed himself to his readers as the very antithesis of the playwright and Opposition M.P. Richard Brinsley Sheridan,⁸⁴⁾ and the eloquent orator Edmund Burke,⁸⁵⁾ whom he accused of putting personal interest before that of the public weal. As in previous publications dedicated to the Prince of Wales,⁸⁶⁾ Williams found

little to praise in his conduct, but considered that he was perhaps the Nation's only reforming hope – a hope that by the second edition of *Lessons* looked increasingly forlorn. 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'.⁸⁷⁾ With anonymity tenuously preserved and its effects enhanced by 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',⁸⁸⁾ and thus had a rhetorical dimension in addition to the other more conventional functions of anonymity.

It is difficult to come to an accurate assessment of whether the ends that Williams wished to achieve through not declaring *Lessons* to be his publicly were actually met. To do so must involve a study of how they were received and read, which is beyond the scope of this article. Certainly *Lessons* were one of the few major works which he did not own in his autobiography, *Incidents*. Yet, they were second only to *Royal Recollections* in the number of editions which they went through. The enigmatic value of anonymity and pseudonymity, bolstered by the numerous poems addressed to the 'unknown author' and their 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!'⁸⁹⁾ This was not the only sceptical voice. In the Appendix to *Lessons* in which he responded to claims that 'the Author's satire [was] the offspring of disappointment,'⁹⁰⁾ he countered by declaring that various paths of ambition had been open to him at different times, but that, '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'.⁹¹⁾ In his very anonymity, Williams was making a statement to his reader, the sincerity of which was palpable.

Notes

- 1) 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 very 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). Whilst in 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 establish a reputation by writing openly.
- 2) *Enlightenment and the Book*, p. 149.
- 3) *Ibid.* p. 154.
- 4) *Ibid.* p. 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).

- 5) *Ibid.* p. 148.
- 6) 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 which did not appear anonymously.
- 7) 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).
- 8) Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, (ed. & trans.), Stephen Heath, New York: Hill, (1977), p. 148.
- 9) 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'.
- 10) *Annual Biography and Obituary for the Year 1818*, vol. II, London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & others (1818), p. 48.
- 11) 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.
- 12) James Ridgway, 'New Publications', appended to Henry Yorke, *These are the Times that Try Men's Souls!*, London: Ridgway & Symonds (1793).
- 13) 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. For ease of reference, henceforth citations will take the form of *Lessons*, followed by the date, edition number, and page reference.
- 14) *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iii.
- 15) 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. 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.
- 16) *Critical Review*, 70 (1790), p. 455.
- 17) [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.
- 18) *Critical Review*, 1 (1791), pp. 230–231.
 - 19) *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
 - 20) [Jerom Alley?] *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.
 - 21) 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.
 - 22) *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, London, March 4 (1791), issue 5570.
 - 23) *Ibid.*
 - 24) [David Williams], *Letters on Political Liberty*, London: T. Evans (1782), cited on pp. 76–77 of the first edition of *Lessons*.
 - 25) [David Williams], *A Plan of Association*, London: G. Kearsly (1780), cited on pp. 76–77 of the first edition of *Lessons*.
 - 26) 'New Publications Printed for James Ridgway', London: J. Ridgway (1791), appended to [Anon], *The Rights of Kings*, London: J. Ridgway (1791), pp. 1–3.
 - 27) 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.
 - 28) The internet-based company Amazon.com uses this technique heavily.
 - 29) *Letters on Political Liberty* carried Williams' name on the title page from the second edition onwards, though no copy appears extant.
 - 30) *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iv.
 - 31) 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).
- 32) Thomas Morris, *A General View of the life and Writings of the Rev. David Williams*, London: J. Ridgway (1792).
 - 33) 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).
 - 34) For David Williams' connection with Velnos Vegetable Syrup see *On Burning Ground*, pp. 310–312.
 - 35) This error may have been due to the imprisonment of Symonds and Ridgway for seditious libel, when they did not have direct supervision of their businesses.
 - 36) 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 overrate 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>].
- 37) *British Public Characters of 1798*, London: R. Phillips (1798), p. 471.
 - 38) Anonymity seems to have persisted longer in America, and conversely, for a shorter period in France.
 - 39) *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.
 - 40) 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.
 - 41) *Enlightenment and the Book*, pp.148–155.
 - 42) *Ibid.* p. 150.
 - 43) Attribution of this work to the Rev. Jerom Alley is based on textual and argumentative similarities with his *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). The Latin phrase ‘*Audi alteram partem*’ (hear the people) appears on the title pages on both works and stylistically in other ways the resemblance is compelling.
- 44) [Jerom Alley?], *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.
- 45) 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.
- 46) *On Burning Ground*, pp. 186–187.
- 47) 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).
- 48) 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, and ironic sidestep the head of the advertisement stated, ‘the following personages appear in glowing colours’, *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*; London, March 4 (1791), issue 5570.
- 49) 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 an immediately following letter he remarked that he 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).
- 50) The importance of the association between Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man Pt II* and *Lessons to a Young Prince* has not been adequately explored.

- 51) *Defence of the Constitution of England*, title page.
- 52) A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.
- 53) *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 169.
- 54) *Ibid.* p. 170.
- 55) 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 in My Own Life which have Been Thought of Some Importance*, (ed.), Peter France, Falmer: University of Sussex (1980), 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).
- 56) A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jacques Pierre Brissot, 24 November 1790.
- 57) For example, the *Scots Magazine*, no. 53 (January: 1791), pp.22–23, which reprinted eight full paragraphs.
- 58) *Ibid.*
- 59) 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.
- 60) *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.
- 61) John King, *Mr. King's Apology, or a Reply to his Calumniators. The Objects Treated and Facts Stated*, London: T. Wilkins (1798), p. 35.

- 62) 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.
- 63) ‘Impromptu Addressed to the Unknown Author of Lessons to a Young Prince’, Appendix to *Lessons*, (1791), 6, p. 176 (1791).
- 64) A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 27 September 1790.
- 65) *British Public Characters*, p. 471.
- 66) *Letters of Joseph Ritson*, p. 101.
- 67) 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*.
- 68) A.N., Ms. 446AP6, David Williams to Jean Pierre Brissot, 27 April 1789.
- 69) Williams is apparently referring to *Le patriote français* which he edited from 10 April 1789 until his arrest by the Montagnard faction on the 2 June 1793.
- 70) 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*.
- 71) *St James’s Chronicle*, 21 July (1791), issue 4731.
- 72) 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).
- 73) *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iii.
- 74) *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
- 75) 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’. Such a view is consistent with his long held view that these men were orators rather than political thinkers.
- 76) *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iv.
- 77) The increasingly negative attitude of David Williams towards the Prince of Wales is

- indicated by the fact that *Lectures on Political Principles* (1789) were 'dedicated' to the Prince of Wales, whereas *Lessons* (1790) were 'addressed' to him.
- 78) 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 calculates him as being 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.
- 79) *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
- 80) 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.
- 81) *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. iv.
- 82) *Ibid.* p. 13.
- 83) *Ibid.* p. 3.
- 84) 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.
- 85) Edmund Burke (1729–1797), an Anglo-Irish Whig M.P.
- 86) 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.
- 87) *Lessons* (1790), 1, p. 90.
- 88) See, *Lessons* (1790), 1, pp. 9, 18, 20, 21.
- 89) *Monthly Review*, 4 (1791), p. 63.
- 90) *Lessons* (1791), 6, p. 181.
- 91) *Ibid.*