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## **Masks of Refinement: Pseudonym, Paratext, and Authorship in the Early Poetry of Thomas Moore.**

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Abstract: Thomas Moore adopted the pseudonymous persona of Thomas Little in order to place his early amorous poetry within distinct literary, historical, and generic contexts. He was motivated by a desire to provoke a favorable response from his readers by alluding to his literary precursors, but also by a keen awareness that crude biographical inferences were likely to be made on the basis of the poems' morality. These aesthetic and functional objectives are evident in the overlapping irony and sincerity of the volume's paratextual strategies. These strategies consistently tread the nebulous line between playfully activating readerly expectations and protecting Moore's identity, while also revealing the author's responsiveness to the principles and consequences of romantic authorship. The hostile critical reception for this amorous poetry prompted revisions which affirm Moore's conception of authorship as a pliable construction, and reveal the roles of multiple agents within the literary marketplace in shaping the function of the romantic author.

Keywords: Thomas Moore; paratext; pseudonym; authorship; reception; revision.

Thomas Moore is known primarily as the unofficial national poet of Ireland in the nineteenth century. His was a varied career, however, and the popularity and endurance of his collection of patriotic songs, *Irish Melodies* (1808-34), have somewhat overshadowed a diverse oeuvre that encompassed political satire, romantic orientalism, historical and theological writings, and biographies whose subjects included Lord Byron and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Moore scholarship has tended to follow this pattern, with greater attention devoted to the author's nationality than to his centrality to romantic historicism<sup>1</sup>. However, Moore's early poetry gives little attention to Irish issues and later disavowals of his own early work appear to sanction the scholarly neglect of this period. But aspects of the early poems'

composition, publication, and reception give them an interest and significance in spite of the mature poet's renunciations. The publication of *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little, Esq.* (hereafter *Little*), in particular, provides a focus for understanding Thomas Moore's differing formulations of authorship in his early poetry and the ways in which they were influenced by the romantic conception of the author. The pseudonymous publication of *Little* (1801) followed Moore's translation of *The Odes of Anacreon* (1800) and preceded the orthonymous publication of *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems* (1806), and the shifting authorial methods and practices across these three volumes illustrate how Moore viewed authorship as a pliable construct for yielding favorable aesthetic and professional outcomes. This phase of Moore's career deserves greater scholarly attention because it reveals the origins of his complex relationship with authorship and onymity<sup>2</sup>, and exposes the source of the reputation for licentiousness that followed him for many years<sup>3</sup>.

A dynamic dialectic of irony and sincerity which informed Moore's understanding of romantic authorship is evident in the creation of the pseudonymous Thomas Little persona. The self-conscious strategies of the *Little* volume represent both an ironic take on the model of the romantic author and a sincere desire for literary achievement, and they reveal Moore's awareness about his relationship to the literary market and to traditions of pseudonymous authorship. While these strategies betray closely related self-promotional and self-protective instincts, Moore's desire to shape his authorial persona is interrupted by functions of the marketplace and significations of romantic authorship that are beyond his control. This article examines the paratextual strategies and the pseudonymous persona of *Little*, using theoretical perspectives on paratexts and onymity to argue that aspects of their creation elide the distinction between their aesthetic and functional effects. The complex interaction of these pseudonymous features and the difficulty of neatly categorizing the instincts and motivations that contributed to their adoption are evidence of Moore's anxious relation to an age that

amplified the needs and consequences of presenting a distinct authorial identity. His formulations of romantic authorship contribute to a more complex and nuanced picture of the phenomenon than is yielded by a concentrated focus on the major Romantic poets. The article also traces the critical reception of *Little* to reveal how accusations of immorality made against Moore resulted from a characteristic romantic equivalence of authorial and personal identities. Both this situation and the later revisions to the Little persona and poems are evidence of Moore's flexible understanding of authorship, and of its status as a broadly mediated cultural phenomenon. The case surrounding *Little* reveals an important point about considerations of anonymous and pseudonymous publication: accounts of authorship cannot be solely subject-centered, since authorship is the outcome of a convergence of individuals and institutions in a circuit that includes a variety of social, cultural, legal, economic, and technological forces<sup>4</sup>. The romantic "age of personality"<sup>5</sup> tends to obscure this situation with its traditional locus of authorial meaning in a linear causal relationship between author and text<sup>6</sup>. By examining Thomas Moore within this broader authorial circuit, however, we can see the motivations, means, and consequences of his early pseudonymous works<sup>7</sup>.

Moore is conventionally pseudonymous in *Little*, his first volume of original verse, but elements of his particular formulation of authorship are also evident in his translation of Anacreon and the orthonymous *Epistles*. When *Little* was published, Moore was already a fashionable figure in London society. *Anacreon* had succeeded in establishing his *name*, if not yet his poetic reputation. Its dedication to the Prince of Wales brought it commercial success and attention in London society, though some commentators saw a disparity between the volume's qualities and the celebrity accorded to its author<sup>8</sup>. *Little*, a collection comprised of amorous and gently erotic verses, was a very different publication. Selling for seven shillings in octavo format, it was one-third of the cost of the luxurious *Anacreon* quarto. Its

smaller format allowed for larger print runs, wider distribution, and a broader audience. Not only did these aspects of the volume declare a different bibliographic code to the stately *Anacreon*, but the smaller format helped to enable its pseudonymous publication. In practice, an author who wished to publish anonymously or pseudonymously was constrained to some degree by the market, since readers who paid a high price for a book expected to be able to identify its author<sup>9</sup>. James Carpenter, who would later publish *Epistles* in quarto, recognized that *Little* would appeal to a different reader, but that no reader would pay a high price to read the work of an unknown poet. Bibliographic and market determinants thus played a role in facilitating the authorial situation of the *Little* poems, just as they would when Moore came to revise them later in his career.

Moore's initial pseudonymous strategy may have the appearance of as a defensive posture that had limited success, but while this account holds some appeal, it fails to explain the complexity involved in the choice of pseudonym, the way in which it functions, and the relationship between author and reader that it effects<sup>10</sup>. Instead of capitalizing upon the success associated with his name after his translation of *Anacreon*, Moore's pseudonymous publication of *Little* appears more of a reaction against the model of the sincere and authentic romantic author. But a particular reading of *Little* suggests that Moore's is a more subtle engagement with romantic ideology. This reading depends on viewing Thomas Little as a deliberate and ironic staging of a romantic persona, rather than a genuine attempt to conceal the true identity of the author<sup>11</sup>. The mask of the prematurely dead Thomas Little is a romantic type which readers would be expected to recognize as a fiction, establishing a contract where their disbelief is willingly suspended<sup>12</sup>. Little's presence in the paratextual elements of the volume serves to amplify a set of readerly expectations instead of disguising a reticent author<sup>13</sup>.

Authorial formulations shift across Moore's early works, and a view of orthonymity as a calculated and deliberate stance equal to pseudonymity can illustrate the mutability of the authorial function. The dedication of *Anacreon* to the Prince of Wales was a transparent petition for preferment, and its title page identified the translator as "Thomas Moore, Esq. of the Middle Temple." The subject matter of some of *Anacreon*'s odes is not dissimilar to that which prevails in *Little*, though some critics accused Moore of gratuitously amplifying the amorous context of *Anacreon*'s verse (Eyre 462-63). However, his status as translator and the classical idiom of the work meant that the book posed little threat to the respectability of his name. The erotic poetry which would appear in *Little* offered no such personal or historic buffer, so Moore's awareness of the age's gossiping tendencies which read authors' works in terms of their personal lives was a motivation for the initial absence of his name from the volume<sup>14</sup>. Thus, we see a dual imperative in the pseudonymous attribution of *Little*. The paratextual construction of Thomas Little reveals, in part, Moore's understanding and application of ideas of romantic authorship. Instead of publishing his amorous verse anonymously, he elects to construct a persona that embodies the biographical instincts and expectations of the period, and titillates the reader by signaling an apparent need to hide. Another part of the pseudonymous strategy is addressed explicitly to critics, and is aimed at generating a favorable reception for the volume. Neither aspect is straightforward, however, and the ironic and sincere formulations of authorship blur this simple distinction. Closer examination of *Little* brings the motivations, means, and consequences of Thomas Little's creation into sharper focus.

