



In 1861, Sir John Tenniel created a sequence of sixty-nine illustrations for *Lalla Rookh*. More than any other illustrator before or since, Tenniel's images succeed in revealing Moore's unique blend of Gothic theatricality inflected by Islamic culture. This image of Feramorz, "The Minstrel from the Beautiful Country," the young Cashmerian with a kithar provides an unmistakable Oriental mirror image of the Irish Minstrel himself. From *Lalla Rookh* (London: Longmans, 1861); collection of the author.

J. C. M. Nolan



In Search of an Ireland in the Orient: Tom Moore's *Lalla Rookh*

Tom Moore's immensely successful 1817 poem *Lalla Rookh* (a book-length work comprising four interwoven stories sung to an Indian princess, Lalla Rookh, by a Cashmerian poet named Feramorz) has been often mentioned in the context of the Irish poet's friendship, and competition with, Lord Byron. It is only in recent times that closer critical attention has been given to the Irish political and cultural contexts of a work that now calls out to be more fully interpreted as a key work in Moore's lifelong search for an understanding of the old and new Ireland.

The earliest indication that the poem shows Moore in search of an Ireland in the distant Orient—that is, of a parallel or analogous national story through which he might encode his commentary on the contemporary Irish situation—surfaced in exchanges between Byron and Moore while the long-poem-in-progress *Lalla Rookh* was still in the early days of its extended gestation. In June, 1813, Byron published his first oriental poem *The Giaour*. Ironically, the instant success of Byron's oriental poem discouraged Moore. In August, 1813, he wrote to his friend Mary Godfrey that

Never was anything more unlucky for me than Byron's invasion of this region, which when I entered it was as yet untrodden . . . instead of being a leader as I looked to be, I must dwindle into a humble follower—a Byronian. This is disheartening.¹

By the end of that same month, Byron was writing to Moore, urging him to press on with his own oriental poem:

Stick to the East . . . The little I have done in that way is merely "a voice in the wilderness" for you; and if it has had any success, that also will prove that the public are orientalizing, and pave the path for you.²

1. *The Letters of Thomas Moore*, ed. Wilfred S. Dowden (Oxford: University Press, 1964), vol. 1, p.275.

2. *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1973–82), vol 3, p. 101.

In 1814, Byron's *The Corsair* appeared with an effusive dedication to Tom Moore that declared that Moore was among the foremost of Ireland's patriots, and that he too would soon find parallels in the East for the wrongs of Ireland, for fiery spirit of her sons, and the beauty and feelings of her daughters.

Your imagination will create a warmer sun, and less clouded sky; but wildness, tenderness, and originality are part of your national claim of oriental descent, to which you have already thus far proved your title more clearly than the most zealous of your country's antiquarians.³

When Byron first showed the dedication to John Murray, the publisher objected to the reference to Ireland, and asked Byron to rewrite it. Byron did so, but showed the original wording to Moore—who urged him to submit it again unchanged. Byron wrote to Murray, “Let those who cannot swallow chew the expressions on Ireland.”⁴ Murray agreed and awaited the predictable outrage in the Tory newspapers at the Byronic endorsement of Ireland's cause with which Moore had become associated.

On the very day of the publication of *The Corsair*, the Tory-supporting newspapers *Courier*, *Morning Post*, *Daily Herald* and *Sun* began hurling, on a daily basis, abuse and ridicule in prose and verse against Byron and Moore as traitorous Whig enemies of the Prince Regent. *The Courier* of February 17, 1814 published a poem accusing Byron of forming an alliance with Moore, “the low and indecent composer of jigs . . . the son of the seller of Figs.” The poem concluded with a stern warning to parents to protect their daughters from the work of this pair of serpents, “their infernal attacks from your mansions repel, / Where filial affection and modesty dwell.”⁵ Byron's dedication also drew a furious response from a couple of Irishmen. A few weeks earlier, the *Morning Post* printed a protest letter signed by Hibernicus, posing as an “Irish gentleman,” in which Moore was taken to task for, among other things writing “Let Erin Remember the Days of Old..” which Hibernicus branded as a trifling song with objectionable whiffs of disloyalty. Another rebuke came from the Irish poet and wit, Edmund Lewis Lenthal Swifte, who found *The Corsair* a libel on the sovereign and attacked at Byron's dedication for

3. *Lord Byron; The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann. (Oxford Clarendon Press, 1980–1993), vol. 3, pp.148–49.

4. *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 4, p. 32.

5. For details of newspaper attacks on Byron occasioned by *The Corsair* dedication, see *The Letters of John Murray to Lord Byron*, ed. Andrew Nicholson (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), appendix B, pp. 476–505.

praising the little man, of course, his patriotism and genius and likening the Papists of Ireland to the Parias of the East, her damp vapours to the vertical sun of Madras and her bogs to the plains of Bencollen.⁶

In the face of press outrage, the two friends began to feel more closely united against their Tory critics.⁷ In early April, 1814, Byron wrote to Moore about a scheme to escape from the mocking Tories:

Let it be Rome, Milan, Naples, Florence, Turin, Venice, or Switzerland, and “egad” (as Bayes saith) I will connubiate and join you; and we will write a new “Inferno” in our Paradise.⁸

The pair were never to settle in an earthly paradise—partly due to Byron’s mental and physical restlessness, but more likely due to an ongoing imaginative rivalry between the two poets, which became discernible in their reactions toward each other’s work as Moore struggled with the extensive research which he required for *Lalla Rookh*.