The pseudonymous strategies of *Little* are located in the volume's paratexts<sup>15</sup>. Their form is recognizable and conventional, but the strategic means by which Moore combines them with allusions to coterie circulation and a dynamic interplay of irony and sincerity is quite original. The full title of the volume established it as the posthumous publication of a

poet's verses, and a preface by an unnamed editor gives the reader some context about the purported author's life and influences, and the provenance of the works. If a function of the paratext (and particularly the preface) is to hold the reader's attention with "a typically rhetorical apparatus of persuasion" (Genette 198), Moore achieves this by presenting an author who "died in his one-and-twentieth year" (iv). This tragic young bard is a recognizable romantic type, and Moore employs the ludic potential of the paratext in order to create his deceased alter-ego. In one respect, Moore is engaging in romantic poetics by providing a biographical context for the originator of the verse, but he is also communicating to the reader his distance from the work and his role as artificer. The tragic romantic type is a cue for readers to question the veracity of the preface, and it invites the possibility of an ironic reading of the volume's authorship. The reader's awareness of their participation in this game is in proportion to their knowledge of the identity of the author hidden behind the pseudonym, and, more generally, to their readerly docility (Genette 3) about paratextual functions and conventions. That initial readers of *Little* were ignorant of the true author's identity is certainly conceivable, but a small measure of awareness would have alerted readers to the presence of a calculated artifice<sup>16</sup>.

The opening lines of the preface evoke the private literary coterie in which Little's poems circulated, while setting an apologetic tone for the verse. "The poems which I take the liberty of publishing were never intended by the Author to pass beyond the circle of his friends. He thought, with some justice, that what are called Occasional Poems must be always insipid and uninteresting to the greater part of their readers" (iii). In one sense, the preface functions here to support the authorial fiction by describing the means by which the verses have come to be published<sup>17</sup>. It also offers an autocritical hedge against critics who find the verse "insipid and uninteresting," but its reference to coterie circulation is particularly significant. Moore is providing another key to reading the work, by alluding to the means of

textual circulation of amorous precursors of the Restoration, such as Rochester and Sedley, and the recent (and calculatedly artificial) coterie of the Della Cruscans<sup>18</sup>. In making this allusion, Moore highlights a crucial difference between textual transmission in coterie and in the literary marketplace: the printed book. In so doing, he enables his paratextual strategizing and evokes a different set of literary standards and conventions for the verse. First, the paratextual means by which Moore asserts his pseudonymity is intrinsic to the printed book and not to manuscript transmission<sup>19</sup>, and second, the standards to which the verse should be held (in terms of its quality or morality) are different because of the private original site of their composition and circulation. In effect, Moore is creating a fictional context of moral relativism for the verses in *Little*: their amorous and licentious content is acceptable in a consensual literary network, but the move from manuscript to print, and from private to public effects a change in their moral status for which the reader should be prepared.

The convention of adopting pseudonyms in literary coterie also draws further attention to *Little*'s imagined author. The fact that assuming a name in a literary network was less a cloaking device than a means of signaling one's membership of a network points again to the performative nature of the Thomas Little persona<sup>20</sup>. The tendency to posit defensiveness or fraud as central to pseudonymous publication is also a consequence of reading backwards into literary history from the perspective of commercial print production, and judging issues of authorship and readership on that general basis rather than on contemporaneous literary practice<sup>21</sup>. Ezell has shown the convention of coterie pseudonyms emerging in the English Commonwealth and moving through the Restoration, before being adopted by commercial literature in the early eighteenth century ("Reading Pseudonyms" 18). Her work also argues that the connection between coterie and pseudonyms as a participatory (rather than antagonistic) literary model extends its influence from the seventeenth century into the Romantic era<sup>22</sup>. Though Ezell analyses the coterie to discredit assumptions about



pseudonyms serving a protective and defensive role in female authorship, the literary network that Moore evokes is static and masculine. The subjects of the amorous poems in *Little* remain subjects, not active participants in the exchange of verse that is characteristic of the Della Cruscan circle. The various Celias, Chlorises, and Phyllises of *Little* explicitly recall the subjects of Rochester's verse and the monologic male speaker of *Astrophil and Stella*. While Moore's poetic and prosodic style is closer to his classical and Restoration precursors, the artifice and performativity of the literary persona and the transfer of coterie circulation to the printed book is his inheritance from the Della Cruscans. Just as the original periodical ephemerality of Della Cruscan verse and the tortuous love story of the two protagonists was granted literary immortality by the publication of the *Poetry of the World* (1788) volume<sup>23</sup>, so Moore created a fictional coterie to whose private and ephemeral verse the publication of the *Little* book gave public life.

After the brief biographical remarks on Little in the volume's preface, the editor embarks on a detailed examination of the respective merits of Ovid, Catullus, and other poets of antiquity that the pseudonymous poet "selected for imitation" (xi). The legacy of Moore's formulation of authorship in *Anacreon* is evident here, and comparing the two prefaces illustrates further paratextual strategies in *Little*. In the case of Anacreon, his classical stature absolves Moore of the obligation to attribute high value to the work in his prefatory comments. But the recently posthumous Thomas Little has no such canonical status, and so the reader might expect to find in the preface the biographical information and editorial advocacy that would justify the canonical-sounding title *The Poetical Works*. That Moore provides so little of the former, and reaches back to antiquity for the latter illustrates the twin imperatives of irony and sincerity that inform Moore's paratextual strategies in the volume.

Moore shows both classical and neoclassical influences in these strategies. The attribution of the title *Poetical Works* to a twenty-year-old poet is an ironic gesture recalling

Pope's publication of his *Works* at the age of twenty-nine. The addition of the honorific "Esq." to Thomas Little is also a common Augustan authorial convention<sup>24</sup>. In Moore's own neoclassical signals, we can see the sincere side of his dual strategy. The *Little* preface's apparently tangential excursion into a discussion of ancient poetic models has in fact a very definite object. In this argument from ancientness, Moore insists on the classical nature of his themes and subjects. Through this approach, Moore positions his work in a particular respectable tradition, and provides the reader with the authoritative context that stands opposed to the humility implicit in the coterie writer who never sought a public audience<sup>25</sup>. Thus, he aims at fulfilling the dual function of the paratext: generating a better reception and a more pertinent reading of the text (Genette 2).

Against this strategy that establishes sincere literary precedents for the verses in *Little*, we must weigh the fictional author's curtailed biography. Early in the preface, the editor writes: "The particular situation in which [the poems] were written, the character of the author and of his associates, all these peculiarities must be known and felt before we can enter into the spirit of such compositions" (iii-iv), but the analysis of his classical influences dominates the rest of the remarks. Little makes a brief and belated return at the end of the preface, only to allow the editor to contradict his opening statement: "Where Mr. LITTLE was born, or what is the genealogy of his parents, are points in which very few readers can be interested<sup>26</sup>" (xii). This elliptical picture of Little activates the reader's romantic expectations of a tragic Chattertonian figure before swiftly disappointing them. It exposes the fallacy of positing a credulous reader and a protective function for the Little pseudonym, while simultaneously revealing Moore's ironic formulation of Romanticism's biographical interpretive instincts. A regular formal characteristic of the pseudo-editorial preface involves explaining or recounting the circumstances in which the pseudo-editor acquired the text<sup>27</sup>, but the Little pseudo-editor does not do this, nor does he explain his relationship to Little, thus

failing to fulfil the official fiction. Though the pseudo-editorial narrative continues throughout the text (with editorial notes provided for individual poems), its fictional credibility is weakened by the biographical gap in the preface. In the context of the appeal that the theatricality of pseudonymity held for Moore, we can read the incompleteness of the authorial fiction as deliberate and ironic, rather than careless or lackadaisical. For in thus masking himself, Moore does not disavow his writings. Rather, in ironically concealing his authorship, Moore is presenting himself as an author (not just a translator) for the first time.

The authorial preface functions to allow the author to assume a different persona that is distinct from the author of the text (Genette 261). The first edition of *Little* presents an unnamed pseudo-editor who writes the preface and annotates Little's poems. Given Moore's habit of exhaustively annotating his own works, the pseudo-editor's annotative practice is interesting. While Moore's authorial notes to a poem like *Lalla Rookh* (1817) serve the same argument-from-authority function as the classical digression of the *Little* preface, the pseudo-editor of the latter volume interrupts the close narrational-authorial discourse (Genette 340) through his fictionality. Instead, to preserve the fictional authorial situation constructed in *Little*, the footnotes resort to an awkward and contrived syntax: "I believe Mr. Little alluded to a famous question among the early schoolmen..." (40), or to ironic knowingness: "There are many spurious copies of this song in circulation, and it is universally attributed to a gentleman [Moore] who has no more right than the Editor of these Poems to any share whatever in the composition" (108)<sup>28</sup>. This pseudo-editor, who creates a further layer of distance between the text and Moore's authorship and ultimately excludes the romantic "I", may be read in two ways. The pseudonymous fiction demands this logical necessity: the imagined author is deceased and requires an agent to publish his work. The absence of any identifiable biography for the editor has the dual effect of distancing Moore from the text, but also offering the possibility to the enlightened reader that *he is* the unidentified author. The

pseudo-editor's anonymity contributes to the vertiginous and artificial authorial situation: this partial and performative gesture signals to the convention of the fictive preface-writer<sup>29</sup>.

Later occasions on which Moore adopts a pseudo-editor in his writing help to clarify the particular function of the *Little* editor. *Intercepted Letters; or, the Twopenny Post-Bag* (1813) is shaped by the fictional Thomas Brown, the Younger for legal reasons. This political satire was published the same year Leigh and John Hunt were imprisoned for libeling the Prince Regent in *The Examiner*, and the threat of prosecution occasioned the fictional editor and led Carpenter to publish the volume through a proxy, J. Carr<sup>30</sup>. The prose narrative of *Captain Rock* (1823) also contained some politically sensitive material, but the fictional editor "S. E." who claims to have been presented with the manuscript that forms the basis of the narrative by the titular Captain, may also be read as reflective of the secrecy and assumed identities of the agrarian insurgency movement which forms the subject of the narrative<sup>31</sup>.

The initially uncertain signification of the pseudo-editor changes with the second edition (1802) of *Little*<sup>32</sup>, where the preface is signed "T. M." Without explicitly revealing himself, Moore is satisfied to disclose a connection to the work in the form of his apparent editorship. The paratext remains the same, though a new dedication to Joseph Atkinson<sup>33</sup> (also signed "T. M.") preserves the pseudonymous fiction with an ironic reference to "our friend LITTLE's Poems" (xvii). Now more transparent, the official fiction of Thomas Little is more theatrical in proportion. Under these conditions, to fully disclose Moore's authorship would benefit neither author nor reader, and so the pseudonym, never sincerely intended to conceal the author, retains its crucial role in articulating the work's ironic formulation of authorship.

Writing about anonymity in the Romantic period, Lee Erickson argues that aside from those writing political satire or panegyric, most poets hid their identity because of "fearful modesty" (247). While *Intercepted Letters* and *Captain Rock* engage onymous traditions of

satirical and political writing in different ways, Moore's use of imagined personae triggers the irony and performativity that is not possible in anonymous publication. Compared to those volumes, *Little* has no generic or thematic justification for pseudonymity<sup>34</sup>, so does the charge of fearful modesty apply? The autocritical strategy described below can be interpreted to some degree as an active response to Moore's fears about his critical reception, but he was also following an established onymous tradition for poets of the Romantic period. Volumes of poetry that were initially published anonymously, commonly saw the poet later revealing his or her identity if the work gained sufficient popularity to remain in print<sup>35</sup>. This evidence counters interpretations that equate withheld orthonyms with a desire for concealment. It suggests that poetic anonymity was occasioned by both the functioning of the literary marketplace and the modest desire of poets not to have their names associated with bad or unpopular poetry, just as an examination of female onymity in the period reveals the counterintuitive fact that female poets rarely published anonymous volumes (Feldman 279)<sup>36</sup>. The evidence of Erickson and Feldman suggests that poetic anonymity was relatively uncommon in the romantic period, that it was usually a case of testing the waters upon initial publication, and that, where successful, a work would usually receive orthonymous attribution by the third edition. Both scholars make important points about respectability, readership, and the market for poetry as factors in acknowledging authorship<sup>37</sup>. Along with the recognition that "in the early years of the nineteenth century, it was not all that easy to remain anonymous" (Feldman 283), this is further evidence that Thomas Little was a strategic and performative pseudonym.

If the addition of "T. M." to the second edition of *Little* signals both a conventional path from anonymity towards orthonymity and the enduring fictiveness of the Little persona, what is the purpose of the autocritical strategies that appear in the volume? These mostly take the form of comments by the pseudo-editor on the verses in the volume, and in this fictive

spirit represent an apparently objective report that balances the circumstances of their composition with their quality and morality<sup>38</sup>. From the perspective of Moore's authorship, however, the paratextual situation of the preface offers him the indulgence of saying what he, as the author, cannot say<sup>39</sup>. References to the youth of Thomas Little abound: "most of these Poems were written at so early a period, that their errors may claim some indulgence from the critic" (iv). These are designed to increase the appeal of the work on the basis of its youthful unselfconsciousness, while displaying an acute awareness of the consequences for one's reputation of the reception of one's first publications. While Pope confronted this situation head-on<sup>40</sup>, Moore's pseudonymity effects a circuitous appeal for critical clemency, reducing the potential pathos with layers of irony. The prefatory comments may be interpreted as aiming at eliciting a *contextual* reading and a *sympathetic* reading, in a further instance of the volume's fusion of irony and sincerity.

Moore deploys this autocritical strategy in his writings on a number of occasions. The character of Fadladeen in *Lalla Rookh* uses the interludes between poetic sections to offer invariably negative criticism on the preceding verse. Through this overblown and hypocritical eunuch, Moore satirizes pedantic critical practices and undercuts criticisms of this kind by anticipation. Thus, to disentangle the playfulness of Moore's ironic autocriticism from genuine anxiety about his own critical reception is a subtle and tricky negotiation. The case of *Little* is more acute since it represented the twenty-one-year-old Moore's submission of "these trifles of the moment to the eye of dispassionate criticism" (iv), and other evidence confirms his heightened awareness of the relationship between authorship, reputation, and criticism. In the discussion of Little's classical precursors, the pseudo-editor refers to an inherent hypocrisy in the criticism of contemporary amatory verse.

It is astonishing that so many critics have preferred [Propertius] to the pathetic Tibullus; but I believe the defects which a common reader condemns have been looked upon rather as beauties by those erudite men, the commentators, who find a field for their ingenuity and research in his Grecian learning and quaint obscurities (vi).

The accusation of misplaced critical attention suggests that bacchanalianism is tolerated, even critically venerated, when safely ensconced within the dust of antiquity but is censured when it appears in the contemporary poetic idiom<sup>41</sup>. The comment also engineers an appeal from the critic's judgment to that of the "common reader" which Moore uses the opening poem of the volume (and the shift to Little's voice) to underline in more explicit terms:

Oh! let my song, my memory find  
A shrine within the tender mind;  
And I will scorn the critic's chide,  
And I will scorn the fume of pride,  
Which mantles o'er the pedant fool,  
Like vapour on a stagnant pool! (2)

This appeal to the good sense of the reader is as common a strategy as the argument from ancientness. It placates the reader's self-regard and critical awareness while emphasizing the conscious decision that Little has made to avoid the critical glare of the literary marketplace.

*Little's* publication came a year in advance of the shift in the gravity and importance of periodical reviewing of literature represented by the founding of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802. Nonetheless, the reviews of *Little* that appeared throughout 1801 and 1802 give some interesting indications about the reception of the volume and its strategies<sup>42</sup>. Reviews were mixed, in general, with an apparent consensus about the author's technical abilities tempered by complaints about the morality of the verses. The *British Critic* (conservative, anti-Jacobin) judged the volume's autocritical strategy as: "adopted...with the view, no doubt, of screening the poetry from severe criticism: for who would treat with asperity the defects or errors of a youthful writer after his decease?" (540). The reviewer thus identifies a purely sympathetic motivation behind the strategy without seeing the contextual purpose—generating a correct reading of the volume—that it also serves. Such a reading betrays a solipsistic view of the reviewer's role, interprets the relationship between author and reviewer as antagonistic, and repositions the pseudonymous stance as necessarily hostile or evasive<sup>43</sup>. The reviewer's assessment of Moore's intent to generate a sympathetic reading contains a degree of

accuracy, of course. By making this allusion, the reviewer highlights the self-fulfilling function of the pseudonymous strategy, which Genette identifies as a “perverse effect” (410) of the paratext: that its strategic use highlights the motives for its adoption<sup>44</sup>. But Moore may also claim a measure of success for this function of the strategy here: by simply agreeing with the reservations of the Little editor, reviewers criticized the volume on the terms that he dictated<sup>45</sup>.