Unlike his other works, Moore’s *Lalla Rookh* was written very slowly, and it appeared in the shadow of Byron’s *Turkish Tales*, which, by comparison, had been dashed off. When Moore read *The Bride of Abydos* in 1813, he found to his dismay that Byron—despite his claim that “it does not trench upon your kingdom in the least”—had used the tale of Selim and Zuleika, which Moore had hoped to use in *Lalla Rookh*. Moore wrote to Byron about the abortion of his own tale in which he had planned to espouse “the national cause of Ireland.”⁹ On July 8, 1814, Byron lent Moore the proofs of *Lara*, his sequel to *The Corsair*. A little later he advised Moore, “Now is your time. The people are tolerably tired of me.”¹⁰ Moore, keenly aware of both the pitfalls of drawing on Oriental sources at a time when the work of such of pioneering scholars as Sir William Jones was creating a serious understand of the East, and of the limitations of his armchair-traveler’s view of the Orient, Moore passed drafts of *Lalla Rookh* for comment to another friend, Samuel Rogers (to whom Moore eventually dedicated the long poem). When Byron published *A Selection of Hebrew Melodies, Ancient and Modern* in two volumes, each one with twelve songs in the manner

6. Edmund Lewis Lenthal Swifte, *Anacreon in Dublin* (London: J.J. Stockdale, 1814), pp.137–38.

7. See H.J. Palmerston, *The New Whig Guide* (London: W.Wright, 1819) for a selection of these parodies of Byron and Moore.

8. *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol. 4, p.93.

9. *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of his Life*, ed. Thomas Moore, (London: Murray, 1830), vol. 1, p. 433.

10. *Byron’s Letters and Journals*, vol.4, p.157.

of each number of Moore's *Irish Melodies*, it seemed to many that Byron was poised to assume the style of Moore's *Irish Melodies*, and would write melancholy yet angry songs about an heroic Jewish people who were as oppressed as the heroic Irish people¹¹

Byron's sudden intrusion onto even this territory distressed Moore, especially when Byron's melodies were set to music by Isaac Nathan; he wrote to his music publisher, "Was there ever anything as bad as the Hebrew Melodies?"¹² The slow pace of Moore's work on *Lalla Rookh* facilitated the meticulous way in which he selected and designed the oriental detail employed in the sequence of four tales in verse. Eventually Moore composed four tales in verse with a connecting prose narrative: the tales were titled "The Veiled Prophet of Khrassan" (2138 lines); "Paradise and the Peri" (512 lines); "The Fire Worshipers" (2226 lines); and "The Light of the Haram" (741 lines).

Moore's ambitious work appears to have been to have completed during 1816, but publication was postponed because of an economic crisis. 1816 was the "year without a summer," when record low temperatures and subsequent agricultural disaster combined with widespread unemployment produced a post Napoleonic war economic depression: much later, Moore commented that the year was the least favorable that could be conceived for the first launch into print of so costly a volume.¹³ During a fretful time for Moore, Byron wrote to Murray: "I feel as anxious for Moore as I could do for myself for the soul of me."¹⁴ The sums involved were enormous, for the time: Longmans paid the recurringly impecunious Moore three thousand pounds for the copyright, an offer that trumped Murray's offer for the book by a thousand pounds. The first edition of *Lalla Rookh, an Oriental Romance* appeared on May 22, 1817. A second edition appeared in June, a third in July. Many other editions followed: twenty-four years later, the work appearing in Moore's *Collected Poetical Works* had reached its twentieth edition. A quarto sixth edition, before the end of 1817, featured engravings from designs by Richard Westall; many other artists went on illustrating the work for the rest of the nineteenth century. *Lalla Rookh* proved to be an immensely profitable investment for its publisher and a spectacularly successful stimulation of interest among Regency readers for descriptions of the exotic Orient.

11. For a detailed comparison between Byron's Hebrew melodies and Moore's Irish melodies, see J.W. Vail, *The Literary Relationship of Lord Byron and Thomas Moore* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 89–102.

12. *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore to His Music Publisher, James Power.*, ed. Thomas Crofton Croker (New York: Redfield, 1854), pp. 42–43.

13. *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore. Collected by Himself* (London: Longmans, 1840–1), vol. 6 p. ix.

14. *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol. 5, p.192.

From the outset, the work's reception by the vast majority of the literary critics were distracted by the specter of Byron. In spite of Moore's strivings not be "Byronian," the influence of Byron throughout *Lalla Rookh* was commented upon in detailed discussions of in such publications as *The Literary Gazette*, *The British Review*, *New Monthly Magazine*, *The Critical Review*. Only in the perceptive review by his friend Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review* was the presence of Byron sidelined; Jeffrey noted that Moore imitated Byron as only an original genius could imitate, and briefly referred to the breathing odors of the East to be found in a poet from that Green Isle of the West.¹⁵ The illustrators, too—by concentrating on mustachioed and turbaned men with pistols or scimitars thrust into sashes and on women delicate who were light-skinned and elegantly dressed—situated the poem in a gallery of Byronic looking characters. Moore's massive array of scholarship in footnotes did not suggest to the critics the range and depth of Moore's study, rather, was taken to mean Moore was packaging Byronic tales from the East, full of violence and horror, in decorative learning.¹⁶