Some reviews inevitably took issue with the morality of the volume. After a generally positive assessment, the *Monthly Review* (impartial)<sup>46</sup> writer closes with a proviso that would echo in criticisms of Moore for decades to come: “it is allowable to express our regret that a writer who possesses such talents for pleasing should publish any thing which delicacy and morality forbid us entirely to approve” (179). Writing for the *Critical Review* (Whig, liberal)<sup>47</sup>, Robert Southey takes a similar approach. After allowing that some of the *Little* poems demonstrate technical accomplishment and “abundantly prove the genius of the author,” the reviewer laments that “he degrade[s] himself by thus miserably misapplying it” (205). The reviewer for the *Monthly Mirror* (impartial) accedes to Moore’s argument from ancientness, suggesting that those who object to Little’s verses must also “find fault with all the Latin poets, Horace and Ovid in particular” (317). This reviewer also feels justified in identifying the author behind the persona, illustrating an interesting correspondence between the reviewer’s judgment on the merit and morality of the poems and their assessment of the function of the pseudonym<sup>48</sup>. In addressing the identity of the pseudonymous author, the *Monthly Review* is less explicit, stating that it “is said to be a Gentleman who lately favored the world with a translation of Anacreon” (174), while Southey gravely frames his objections to the verses with the comment: “It is not the business of a reviewer to publish a writer’s name, if the writer himself have chosen to withhold it” (200). This correspondence between judgment and pseudonymous function is interesting for a number of reasons. First, it points to



a common critical knowledge of the true identity behind Thomas Little, further illustrating the transparency of the authorial fiction. Second, it is additional evidence of the apparent critical understanding of pseudonymity in antagonistic terms. The more favorable reviews stage a meritorious revelation of the poet, while articles like Southey's implicitly suggest that the author has good reasons for hiding his identity. The third interesting aspect is the etiquette that constrained Southey from making a direct identification of the true author.

In these divergent positions in the reviews of *Little*, we can trace critical estimations of romantic authorship, and the breadth of that ideology's reach. Southey's claim that the reviewer's business does not include identifying a pseudonymous author may be true in practice, but it does not accurately reflect the broader critical trend of romantic reviewers commenting on authors' personal lives, and reading their work on those biographical terms<sup>49</sup>. The disjunction is a curious one, and appears to be predicated on the functioning of the authorial circuit described above. Moore is generally acknowledged as the author of *Little*, if that authorship appears only between the lines of most of the critical reviews. On initial publication, etiquette grants pseudonymity a free pass, anticipating that future success will see the circuit reveal the true identity of the author and satisfy romantic curiosity. If the publication does not succeed and sinks without trace, the pseudonymous author fails (according to the principles of the marketplace), but preserves their personal identity and integrity. Thus, the authorial circuit understands that the pseudonymous author stakes their personal name in the self-regulating system of literary fame and success. Understood in these terms, the pseudonymous strategies of *Little* simply postponed a reckoning which finally arrived in 1806.

Francis Jeffrey's review of *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems* in the July 1806 issue of the *Edinburgh Review* (Whig) is a delayed articulation of the role that *Little* played in establishing Moore's early reputation. The volume's "Epistles" and "Odes" were inspired by

Moore's experiences and encounters in North America<sup>50</sup>, while the "Other Poems" were verses which closely matched the amorous style of *Little*<sup>51</sup>. The first reason for the significance of Jeffrey's review is that it represented the earliest opportunity for the increasingly influential *Edinburgh* to comment on an original publication by Moore, although a review of the third edition of *Anacreon* in 1803 had announced the journal's antipathy to the author's pseudonymous habits and literary licentiousness<sup>52</sup>. Jeffrey's review soon declares itself as not only an assessment of *Epistles*, but of the career and reputation of Moore to that point<sup>53</sup>. The reviewer disregards the volume's titular emphasis and focuses on the "Other Poems," which more accurately represented the early work that formed the basis for his renown. Jeffrey's criticism is entirely without mercy: the ten-page article was the most public and significant distillation of all of the stray references to the author's immorality which had appeared in the previous six years.

The review begins by noting Moore's technical accomplishments<sup>54</sup>, before hastily moving to the crux of Jeffrey's objections: that the author's fame is founded not upon these qualities, but on those that make him "the most licentious of modern versifiers" (456). Jeffrey echoes Southey's rhetorical antithesis in order to underline the nature of the poetic crimes, but avails of the volume's orthonymity to make a more devastating accusation: that Moore possessed a deliberately malicious and corrupting intent: "It seems to be his aim to impose corruption upon his readers, by concealing it under a mask of refinement" (457). The charge is founded upon the apparently insidious and exploitative union of an amorous message with a talent for versification, and is pursued forcefully throughout the review<sup>55</sup>. Having established his conviction of Moore's malicious design, Jeffrey switches his focus to articulating the consequences of the volume's circulation, identifying the threats that it posed to susceptible parties and to national institutions<sup>56</sup>. Though some of the terms of Jeffrey's argument are exaggerated, the fact remains that the *Edinburgh Review* commanded a great

deal of influence and respect in the literary establishment of the time. Moore's awareness of the reach of the journal, and consequent anxiety about his reception therein was evident in advance of the review: "I wait but for the arrival of the Edinburgh Review, and then 'a long farewell to my greatness' ...I shall vanish and be forgotten" (*Letters* 1:101). The decisive difference between the damaging potential of this review and those which made similar claims is the orthonymy which licensed Jeffrey to level his accusations directly at Moore<sup>57</sup>. By confining the substance of his remarks to *Epistles* and only briefly alluding to "former publications," Jeffrey demonstrates his appreciation of the categorical distinction between that volume and *Little*. By doing this he preserves the etiquette of not exposing pseudonymous authorship, but supports his argument with reference to the open secret of Moore's authorship.

Jeffrey's review adopts the characteristic romantic equivalence of authorial and personal identities, and his accusation of predetermined malice evokes legal rather than literary discourse. But he is a critic, and questions of hermeneutics and interpretation are more important for him than theories of authorship. For Jeffrey, identifying Moore as the source of the immorality that he locates in the verse is a critical and cultural imperative of the age. His accusations collapse the distinction between the orthonym and the "ethical person" (Saunders and Hunter 509), though such a distinction is maintained in legal cases of libel, sedition, or copyright. The law is agnostic about authorial intention in these latter instances, and is more concerned with its material instantiation: that is, in most cases, publication. In *Little*, Moore exploits this crucial legal distinction between private and public circulation to conjure a certain illicitness and intimacy for the reader who reads in the publicity of print what was only ever intended for private transmission<sup>58</sup>. Here, again, the pseudonym is revealed as less of a practical necessity than an aesthetic strategy. Moore's verses, as Jeffrey rightly observes, have none of the vulgarity and obscenity of Rochester, so he has no urgent

need to disguise his authorship. But Rochester's poetry circulated in a private coterie, with the majority published in a bowdlerized posthumous form. Moore's fictional coterie is published and public, so the private imperative is transferred from textual circulation to onymity. In adopting a pseudonym, Moore gives the impression of having something to hide and increases the illicit connotations of the publication<sup>59</sup>. The critical trajectory of *Little* confirms that the pseudonym is only a temporary indemnity against romantic authorship and its equivalence of author and legal name. If anything, its perversity is evident in the vigour with which Jeffrey exploited Moore's unmasking. But what is also clear is that the conditions under which a pseudonym is adopted or exposed are historically circumstantial and obey no single logic<sup>60</sup>.

Since Jeffrey's argument is enabled by *Epistles'* ononymity, the motivations for that manner of publication are important. To capitalize on the success of *Anacreon* and *Little*, Moore and James Carpenter planned a new volume of poetry that was postponed by Moore's departure for Bermuda in September 1803. The nucleus of *Epistles* comprised poems inspired by the North American travels<sup>61</sup>, so had the planned volume been published by Carpenter, the style and content of the poems completed before the transatlantic trip might have warranted another pseudonymous publication. However, the epistles and odes of 1806 represent a significant departure from the juvenilia of *Little*: the epistles, in particular, present the poet as a mature and thoughtful international correspondent: an alternative persona, and one with more favorable associations for Moore<sup>62</sup>. From this perspective, the inclusion of the "Other Poems" was a crucial misjudgment which permitted Jeffrey's assault. *Epistles*, an expensive quarto with another noble dedicatee, provided no bibliographical, pseudonymous, or paratextual imprimatur to justify the inclusion of the "Other Poems" or their licentious content. *Anacreon* and *Little* addressed themselves to distinct markets and audiences, and like those volumes, aspects of bibliography and market played a role in determining the

appropriate authorial situation. However, *Epistles*' failure to harmonize its textual and paratextual signals reaped its consequences in the Jeffrey review.