Unexpectedly, Byron's own view of the published *Lalla Rookh* ignored the work's contribution to Ireland's cause, about which Byron himself claimed to be so passionately concerned during the course of its lengthy genesis. In July, 1817, Byron wrote simply to Moore: "I suspect you have written a devilish fine composition, and I rejoice in it from my heart."¹⁷ After his reading of *Lalla Rookh*—with the defensive 'not with sufficient attention'—Byron wrote more frankly to John Murray in September, 1817:

I don't like the prose at all—at all—and in the mean time the "Fire-worshippers" is the best and the "Veiled Prophet" is the worst, of the volume.—With regard to the poetry I am convinced that *all* of us—Scott-Southey-Wordsworth-Moore-Campbell—are all in the wrong—one as much the other—that we are all upon a wrong revolutionary poetic system—or systems—not worth a damn in itself. . . . I took Moore's poems & some others—& went over them side by side with Pope's—I was really astonished and mortified at the ineffable distance in point of sense-harmony-effect—and even *Imagination*, *Passion* & *Invention* between the Little Queen Anne's Man & us of the Lower Empire—depend upon, is all Horace then, and Claudian now among us—and if I had to begin again—I would model myself accordingly.¹⁸

No doubt eager to preserve their friendship, Byron settled for a brief postscript in a letter to Moore after the publication of the sixth edition within the year: "I

15. *Edinburgh Review* November, 1817, pp.1–35.

16. For a summary of the early reviews, see Vail, pp. 114–33.

17. *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol.5, p. 250.

18. *Byron's Letters and Journals*, vol 5, p. 265.

delight in the fame and fortune of Lalla, and again congratulate you on your well-merited success.”¹⁹ IS THIS RIGHT ?? This terse, and rather dismissive comment on *Lalla Rookh* by Byron took place at a moment when his own preferences in poetry began to shift toward Pope and the Augustan satirists, and he was adopting a new style of writing his own poetry in the publications *Beppo*, *Don Juan* and *The Vision of Judgement*. Byron also implied criticism of Moore's dependence on books when, in a conversation with Thomas Medwin, he expressed unease with poetry that describes the scenery and manners of a country that the poet had not visited.²⁰

Byron and Moore's friendship survived Byron's intellectual detachment from *Lalla Rookh* as a form of poetry which he had outgrown. Soon, Byron's encouragement of Moore in the search for Ireland shifted away from Moore the romantic Orientalist, and toward Moore the radical verse satirist.²¹ Byron told Medwin that Moore's collection of political verse epistles published in 1818 as *The Fudge Family in Paris* pleased him as much as any of Moore's works.²² Moore had first satirized the Tory establishment for its discrimination against Catholics in *Twopenny Post* (1813). In *The Fudge Family*, the satire was considerably stronger in the assemblage of letters from Phelim Connor, an unregenerate Irish patriot; Phil Fudge, an Irish political turncoat and Castlereagh's spy; and the Fudge children—Biddy gushing about Parisian fashions and Bob keen on French restaurants. Again, Tory periodicals fumed at Moore's fierce Irish indignation against the English establishment. The combination of the sensational notoriety of *The Fudge Family in Paris* and the amazing commercial success of *Lalla Rookh* contributed to the public acclaim which greeted Moore as National Bard when during a visit to his native Dublin in June, 1818. He was applauded by the welcoming theatre-goers both during and after a staging of sections of *Lalla Rookh*. Later, he was honored at a public dinner at Morrison's Great Rooms in Dawson Street, with Daniel O'Connell among the guests, where Lord Charlemont praised Moore for “patriotism, independence and consistency.”²³

19. Thomas Medwin, *Conversations of Lord Byron*, ed. E.J. Lowell Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 238.

20. See Robert Nye, *The Memoirs of Lord Byron: A Novel* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989). Nye expresses the common version of Byron's view *Lalla Rookh*: “a box of Turkish delights with the sugar mostly stolen from me,” p. clxxiv.

21. Vail convincingly argues that Moore “helped Byron to construct his own unique satirical voice.” Vail, pp. 41–80.

22. *Conversations of Lord Byron*, p. 240.

23. See Howard Mumford Jones, *The Harp That Once: A Chronicle of the Life of Thomas Moore* (New York: Holt and Company, 1937), pp.198–89. Jones's biography is movingly elegiac in its evocation of “the genius once thought to be immortal and now no longer read,” p. 325.

Years later Moore commented on the source of his inspiration in "The Fire Worshippers":

The thought occurred to me of founding a story on the fierce struggle so long maintained between the Ghebers, or ancient Fire-Worshippers of Persia, and their haughty Moslem masters. From that moment, a new and deep interest in my whole task took possession of me. The cause of tolerance was again my inspiring theme; and the spirit that had spoken in the melodies of Ireland soon found itself at home in the East.