Moore's initial response on reading the review is recorded in a letter of 6 August: "I was agreeably disappointed by the article on my Volume of Poems—there is all the *malignity* which I expected, but not half the *sting*, and I hope I shall always be lucky enough to have such dull, prosing antagonists" (*Letters* 1:102). In the days that followed, however, the apparent coolness of Moore's response gave way to anger, and he decided to challenge Jeffrey to a duel<sup>63</sup>. In issuing the challenge, the accusation of intent to corrupt was the charge for which Moore sought restitution:

after adverting to some assertion contained in the article, accusing me, if I recollect right, of a deliberate intention to corrupt the minds of my readers, I thus proceeded: 'To this I beg leave to answer, You are a liar; yes, sir, a liar: and I choose to adopt this harsh and vulgar mode of defiance, in order to prevent at once all equivocation between us, and to compel you to adopt for your own satisfaction, that alternative which you might otherwise have hesitated in affording to mine' (*Memoirs* 1:201-02).

Moore had anticipated the *Edinburgh* doing some damage to his reputation, but the specific allegations about his personal character were an unexpected and unacceptable outcome.

Given the potentially grave outcome of a duel, we cannot suggest that Moore proposed it to redeem his literary reputation, but the close association between this and one's *good name* is apparent in the fallout from the encounter. The story of the aborted duel soon became the subject of mockery in the press, and, now out of mortal danger, Moore showed great eagerness to protect his name and reputation, and to "stem, if possible, the tide of ridicule" (*Memoirs* 1:209). The story could not be reined in, however, and true and false details of the encounter contributed to the growing ignominy surrounding the episode.

After 1806, Moore changed the course of his writing career, beginning the *Irish Melodies* in 1808, and establishing himself as a satirist. His determination to move away from the reputation earned by the amatory verse of his early publications is evident in his defiant statement of April 1807, "I am not writing love-verses...I am writing politics" (*Letters* 1:120-

21)<sup>64</sup>. The decision was partly motivated by the rich satiric potential of Regency politics and by Moore's sincere desire to distance himself from *Little* and the critical controversy that it provoked. Samuel Rogers later recalled the extent of Moore's regrets about his juvenile volume: "So heartily has Moore repented of having published *Little's Poems*, that I have seen him shed tears—tears of deep contrition—when we were talking of them" (280). Moore's political satires did succeed in effecting a change in his reputation, but rather than achieving a break from his licentious character, he now found opponents referring to this already established type to add weight to new charges of sedition<sup>65</sup>. Reflecting Pope's warning that one's reputation is based upon "the first steps he makes in the world," the durability of Thomas Little was increased by his theatricality and memorability<sup>66</sup>. Moore's use of fictional personae in his political and satirical writings indicates that the *Little* experience had not soured him on the principal of pseudonymity. Instead, he judiciously operated within the traditional and generic onymous conventions of satire, mostly reserving his name for the musical publications of the decade that followed *Little*. While *Little* represented the Poetical Works of a twenty-year-old, Moore was not granted this canonical honor until his early sixties, when Longmans' published his ten-volume *Poetical Works* in 1840-41. In preparation for the edition, he took the opportunity to re-evaluate and reshape his poetical legacy and to revisit and revise some of his previous work: inevitably, *Little* was the focus of attention from his editorial pencil.

Romantic ideas about creativity and authorship are complicated by revision of literary texts (Leader 1), but revisions to paratexts are considered less problematic despite enacting important changes upon the meaning of texts that they frame. Their availability for revision, repositioning, and removal by the author or another agent serves to equate their liminality with disposability<sup>67</sup>. But in a work like *Little*, where paratextual strategies play such a pivotal role in constructing authorship and reception, paratextual revisions are of significant interest.

Coupled with substantive revisions to the texts of the *Little* poems, the motives for Moore's conscientious revisions for the *Poetical Works* demand conscientious analysis. Each of the ten volumes contains a new authorial preface that combines a desire for canonical respectability with a pre-posthumous accent. These prefaces are primarily biographical and contain reflections on the composition of the works, but the cloak of respectability appears to have prevented Moore from undertaking a mature consideration of his early licentious reputation, or of the role of *Little* in its creation<sup>68</sup>. That Thomas Little is an undesirable part of his canon is clear from further paratextual revisions.

Volume one of the *Poetical Works* reprints *Anacreon* in its entirety and original arrangement, and the preface recounts the circumstances of Moore's translation. However, the *Little* poems are dispersed throughout a "Juvenile Poems" section which spans the first and second volumes. The focus of the second volume's preface is on *Epistles'* Bermudian and American poems, revealing Moore's plan to remove Thomas Little as an identifiable entity from the account of his early career. By printing the *Little* poems under the heading of "Juvenile Poems" and interrupting their original arrangement, Moore undermines the integrity of the original volume and its central pseudonymous persona<sup>69</sup>. But in finally asserting his authorship of the poems, he renders the strategic construction of the pseudonymous fiction redundant. Preserving the original architecture of the volume would have presented an exhibit of Moore's publication history and his pseudonymous strategies, but its dispersal takes a more utilitarian view of the volume, prioritizing the textual contents above the fictional paratextual frame. The effect announces Moore's authorship, but shorn of the bibliographic and contextual unity provided by Little and his coterie, the poems suffer a relegation of significance to mere juvenilia.

The inclusion of the original *Little* preface (signed "T. M.") at the head of the "Juvenile Poems" section preserves and distorts the fiction<sup>70</sup>. The effective marginalization of

Thomas Little gives the impression that Moore is writing *in propria persona*, and the preface appears to function as an authentic commentary on the *Little* poems, on the “Other Poems” of *Epistles*, and assorted juvenilia. The destruction of the original volume’s continuity also effects a change in the editorial paratext: a footnote to the 1801 “Song” reads: “I believe these words were adapted by Mr. Little to the pathetic Scotch air ‘Galla Water.’ E[ditor].” (164), whereas the *Poetical Works* simply records: “These words were written to the pathetic Scotch air ‘Galla Water’” (101). Thus, the editor and his curatorial function are destabilized. Just as the original volume’s fictional persona and bibliographical unity enabled the functioning of these paratextual elements, so the weakening of the persona and the breaking of the book demanded their loosening. The revisions are not undertaken to address a new public in different or reflective terms, but the subtle changes to the paratexts are significant because they reorient their original functions. But the manner of these changes is uneasy: the discontinuity of the *Little* poems and the juxtaposition of fictional and autobiographical prefaces in the *Poetical Works* creates a curious dissonance. The dispassionate but selective 1840 preface and the reframed *Little* preface evoke a mixture of assertion and denial of Moore’s early work. Ironically, having originally used a pseudonym for the strategic purpose of directing an appropriate reading, Moore now disavows the *Little* poems with orthonymity. The paratext also betrays Moore’s self-conscious reflection on the revision process and the critical consequences of *Little*. To the claim for the poems in the original preface that “their author...wrote as he pleased, careless whether he pleased as he wrote” (iv-v), he now added the qualifying phrase “in general” (254)<sup>71</sup>.

The *Poetical Works* represented the canonical version of Moore’s verse, and opportunity to shape a reputation that would endure posthumously<sup>72</sup>. Victorian ideas of respectability that succeeded Romanticism’s concerns with authenticity influenced Moore’s



textual revisions<sup>73</sup>, and his prepublication correspondence with Thomas Longman about those revisions underlines further motivations:

I have completed the correction of the *Anacreon* (which cost some trouble) and the castration of the young Mr Little which was done in no time. My intention is (as this portion of the Volume will be headed 'Juvenile Poems') to fill up the vacancies made by the aforesaid operation with other juvenilities from the *Odes & Epistles* – but I shall want your help, when I send up the *Vellutified Little*, to calculate how many more lines that portion of the volume will admit of – I *should like* to get *in as much under that head as is practicable* (*Letters* 2:842).

The claim that the “vellutification” of the *Little* poems involved negligible effort compared to the revision of *Anacreon* is dubious. The degree of attention and the frequency of correction in the *Little* poems that are included in the *Poetical Works* does not testify to a minor intervention. Likewise, Moore’s expressed desire to include as much juvenilia as possible does not tally with the removal of thirty-six complete poems from *Little*. This exclusion was conceivably dictated by practical bibliographic calculations to which Moore alludes, but the poems that failed to make the cut are conspicuously united by a preponderance of the type of amorous content that attracted most critical attention.

To add a respectable velvet trim to *Little*, frequent and substantive revisions are made to the amatory content of the poems. The description of the poems’ revision as “castration” captures both the extent and severity of the excision and its carnal subject: the number of instances where the sexual charge of a “pout” is changed to the modesty of a “smile” are too frequent to recount, but a few examples will illustrate the nature and extent of Moore’s demure adjustments. Any hint of excessively amorous language or imagery is bowdlerized, as in “Rondeau”:

and every minute  
Shall have an age of rapture in it!  
We’ll kiss and kiss in quick delight,  
And murmur, while we kiss, “Good night!”  
(1801, 43).

and every minute  
Shall have an age of transport in it;  
Till Time himself shall stay his flight,  
To listen to our sweet “Good night.”  
(1840, 2:12).