Moore also recalled research in Lord Moira's extensive collection of Orientalist texts in the library at Donington Hall as having been vital to his finding a new way of expressing the same patriotic spirit that lay at the heart of his *Irish Melodies*:

Although D'Herbelot's valuable work was, of course, one of my manuals, I took the whole range of all such Oriental reading as was accessible to me; and became, for the time indeed, far more conversant with all relating to that distant region, than I had ever been with the scenery, productions, or modes of life of any of these countries lying most within my reach.²⁴

When the middle-aged Moore recalled the many agreeable testimonies which he had received for *Lalla Rookh*, he waxed most about the occasion, where little awareness of Ireland-in-India would have been present, at a splendid Diver-tissement which was based on *Lalla Rookh*, at the Château Royal of Berlin in 1822, and performed during a visit of the Grand Duke Nicholas—later, to become Czar Nicholas I of Russia—when most of hundred and fifty members of the Court hugely enjoyed acting out the accompanying tableaux, songs and dances.²⁵ The leading roles, in this grandest of Grand Fêtes, were performed by the Grand Duke as Feramorz (Aliris, the King of Bucharía), the Grand Duchess as Lalla Rookh, Count Haack as Fadladeen, the Duke of Cumberland as Abdallah (Aliris's father), and the Princess Louise Radzievill as Abdallah's Queen.²⁶ It is small wonder that, having been celebrated in so cosmopolitan a manner, the Irish dimensions of *Lalla Rookh* were so readily overlooked.

24. See Thérèse Tessier, *La Poésie Lyrique de Thomas Moore* (Paris: Didier, 1976) pp. 466–70, for a list of more than one hundred books included by Moore in his numerous footnotes. Moore had access to the books in the library of his first powerful patron in England, Lord Moira, at Donington Park, Derbyshire. When Lord Moira was posted to India as Commander Chief in 1813, Moore had "to move on." See Jones, pp. 49–50.

25. Moore's Preface in *Lalla Rookh* (London: Longmans, 1861), pp. ix–xxiv.

26. The Berlin "performance" led Robert Birley to conclude that *Lalla Rookh* was worth reading as a "period piece." See, Robert Birley, *Sunk Without a Trace: Some Forgotten Masterpieces Reconsidered* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1962), p. 171.

After the publication of *Lalla Rookh*, the importance of the work in Moore's search for an Ireland never came up as a topic in exchanges between Moore and Byron. In 1821, Byron sent Moore a poem titled "The Irish Avatar," which attacked the Irish for their enthusiastic reception of George IV on a state visit to Ireland and their servile and contemptuous forgetting of "the glory of Grattan and the Genius of Moore." Moore—no doubt recalling his own enthusiasm for the period of Irish parliamentary reform during the period of Grattan's Parliament and before the disastrous Act of Union—responded by proclaiming Byron as a "true Irishman."²⁷ Moore never allowed Byron's coolness toward *Lalla Rookh* to affect their friendship. After Byron's death in 1823, and the traumatic incident of Murray's burning of the poet's papers at the request of Byron's family, Moore still wrote a fair account of his friend by using other papers and his own memories, which was published by Murray in 1830–31 as *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron, with Notices of His Life*.

Nor did Byron's negative attitude dim Moore's enthusiasm for romantic expression. Another footnoted poem, *The Loves of Angels: an Eastern Romance* was written during his stay in Paris from 1819 to 1822 and published on his return to England. Moore was inspired by the Book of Enoch, and imagined three angels telling the story of how each fell from heaven by loving mortal women. The poem expressed in a shrewdly compassionate way the ambiguities of forbidden human loves, and revealed why even heaven relents in the case of the third story of Zaraph and Nama. In the Preface, Moore admitted humorously that he was again on Byronic territory and had rushed to publish the work to give himself "the chance of what astronomers call an *Heliacal rising*, before the luminary, in whose light I was to be lost, should appear." The poem was so much criticized by his contemporaries for being licentious and anti-Christian that in the fifth edition (1823), God was transformed into Allah, the angels became Mohammedan and the notes were thoroughly Orientalized. This hasty revision shows how Moore tended to resort to forms of Orientalism to mask his revolutionary views.²⁸

Now, Moore's search for an Ireland began to move in different directions. In the wake of a memorable tour of Ireland in the company of his friends Lord and Lady Lansdowne, Moore published *Memoirs of Captain Rock, the Celebrated Irish Chieftain, with some Account of his Ancestors* in 1824, a satirical indictment of the many years of English misrule in Ireland. The book was given a sensational reception: the *Times* and *Morning Chronicle* published long extracts on

27. See Vail, pp. 68–74.

28. Moore's poem was published only nine days before Byron's *Heaven and Earth* appeared in *The Liberal*. For a detailed analysis of Moore's last ambitious poem, see Vail, chapter 5, "The Loves of Angels and the Shadow of Byron," pp. 140–63.

the day of publication, and Whigs were jubilant at the publication of such a lively exposure of England's record of neglect in a country already showing early the consequences of the policy of ignoring the effects of famine in parts of Ireland. In 1825, Moore had his first taste of researching the brilliant career in England of a much-respected fellow Irishman, which led to the publication of *Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan* (1825) in two volumes. Moore's last work looking toward the Orient was in prose, *The Epicurean* (1827). The book masqueraded as a translation of an ancient Greek manuscript found in the monastery of St. Macarius in Egypt c.1800, and told a tale about Aliciphon, a priest of the Epicurean sect who goes to Alexandria to explore the Egyptian mysteries. There, he associates with a young priestess, Alethe, a secret Christian, who initiates him into the mysteries during a journey along the Nile into Upper Egypt. When Alethe becomes a Christian martyr during the persecutions of Valerian, Aliciphon became a monk in the desert. *The Epicurean* is Moore's clearest expression of opposition to forms of bigotry and cruelty in favor of antiquarian forms of syncretism. Though this enabled him to show sympathy with expressions of religious feeling, his stance probably stretched beyond the sympathetic grasp of most conventional Catholics.