In the original version of “The Kiss,” where a lover is invited to “Come panting to this fever’d breast” (97), Moore’s revision invokes a more coy couple: “Come blushing to this

ardent breast” (2:84). Elsewhere, rapture becomes gladness, warmth becomes fondness, and bliss turns to joy. More substantial excisions are made to other poems, as the ten-stanza “To —” (98-100) retains only four stanzas in the *Poetical Works*. In its revised form, the poem is a simple and earnest reflection on the end of a romantic dalliance. Originally, however, the speaker imagines his former lover’s future companion, and concludes:

I think I should be sweetly blest,  
If, in a soft, imperfect sigh,  
You’d say, while to his bosom prest,  
He loves not half so well as I! (100).

Moore’s objective in revising the poems was to oversee Little’s castration: but what were his motivations? Leaving behind a respectably chaste and moral body of work was a priority, but the pseudonym’s role in forming his early reputation was also a significant factor. In removing the persona of Thomas Little, whose influence had provoked “tears of deep contrition,” Moore also removes the fictional context which gave coherence to an otherwise disparate collection of occasional juvenile verses. Such was Moore’s dissatisfaction with the consequences of his *Little*’s publication, that almost forty years later he completed this quiet but substantial disavowal<sup>74</sup>.

Moore is rarely depicted as an archetypal Romantic, but the formulations of authorship evident in his early works and their subsequent revision may be read as a conscious engagement with romantic ideology. His thinly concealed authorship and the construction of the performative Thomas Little persona activate the readers’ “willing suspension of disbelief” (Coleridge, *Biographia* 2:6): if they are willing to play along with the masquerade, so is he. Jerome McGann argues that Byron exposed the hypocrisies of romantic authorship in a figurative anonymity where his orthonym is effectively molded into a theatrical persona, and “[t]he work is engulfed in that dissolving, disillusioning ambiguity” (“Anonymous Lyric” 43) between the self and the text. Moore treads a similar path by

complicating and critiquing the romantic equivalence of author and person, but adopts an active pseudonymity instead. In constructing an occasional provenance for Little's verses, Moore presents them as the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." The creation of the Little artifice itself and the movement of the fictional coterie to the bibliographic sphere represents the complementary portion of Wordsworth's romantic programme: the reflective, self-conscious, and internalized act, or "emotion recollected in tranquillity" (1:xxxiii). Moore, so seldom associated with the romantic aesthetic outlined in *Lyrical Ballads*, effectively internalizes it in his construction of Thomas Little<sup>75</sup>.

In his creation of the Little persona, and its effacement in the *Poetical Works*, we see Moore's developing engagements with differing formulations of romantic authorship: one that sees the authorial self as mutable: created and articulated through the revision and refinement of the texts that reveal that identity<sup>76</sup>, and another where revision creates the authorial self afresh and extinguishes all previous authorial incarnations and intentions<sup>77</sup>. Both perspectives on authorial identity are closer to the Byronic conception of authorship which saw the revision of *The Giaour*, that "snake of a poem" (*BLJ* 3:100), over the course of fourteen editions than to Shelley's Socratic prioritization of inspiration above the inherent corruption of composition. The shifting configurations of the authorial circuit converge to explain Moore's approaches to authorship in *Little* and the *Poetical Works*. The Moore of 1801 is a blank page upon which personae can be constructed and tested. The Moore of 1840 is a palimpsest where the canonical identity of the author is inscribed over the traces of earlier personae. With a view to posthumous respectability, he attempts to bring final order and stability to the polyonymous commotion of the previous forty years.

Moore adopted the pseudonymous persona of Thomas Little in order to place his amorous poetry within distinct literary, historical, and generic contexts. He was motivated by a desire to provoke an appropriate response from his readers by alluding to his literary

precursors, but also by a keen awareness that crude biographical inferences were likely to be made on the basis of the poems' morality. These aesthetic and functional objectives are evident in the overlapping irony and sincerity of the volume's paratextual strategies. The popular and commercial success of *Little* attests to the success of Moore's fiction, but that same achievement precipitated the revelation of his authorship and the consequent accusations about his personality in the periodical press. Though Moore successfully exercised control over the aesthetic effects of authorship through the pseudonymous strategies in *Little*, the broader functional aspects of authorship lay beyond his control and at the mercy of the several agents in the literary marketplace that participate in the authorial circuit and shape the authorial function. At length, Moore's "tears of deep contrition" were a response to the unanticipated personal consequences of *Little*, and the lessons that it imparted about the inevitability of the romantic conception of authorship. That this conception endured beyond the boundaries of Romanticism is evident in Moore's late revisions to *Little* for his *Poetical Works*. With one eye on Victorian respectability and the other on his posthumous reputation, Moore contrived a legacy without Thomas Little.

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### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> This centrality is articulated in James Chandler's *England in 1819* (*passim*, particularly 267-99), where Moore's "extraordinary status and fame in the literary culture of his time" (267) is a cue for examining both his contemporaneous significance and subsequent marginality.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term "onymity" to describe the signed status of a text: whether it is pseudonymous, anonymous, or orthonymous. In doing so, I differ from Genette's use of the term, where it signifies a situation in which the author signs "with his legal name" (39). For this situation, I use the term "orthonymous."

<sup>3</sup> Scholarly works on Moore's writings of this period are few compared to the sustained critical focus that works like the *Irish Melodies* have received. Jane Moore has written articles on *Anacreon* and *Epistles* ("Transatlantic Tom"), Vail largely deals with the poems in *Epistles*, while Moody's treatment of his pseudonymous satire focuses on the later *Intercepted Letters* (1813).

<sup>4</sup> See Saunders and Hunter (483).

<sup>5</sup> The phrase is Coleridge's ("Errors" 138), though he gives it the emphasis of uppercase letters.

<sup>6</sup> Saunders and Hunter characterize the legal rights that are now enjoyed by authors as one of Romanticism's enduring cultural legacies (499).

<sup>7</sup> Similar models that describe circuits of communication, textual transmission, and book circulation appear in the work of Bourdieu, Darnton, and Adams & Barker.

<sup>8</sup> The *British Critic* review, though acknowledging it as an "ingenious work" (27), assessed its merit as "unequal to the very high fame of its author" (27-28).

<sup>9</sup> Lee Erickson uses quantitative methods to examine certain trends and assumptions about originally anonymous poetry publication in the Romantic period, and illustrates this connection between pricing and onymity (256-57). Moore would later experience readers' dissatisfaction with unidentified authors at first hand: readers of the anonymous poems of *The Keepsake* of 1828 demanded to know the identities of the authors, eventually eliciting compliance from the editors of the following year's volume. All contributors (including Moore) of the 1829 *Keepsake* were acknowledged (Feldman 287).

<sup>10</sup> Margaret Ezell argues that to characterize pseudonyms as deliberately covert or fraudulent establishes an antagonistic relationship between author and reader which elides the greater complexity of the authorial situation ("Reading Pseudonyms" 15).

<sup>11</sup> The sobriquet "By a Lady" could perform a similar function for constructing generic feminine personae, according to Ezell ("By a Lady" *passim*).

<sup>12</sup> While paraphrasing Philippe Lejeune, Paul de Man articulates the way in which this contract accommodates uncertainty about authorial identity: "The name on the title page is not the proper name of a subject capable of self-knowledge and understanding, but the signature that gives the contract legal, though by no means epistemological, authority" (922).

<sup>13</sup> Gérard Genette's characterization of the paratext as a zone of "transaction" (2) is important in identifying the locus of collusion between author and reader with respect to pseudonyms. Here, he argues, is "a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that - whether well or poorly understood and achieved - is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it" (2).

<sup>14</sup> A professional issue is also important in this context. Moore had not yet ended his legal studies at the Middle Temple at the time *Little* was published. Just as Walter Scott thought it would be considered indecorous for a Clerk of Sessions to write novels (though he happily signed his poetry), so Moore decided that he should not damage his professional reputation by admitting authorship of a volume of amorous poetry. Erickson also considers this as a factor in the original anonymity of poetry from this period (257).

<sup>15</sup> In the Foucauldian assessment of the author-function (211-16), the author's name (regardless of its onymous status) is equally paratextual to a title or preface, since its function is entirely separate from the legal name of the author. See also Griffin, "Anonymity" (890). However, the other paratextual elements that contribute to the creation of Thomas Little are the main subjects of my focus here.

<sup>16</sup> Moore does leave some clues: aside from alluding to the significance of the occasional verse, "Little" is also a playful reference to the author's well-known diminutive stature. As I discuss below, Moore's authorship was soon revealed through official and unofficial channels, so his authorial identity did not remain secret for long. More broadly, both reader and author anticipate, in almost all circumstances, the unmasking of the pseudonym: "Consequently, no pseudonymous writer can dream of glory without foreseeing this disclosure...but, reciprocally, no reader who is more or less interested in the pseudonymous author can avoid being exposed to that particular bit of information" (Genette 50).

<sup>17</sup> "[T]he fictional preface [is] inseparable from the staging of the fictional exercise itself" (Genette 293).

<sup>18</sup> Both Rochester and Sedley are mentioned in the preface to *Little* (xi). Daniel Robinson describes the ludic, burlesque, and self-deprecating Della Cruscan *milieu*, and the functioning of pseudonyms within that circle ("Della Crusca"), while McGann analyses the role of self-conscious artifice within that network ("Literal World"). Harold Love provides a summary of the functions and significations of scribal transmission in early modern England.

<sup>19</sup> Genette consistently argues for the paratext's intrinsic relation to the printed book and its role in mediating the text for the reader (1, 163, *passim*). However, I do not mean to suggest that paratexts are entirely absent from scribal transmission: the tradition of marginal glosses and annotation could arguably be described as manuscript paratexts. But these are related more closely to the manuscript *book* than to the diverse formats of manuscript circulation in literary coteries. At any rate, Genette and I refer to the paratextual conventions originating from

the printed book (title pages, prefaces, dedications), which have few equivalent conventions in the manuscript tradition.

<sup>20</sup> See Ezell, “Reading Pseudonyms” (21), and further context on onymous conventions in early-modern literary networks in Love and Marotti.

<sup>21</sup> Ezell writes of a misplaced critical presumption of antagonism in the relationship between pseudonymous author and reader (“Reading Pseudonyms” 15). The consistent warning of the early chapters of David McKitterick’s *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* is of the danger of assuming a neat textual division between manuscript and print that coincides with the so-called printing revolution of the 1450s. More generally, McKitterick advises textual and bibliographic scholars to move forwards from the past, rather than backwards into it.

<sup>22</sup> Robinson and McGann make similar points about the Della Cruscan, while Wilson assesses the influence of the Della Cruscan on Charlotte King’s conceptions of romantic authorship and pseudonymity.

<sup>23</sup> Della Cruscan poetry was also published in *The Arno Miscellany* (1784) and *The Florence Miscellany* (1785).

<sup>24</sup> “English neoclassical authors readily styled themselves, for lack of anything better, ‘Esquire’” (Genette 54). Neoclassical resonance is consistently evident in the formally generic choice of titles for Moore’s first three books: Odes, Works, Epistles, Poems.

<sup>25</sup> Genette describes Borges’s prefaces as displaying a similar “coquettish rhetoric of modesty” (205).

<sup>26</sup> This echoes Moore’s treatment of Anacreon’s biography in the preface to his debut volume: “The name of his father is doubtful, and therefore cannot be very interesting” (6). But in those “Remarks on Anacreon,” Moore remains wary of readers’ identification of authorial character in literary works: “To infer the moral dispositions of a poet from the tone of sentiment which pervades his works, is sometimes a very fallacious analogy: but the soul of Anacreon speaks so unequivocally through his odes, that we may consult them as the faithful mirrors of his heart” (10).

<sup>27</sup> For example, Mackenzie’s *The Man of Feeling*, Scott’s *Rob Roy*, and Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*.

<sup>28</sup> The uncertainty produced by this effect is reminiscent of the gradually increasing suspicions provoked by the paratextual apparatus of Charles Kinbote in Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*. Like the *Little* editor, Kinbote introduces and annotates the poetry of the deceased John Shade, and, like the *Little* volume, the numerous doubts about the identity and motivations of Kinbote are generated by the paratext and its apparent dissonance from the text of Shade’s poem. My thanks to Sheila Rooney for sharing her impressions on the footnote to ‘Song (Oh! nothing in life can sadden us).’

<sup>29</sup> “If an author is going to take the trouble to make up an allographic preface writer, he generally prefers to grant him the solid identity that a name confers” (Genette 188-9). For contrast, consider the biographical detail conferred on Jedediah Cleishbotham by Walter Scott.

<sup>30</sup> From Moore’s perspective, this choice of pseudonymity was probably motivated by a mixture of satirical convention and performativity rather than a genuine fear of imprisonment. Carpenter’s dissemblance is more significant, since it was printers and publishers that were held legally culpable for libel. Though Leigh Hunt had written the libelous piece, he and his brother were charged, as proprietors of *The Examiner*, with “Publication of a libel tending to traduce and vilify the Prince of Wales, Regent of these Realms, and to bring him into contempt and disgrace” (Holden 62).

<sup>31</sup> The onymous status of Moore’s satirical and political writings warrant separate study, since they engage with a long tradition of pseudonymous satire and function as covert protection from the threat of sedition. Evidence of the latter may be traced to Moore’s college days, when his revolutionary idealism was manifested in an allegorical poem (“Extract from a Poem: In Imitation of Ossian”) and a vigorous letter (“To the Students of Trinity College”) which were published in the *Press* newspaper. The poem first appeared under the persona of ‘PITY’ in Belfast’s *Northern Star* newspaper, but was anonymous in the *Press*, while the letter to his classmates was signed “A Sophister” (Kelly 55-9; Jane Moore, *Satires* xv).

<sup>32</sup> *Little* satisfies Erickson’s criterion for merit (discussed below): fifteen editions of the work were published by 1822.

<sup>33</sup> Or, “J. AT—NS—N, Esq.” (xvii) as it appears in print. In this dedication, Moore also makes reference to pseudonymity and its effects on reputation while maintaining the fiction of Little: “you know the pious Beza was not the less revered for those sportive juvenilia which he published under a fictitious name” (xviii).

<sup>34</sup> Authors were similarly protected from answering legal charges of obscenity, and Carpenter’s willingness (along with his printer, Gosnell) to attach his name to the publication indicates the unlikelihood of it attracting such charges.

<sup>35</sup> Erickson’s analysis presents the unveiling of authors after three years of sustained interest in their work as a “signal feature” of anonymous poetry publication (249).

<sup>36</sup> When they did, they followed the pattern described by Erickson, with a first edition serving as a “trial balloon” (Feldman 279).

<sup>37</sup> This contrasts sharply with evidence from the novel publication market in a similar period. James Raven has shown that over eighty percent of all British- and Irish-published novels between 1750 and 1790 were anonymous (143).

<sup>38</sup> “It may likewise be remembered, that they were all the productions of an age when the passions very often give a colouring too warm to the imagination; and this may palliate, if it cannot excuse, that air of levity which pervades so many of them” (v).

<sup>39</sup> Roland Barthes referred specifically to the allographic preface when he wrote “I tend to believe that the preface-writer’s role consists of expressing what the author, from a sense of propriety, modesty, discretion, etc., cannot say” (qtd. in Genette 275), but his remarks also apply to the effect of an author prefacing *their own* work.

<sup>40</sup> “For (what is the hardest case imaginable) the reputation of a man generally depends upon the first steps he makes in the world, and people will establish their opinion of us, from what we do at that season when we have least judgment to direct us” (“Preface” n. pag.).

<sup>41</sup> Nearly forty years later, Moore was still conscious of such duplicity, as he gleefully recounted the story of how the board of Trinity College refused to sanction his “convivial and amatory” translation of Anacreon, yet later presented two Greek editions of Anacreon, which the poet had used as sources for his translations, to the Pope (*Poetical Works* 1:xxiii-xxv).

<sup>42</sup> *Little* received notices in seven journals. This can be partially accounted for by the relatively underdeveloped reputation of Moore at this time, but the growth of the literary reviewing industry must also be a factor when considering the reception of *Lalla Rookh* (1817, twenty-three reviews) or *The Loves of the Angels* (1823, thirty-four reviews).

<sup>43</sup> In analyzing the critical treatment of Charlotte King, Wilson suggests that this viewpoint may have been provoked by a growing critical recognition of the self-fashioning and self-marketing instincts behind pseudonyms in the Romantic period (393-94).

<sup>44</sup> Genette argues that this paradoxical effect can function as an “impediment to the effectiveness of the paratext” (410). He continues to assert that “the paratext sometimes tends to go beyond its function and to turn itself into an impediment, from then on playing its own game to the detriment of the text’s game” (410).