For Moore, as the writer of *A Letter to the Roman Catholics of Dublin* (1810), the enactment of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 was an important landmark. His Whig friends, after some thirty-four years in the political wilderness, under the leadership of Lord Grey, were now in power, with Lord John Russell as paymaster general; Lord Holland as the chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Lord Lansdowne as lord president of the council, all of whom Moore counted as friends. Moore now looked for Ireland in biography, theology, and history. At first his friends expressed reservations about the timing of his 1831 *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* in two volumes; for Whigs, the prospect of Moore's heroic view of the 1798 revolutionary Fitzgerald threatened to distract from the Reform Bill as the top priority. When asked to stand for an Irish parliamentary seat in Limerick, Moore declined by pleading his total dependence on his writing for income to support his wife and family.²⁹ This was the same period in which Moore unexpectedly turned to Catholic apologetics, in *Travels of an Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion* (1833), as an opportunity to rebut the Protestant invective directed at Catholics in Ireland. Moore used *Travels* not to present an apologia for his personal religious faith, but to make an historical case for the antiquity, authority and consistency of the Catholic church—an opinion that increased his popularity among Irish Catholics and annoyed Protestants. Rev. Mortimer O'Sullivan published a furious reply in Dublin: A

29. See chapter 23, "Irish Initiatives" in Linda Kelly, *Ireland's Minstrel: A Life Of Tom Moore: Poet, Patriot And Byron's Friend* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 212–21.

Guide to an Irish Gentleman in his Search for a Religion and Roger O'Connor wrote a nonfictional rejoinder, *Captain Rock in Rome*.³⁰

In 1829, Longmans commissioned Moore to write a history of Ireland, as a companion work to Walter Scott's *History of Scotland* and Sir James Mackintosh's *History of England*. As Moore began working on the project, his own ill health and deaths in the family began to threaten his mental powers. His impressive capacity for scholarly reading—first developed as a university student in Marsh's Library, in his early translations of Anacreon's Odes, and in his extensive research for *Lalla Rookh*—was now directed toward piecing together a chronological and coherent view of Irish history. Moore began with his account of the Irish as a seafaring race who were a mixture of Celts and Phoenicians; he cast the early Phoenician invasion an example of benevolent colonial rule. Moore's research ended when he turned to previously unexamined State Papers in order to shed light on the mysterious flight, during the Elizabeth period, of Shane O'Neill, earl of Tyrone.³¹

Moore's history was published in for volumes between 1835 and 1846 as *The History of Ireland, from the Earliest King of that Realm, down to Its Last Chief*. In it, he imagined Irish history, stretching from the open character of her early religion to the tragedy of the English rout of the earls. But the work lacked the depth of historical research to weave together convincingly so many threads. It also suffered for having been outside the emerging zeitgeist. Moore's history appeared just as a revived Irish revolutionary spirit began moving toward an insular sense of Irish cultural identity in postfamine Ireland, and as enthusiasm began to grow among nationalists for recovering the rapidly dying Irish language—which Moore had never learned.³²

After Moore's death in 1852, his friend Lord John Russell too quickly edited *Memoirs, Journals and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* in eight volumes. Russell's selection of writings, which emphasized Moore's close involvement with the Whig worthies of Regency society, suggested to many readers that Moore had led a vain life, dominated by the pursuit of the approval and companionship of English toffs. Such a one-sided view of his personality eventually contributed to the plunge in Moore's reputation as a writer. The first blows gave joy

30. For a most comprehensive account of reactions to *Travels of an Irish Gentleman*, see H.H. Jordan, *Bolt Upright: the Life of Thomas Moore: Salzburg Studies in English Literature* 38, ed J.Hogg, two vols. (Salzburg University, 1975), pp. 374–84.

31. Dowden, *Letters of Thomas Moore*, vol. 2, p. 623.

32. Moore expressed late regrets about not knowing Irish in a letter to Archbishop John MacHale of Tuam dated April 30, 1842, when he thanked MacHale for his translations of the Melodies and added: "Your Irish (truly Irish) Melodies are a shame and reproach to me, and I would willingly give up much of what I know of other languages to have been Irishman enough to accomplish such a work," Dowden, *Letters*, vol.. 2, p. 916.

to his Tory enemies, and also to a fellow Irishman and one-time friend, John Wilson Croker, who exulted over the destruction of Moore's character across some seventy pages in *The Quarterly Review*.³³

The decline in Moore's reputation as Ireland's National Bard offers a case history of the shifts within Irish cultural nationalism. Stephen Gwynn's 1905 biography noted that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Moore had lost his status as the Ireland's National Poet among the new emerging generation of poets—but still maintained that Moore, almost without knowing it

wrote primarily for his own countrymen, and in return they honoured him . . . with a sane instinct, because he had done for Ireland, what neither Seaghan Clarach nor Rafferty, nor all the bards of Munster and Connaught, could at that moment do for her. He had given a voice to Ireland; he had put into her mouth a song of her own.