<sup>45</sup> The *British Critic* reviewer stated that “Admissions so candid...render the task of the critic more pleasing” (540).

<sup>46</sup> In its early years, this journal signaled its recognition of the complex onymity of the age by printing on its own title page the motto, “*Fronti nulla fides* / No trusting to Title-pages.”

<sup>47</sup> After its initial stance as an organ of conservative Tory values, the *Critical Review* “completely reversed its position on politics and religion” (Sullivan 75) in its second series, beginning in 1791.

<sup>48</sup> “Mr. Little, we understand, is a name of fiction. The real author is Thomas Moore, Esq. of the Middle Temple, whose splendid translation of the Odes of Anacreon we shall consider at some length hereafter” (316-17).

<sup>49</sup> Examples of this trend are numerous and well known. The critical fate of Lord Byron’s *Hours of Idleness*, which shares some of the paratextual strategies of *Little*, provides an interesting comparison. Henry Brougham’s review of the volume was shaped by commentary on aspects of the author’s personality, including his nobility and lameness (“hobbling stanzas” (286)).

<sup>50</sup> Moore spent the first four months of 1804 in his post of Registrar to the Vice-Admiralty Court at Bermuda. Before and after this spell, he toured through the United States and Canada before returning to England in November 1804. See Moore, *Letters* (1:47-82) and Kelly (91-127) for an account of this period.

<sup>51</sup> Or, “trifles of a much earlier date,” as Moore would later characterize them (*Poetical Works* 2:iii).

<sup>52</sup> This review announces that “the name on the title-page...is well known to be a variety of the appellation by which the author was pleased to distinguish himself, when, a few years ago, he submitted to the public the Effusions of Mr Thomas Little” (462). The reviewer gives ironic praise to the translator for his decision to publish under his own name: “By this change of title, we conclude, Mr Moore means to intimate that he has now attained that maturity of genius which may enable him to meet the decision of the public in his own person” (462-63), and the article concludes that by giving unwarranted emphasis to the amorous aspects of Anacreon’s poetry, Moore has produced a translation “calculated for the bagnio” (476).

<sup>53</sup> The admission is articulated thus: “We have been induced to enter this strong protest, and to express ourselves thus warmly against this *and the former publications of this author...*” (459, my emphasis).

<sup>54</sup> “a singular sweetness of melody and versification...brilliancy of fancy...classical erudition” (456).

<sup>55</sup> Elsewhere, Moore is characterized as “the most poetical of those who, in our times, have devoted their talents to the propagation of immorality” (456); as making “a cold-blooded attempt to corrupt the purity of an innocent heart” (456) and “insinuating pollution into the minds of unknown and unsuspecting readers” (456). Rochester and Dryden are described as poets whose vulgarity and “undisguised profligacy” (457) rendered them unappealing to the delicate and impressionable reader, but Moore, by contrast, had not the honesty to thus advertise his impropriety, instead mixing it with “exalted feeling and tender emotion” (457).

<sup>56</sup> Women, he claimed, were particularly susceptible to the delicacy of the language and imagery, and “become familiar with the daemon, for the sake of the radiant angel to whom he has been linked by the malignant artifice of the poet.” (459). He also found the dedication of works to “persons of the first consideration in this country” (in the case of *Epistles*, to Lord Moira) objectionable because of the apparent obligation of the elite to set an example for the populace (460).

<sup>57</sup> Without recourse to Little or Anacreon, or to the critical propriety which prevented naming names, Moore found the amorous details of the verses explicitly identified with him: “Mr Moore...is at pains to let the world know that he is still fonder of roving, than of loving; and that all the Caras and the Fannys, with whom he holds dalliance in these pages, have had each a long series of preceding lovers” (458).

<sup>58</sup> Little’s private literary network alludes to what Harold Love characterizes as the scribal text’s “aura of forbidden knowledge” (107) and “air of privileged secrecy” (111).

<sup>59</sup> Byron evokes these illicit associations when reporting to Moore: “I believe all the mischief I have ever done, or sung, has been owing to that confounded book of yours” (*BLJ* 7:117). However, as I have stated, the law did not pursue the *author* of obscene material, but rather the printer and publisher. So, the impression that the obscene author (masked or unmasked) was under any legal threat whatsoever is itself a romantic fallacy.

<sup>60</sup> See Saunders and Hunter (483).

<sup>61</sup> Moore describes these in his preface as the “principal poems” (vii).

<sup>62</sup> These poems gave a report from the period of government appointment that earlier appeals for preferment (such as the dedication of *Anacreon*) had earned Moore (see Kelly 89-90, 93). The situation is an ironic reversal of the onymous consequences of public office that were a factor in Brian O’Nolan’s decision to publish under a range of pseudonyms including Flann O’Brien and Myles na gCopaleen (Taaffe 30).

<sup>63</sup> The invitation to duel may not be a reliable gauge of Moore’s rational feelings. He subsequently issued a similar challenge to Lord Byron after reading a reference to “LITTLE’s leadless pistol” (25) in a comic account of the aborted duel with Jeffrey in *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers*. Moore’s account of the duel is in *Memoirs* (1:199-207) and the episode is described by Kelly (138-51) and Jordan (1:128-37).

<sup>64</sup> This marked the beginning of a period of contributing regular squibs to the periodical press, as well as the publication of *Intercepted Letters* and *The Fudge Family in Paris*. Moore’s satirical writings have been collected in Jane Moore’s edition, *The Satires of Thomas Moore*.

<sup>65</sup> Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston took this approach in his 1819 parody of the *Fudge Family*, entitled *The Fudger Fudged; or, The Devil and T\*\*\*y M\*\*\*e*:

A BALLAD-SINGER, who had long  
Strumm’d many a vile lascivious song,  
Such as unwary youth entice,  
To follow in the paths of vice,  
Worn out and impotent become,  
Beats, as he can, sedition’s drum (1).

<sup>66</sup> The endurance of James Hogg’s “Ettrick Shepherd” persona provides a more pronounced example of this associative tendency, where “the brand came, in time, almost to swallow up its creator” (MacLachlan 6).

<sup>67</sup> Genette writes of paratexts’ “intermittent duration” (6-7) which exposes their ephemerality, in one sense, but also reveals their dynamic hermeneutic potential compared to the (relatively) static text that they frame.

<sup>68</sup> Associated events of significance such as Jeffrey’s review and the subsequent duel are also conspicuous by their absence.

<sup>69</sup> Moore also revises the distribution of the poems from *Epistles* in the second volume of the *Poetical Works*, but he had a more legitimate reason for doing so. *Epistles*’ original arrangement was miscellaneous, with American, Bermudian, and *Little*-style verses indiscriminately mixed together. The creation of a “Poems Relating to America” section, his preface claims, resolves this “awkward jumble” (*Poetical Works* 2:v).

<sup>70</sup> A brief footnote explains its provenance: “A portion of the Poems included in this and the succeeding volume were published originally as the works of ‘the late Thomas Little,’ with the Preface here given prefixed to them” (1:253).

<sup>71</sup> Genette identifies this compensatory attitude as characteristic of the revised preface (240).

<sup>72</sup> Moore’s arrangement was also canonical, and was preserved in the 1910 OUP edition of his *Poetical Works*.

<sup>73</sup> Dawson traces the influence of Victorian notions about respectability on the extensive bowdlerization of sexual language in contemporaneous scientific literature (11-12, *passim*).

<sup>74</sup> Parallels are evident between Moore’s quest for respectability and the posthumous appearance in print of Rochester’s poems. As well as reordering the poems to fit print conventions, indecent material was suppressed in order to package Rochester as an occasional writer fit to public consumption (Love 117).

<sup>75</sup> However, Jane Moore has recently traced the influence of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and *Lyrical Ballads* in the Canadian poems of *Epistles*, linking them to the later Romantic nationalism of the *Irish Melodies* (“Transatlantic Tom” 83-6). Her article on *Anacreon* sees that volume sharing with the authors of *Lyrical*



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*Ballads* a revolutionary instinct that “marks its modernity by making a self-conscious return to earlier genres” (39), while also arguing that the passage of his Anacreontic influence from Hunt to Keats makes Moore “an unacknowledged governor of the Cockney School” (43).

<sup>76</sup> Where, “revision is as much an attempt to establish personal identity as to reveal it” (Leader 5).

<sup>77</sup> Leader identifies this effacing tendency in the final lines of Whitman’s “O Living Always—Always Dying”: “O to disengage myself from those corpses of me, which I turn and look at, where I cast them! / To pass on, (O living! always living!) and leave the corpses behind!” (7).

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