Gwynn contends that Moore's greatness was proven in *The Irish Melodies*, "uttered in a language which nine out of ten Irishmen could understand." However, Gwynn dismissed Moore's claim that *Lalla Rookh* breathed the spirit that had spoken in the melodies of Ireland by its new home in the East: "It found itself about as at home, I should say, as is the ordinary European in oriental costume at a masked ball."³⁴

Gwynn saw no trace of Irish relevance in *Lalla Rookh*, which he pigeonholed as a confection of fashionable poetry and deplorable prose, concluding that "if it were not for the Melodies, nobody would now give an eye to their stable companion."³⁵ About seventy years later, another generally sympathetic biographer, Terence de Vere White, agreed with the verdict of the former generation on *Lalla Rookh* but detected an Irish allegory in one section of the work "The Fire Worshippers." Hafed, the leader of the Ghebers in revolt against tyranny in Persia, was clearly Moore's Dublin University friend Robert Emmet. De Vere White concluded by sidestepping Moore's Orientalism: "The theme is universal . . . Moore was able to kindle some fire by thinking of Emmet. His interest in the Ghebers was strictly academic."³⁶

33. On Russell, see *The Journal of Thomas Moore*, ed. W.S.Dowden (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983), vol. 1 "Introduction," pp. 9–20. On Croker, see Terence de Vere White, *Tom Moore: The Irish Poet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1977), pp. 264–70.

34. Stephen Gwynn, *Thomas Moore* (London: Macmillan, 2005), pp.188–89. Gwynn's view of the Moore's lyrical poetry as discovering Ireland for the nineteenth century was later elaborated by Sean O'Faolain in his preface to *Lyrics and Satires from Tom Moore* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1929), and by Thomas MacGreevy in his essay "Thomas Moore 1779–1852," in *The Capuchin Annual* 1948, pp. 286–93. VOLUME NUMBER KNOWN ??

35. Gwynn, pp.84–90.

36. de Vere White, pp.132–33.

In 1975, Hoover H. Jordan published an extremely well-researched and penetrating study of Moore, which concluded that "He wrote for forty years in behalf of the common man, his freedom from political, economic, and religious tyrannies. . . . He helped to create a new Ireland and a new attitude in England and the rest of the world."³⁷ But in contrast to Jordan's vivid description of the elaborate celebrations in Dublin that marked the Moore centenary in 1879, the bicentenary in 1979 came and went with only a grudging acknowledgement in Ireland of the strengths of Moore's poetry.³⁸ Over the next decade, attacks on Moore, the toppled National Poet, became more virulent. Terence Brown detected in the story of the Veiled Prophet echoes of Moore's opposition to Daniel O'Connell's demagoguery, but went on to claim that in writing an Oriental romance, Moore merely confirmed British stereotypes of Ireland "wrote of the Orient in ways that made quite certain that any politically suspect potential in his material would have no opportunity to inhibit his critical and commercial success."³⁹

Not even the *Irish Melodies* escaped Brown's savage indignation. For him, Moore's songs treated Irish history as if its true significance was to provide a drawing-room audience with metaphors of its own indulgent sense of "personability." Brown concluded that Moore's poetic exploitation of the Irish past as an exotic dimension of experience was "an aspect of the Celticism that had flowered in the fertile soil of the Ossianic enthusiasm."⁴⁰ The nadir of modern Irish critical misunderstanding of Moore's Orientalism was reached in Robert Welch's dismissal of *Lalla Rookh* as "soft dream," "a kind of pornography," and "essentially sad."⁴¹ When Moore was being branded as "too colonisé," what a gift the Moore's grotesque zinc effigy in Dublin must have seemed in College Green:

37. Jordan, pp. 637–38. Jordan wrote of Moore's *Captain Rock* that "The total effect is one of horror, which Moore hoped would sink into his readers, especially the English who were little versed in the grim tragedy of Irish history," p. 375.

38. See, for instance, Seamus Heaney's introduction to a bicentenary volume in 1979, in which he writes "A nation whose conscience was being forged by James Joyce, whose tragic destiny was being envisaged by W. B. Yeats and whose literary tradition was being restored by the repossession of voices such as Aodhógán O'Rathaille's and Brian Merriman's, that nation could afford to rescind Moore's title as "national bard". His note was too light, too conciliatory, too colonisé." *A Centenary Selection from Moore's Melodies*, ed. David Hammond (Sherries: G. Dalton, 1979), pp. 8–9.

39. "Thomas Moore: A Reputation" in Terence Brown, *Ireland's Literature* (Mullingar: Lilliput, 1988), pp. 14–28. EXACT CITE KNOWN??

40. Brown, PAGE KNOWN???

41. Robert Welch, "Constitution, Language and Tradition in Nineteenth-century Irish Poetry," in *Tradition and Influence in Anglo-Irish Poetry*, ed. Terence Brown and Nicholas Grene (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 17. A few years later Moore did not even feature among the more than 1,800 entries in the widely consulted *Oxford Companion to Irish History*, ed. S. J. Connolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). For another view, also dating from the 1980s, of the *Melodies* as a

bald-headed, drooping, wrapped in a capacious Trinity College gown, a pencil in one hand, a pad in the other, gazing toward the Bank of Ireland across the way and overshadowing the public toilets that were later built very close by.⁴²

Yet, during the very years when Moore's reputation was at its lowest among the Irish, his oriental writings began to be mentioned here and there in critical discussion of European Romanticism. As early as 1923, Sencourt, writing about the theme of India in English literature, criticized Moore for his inaccurate descriptions of Indian landscapes in *Lalla Rookh*, but praised Moore for the fact that his Irishness had given him insights into the workings of the Indian mind and into reproducing the quality of emotion which is most general in the love poems of the Mahomedan world.⁴³ More recently, Nigel Leask examined Moore the Orientalist in his examination of the links between Romantic Orientalism and political struggles for national independence; Leask paid special attention to connections between *Lalla Rookh* and Shelley's *Address to the Irish People* (1812) and *The Revolt of Islam* (1818).⁴⁴

Julia M. Wright, the editor of a recent republication of Lady Morgan's *The Missionary: An Indian Tale* (1811), noted the influence of *The Missionary* (1811) on *Lalla Rookh*, which was set in the same Mughal period. Lady Morgan's tale of cultural encounter and transracial romance was developed in ways which highlighted the story's parallel meanings for Ireland and India under British rule. The allegory probably encouraged her close friend Moore to interlink Ireland and India in his own search for Ireland.⁴⁵ Joseph Lennon's recent wide-ranging survey of Irish writings about the Orient, the interpretation of *Lalla Rookh* makes the point that Moore managed to mirror both Ireland's anti-

popular source of iconography for Irish art in the nineteenth century, see Jeanne Sheehy, *The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past: The Celtic Revival 1830–1930* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), pp. 46–49.

42. See John Turpin, *John Hogan: Irish Neoclassical Sculptor in Rome 1800–1858* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1982), pp.102–04 for an account of how John Hogan's design for the Moore statue was universally admired by the public, but rejected by the committee who preferred the design of Christopher Moore, a specialist in portrait busts. Hogan's lyrical plaster model of Moore is still stored in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. (IS THAT SO?? OR JUST THE PHOTO IN TURPIN'S BOOK)

43. Robert Sencourt, *India in English Literature* (London: Simkin, Marshall, Hamilton and Kent, 1923), pp. 305–11.

44. Nigel Leask, *British Romantic: Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: University Press, 1992), pp. 110–14.

45. Julia M. Wright, "Introduction" in *The Missionary* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), pp. 9–57.

imperial struggle and Ireland's internal struggle for cultural identity.⁴⁶ Slowly, slowly then, *Lalla Rookh* is at last being read as a significant text in the history of British Romanticism largely as a result of its contribution to the study of the political legacies of the French revolution and the Irish Rebellion of 1798. In these readings, "The Veiled Prophet" and "The Fire-Worshippers" become important cross-cultural tales about colonized peoples and colonizing powers.⁴⁷

The most exciting references to *Lalla Rookh* and *The Epicurean* in recent critical debates appear in the work of two Indian scholars, Javed Majeed and Mohammed Sharafuddin: suddenly, Moore's characterization of the Veiled Prophet as a violent Islamic leader who corrupts the words of the Koran from being a book of love into a book of hatred takes on a contemporary relevance. Majeed and Sharafuddin consider the interludes "Paradise and the Peri" and "The Light of the Haram" not as sugary tidbits for its original nineteenth-century readership, but as tales exploring emotions of patriotism, love, and religion in picturesque Oriental landscapes, tales that faithfully reflect the daily details of Islamic piety and the poignancy of the human condition. They interpret *The Epicurean* as an example of Moore connecting with a syncretic Oriental tradition of absorbing faiths and cultures. They contend Moore was a identifying with the scholarly attitudes of Irish antiquarians—ranging from Geoffrey Keating in the early seventeenth century to General Vallency and Sir William Betham of the Royal Irish Academy—all of whom sought to refute the barbaric image of the Celt compared to the civilized Graeco-Roman that had become the dominant view of the native Irish after the Norman Conquest of the island in the twelfth century.⁴⁸

Strong evidence of the academic rediscovery of Moore's writings came in the foundation of the Thomas Moore Hypermedia Archive Project, at present being hosted at the National University of Ireland, Galway at the Moore Institute Research in the Humanities and Social Studies.⁴⁹ The organizers of the project view Moore as a major figure within European Romanticism, a popular and influential Irish poet of the nineteenth-century, and an exponent of a distinctive form of cultural nationalism. The task of the project will be the construc-

46. Joseph Lennon, *Irish Orientalism: A Literary and Intellectual History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), pp. 155–60.

47. See in particular "The Standard of Revolt: Revolution and National Independence" by Vail in Moore's *Lalla Rookh* in *Romanticism on the Net* No. 40 2005: www.ron.umontreal.ca/

48. See Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), especially chapter 3, "Thomas Moore and Orientalism." pp. 87–122; Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), especially chapter 3, "Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh* and the Politics of Irony." pp. 134–213.

49. See www.nuigalway.ie/mooreinstitute/projects.php

tion of a scholarly hypermedia archives to include all of Moore's published works and papers. Linda Kelly's sympathetic life of Moore was published in 2006.⁵⁰ A 2008 biography by Ronan Kelly also promises to examine "the Bard of Erin" as one of the influential figures in shaping the Irish psyche.⁵¹ SHOULD THIS BE FUTURE TENSE, OR THE R KELLY BOOK ALREADY OUT?

Yet, clearly, *Lalla Rookh* is not a work that has in any way shaped the Irish psyche—despite its strong claim to be the key work in Moore's search for an Ireland. Sections of the work can move a contemporary audience who do not need any awareness of its Irish dimension to their cause their appreciation. In 2006 at the Three Choirs Festival at the Three Choirs Festival in England, there was a rapturously received rare performance of Robert Schumann's cantata *Paradise and the Peri*, an adaptation of Moore's work in a German translation whose first successful performance was given in the Leipzig Gewandhaus in 1843 under the direction of Schumann who wrote that "Moore's tale seemed made for music. The idea for it is so poetic, so pure, that I am completely inspired by it."⁵²

The search for *Lalla Rookh* by the modern reader is best begun by recalling its tumultuous reception during the Regency and Victorian periods. That reception was reflected in the work of the many illustrators who worked right through to the end of the century, continuing to seize upon the exotic settings, the ornate costumes, the strange customs, the magical happenings, the scenes of terror, the processional display of character, action, emotion and speech. Many of its first admiring readers were driven mainly by a shared urge for novelties and curiosities, which in turn helped to build up the market for the East India Company's luxuries. The sheer range of *Lalla Rookh's* popularity inevitably provoked burlesques and parodies. The supreme example of this was Vincent Amcotts's theatrical squib in 1868, "founded on Moore's poem," in the manner of a burlesque extravaganza with music selected from Offenbach that included a version of a widow as a pantomime dame by the name of Mokanna—"Tra-la-

50. Linda Kelly's *Ireland's Minstrel* is very positive about Moore, with the exception of *Lalla Rookh*, which she dismisses: "as a whole it is almost unreadable today." L. Kelly, p.135. David Crane's review of *Ireland's Minstrel* in the *Spectator* (August, 2006) shows how the old Tory prejudices about Moore still survive: "a simpering religious versifier, a peddler of Oriental Tales or a dangerously sentimental, Tourist Board Irishness." Fortunately, there have been very recent positive insights into the ambiguities of *Lalla Rookh* in Shelley E. Meagher, "Nineteenth-century Ireland and the Orient: Tom Moore's *Lalla Rookh*" in *New Voices in Irish Criticism* 5, ed. Ruth Connolly and Ann Coughlan (Dublin; Four Courts Press, 2005). PAGES KNOWN??

51. Ronan Kelly, *Bard of Erin: The Life of Thomas Moore* (London: Penguin UK, 2008).

52. See *Three Choirs Festival Hereford Programme 2006* for German text and notes for the performance of Schumann's *Das Paradies und die Peri* Op.50, in Hereford Cathedral on 8 August 2006, pp. 131–46.

Lalla Rookh!"⁵³ Fortunately in 1861, nine years after Moore's death, Sir John Tenniel (1820–1914)—best known for the illustrations of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*—created a sequence of sixty-nine illustrations which, taken together, suggest something of Moore's combination of Gothic theatricality and Symbolist drama pieced together as well-polished fragments of Mughal Islamic culture. Tenniel's style of drawing achieved a translucency that rescued the rich imagery from the shadow of sub-Byronic stereotypes.

Passages from *Lalla Rookh* in which Moore brilliantly transfigured moments of disguise and revelation, love and war, memory and reconciliation, were superbly matched by Tenniel's images. Tenniel's first drawing depicts the scene of the wedding party at the beginning of the journey from Delhi to the kingdom of Cashmere. The Tenniel includes Fadladeen, squatting on a carpet with elevated critical eyebrows, having refreshed his faculties with opium and ready to pounce on Feramorz's words. There follows striking illustrations for Feramorz's first tale of 'The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan' which introduces the ritual of veiling and unveiling. There is the unveiling of the loved one in the tragic love story of Azim and Zelica who are caught up in a civil war caused by Mokanna's revolutionary Islamic sect:

Her veil falls off her faint hands clasp his knees
'Tis she herself! 'tis Zelica he sees!
But, ah, so pale, so chang'd none but a lover
Could in that wreck of beauty's shrine discover
The once ador'd divinity. . . .⁵⁴

The climatic unveiling of the monstrous leader of the sect Mokann, which exposes the full horror of his tyranny as his betrayed followers lie about dying. When Azim is among the invading Caliph's troops breaking down Mokanna's battlements, Zelica in Mokanna's Silver Veil casts off the veil and tragically commits suicide:

Then with a bound, rushes on Azim's spear,
And casting off her Veil in falling, shows—
Oh!—'tis his Zelica's life-blood that flows! (*LR* 117)

Moore unveils the extent of the human cost of French revolutionary violence and the culturally destructive threats from Islamic extremism.

53. Vincent Amcotts, *Lalla Rookh. An Oriental Extravaganza* (London: T. H. Lacy, 1869)

54. *Lalla Rookh. With sixty-nine illustrations from original drawings by John Tenniel, and five ornamental pages of Persian design by T. Sulman, Jun. engraved on wood by H.N. Woods* (London: Longmans, 1861), p. 71; hereafter cited parenthetically, thus: (*LR* 71). The illustrations in this edition are closest to the turnings of Moore's imagination.

Tenniel's illustrations for "Paradise and the Peri" depict a fallen angel in search of a return to Paradise. First, she kneels to tend to the prostrate body of an Indian warrior killed in battle:

'Sweet,' said the Angel, as she gave
The gift into his radiant hand,
'Sweet is our welcome of the Brave
Who die thus for their native land'. (LR 135)

Alla's heavenly Gate does not open to the gift of the hero's last drop of blood, nor to the the gift of the maiden's last sigh. Then the angel arrives in Syria where she hovers over an repentant Arab horseman who kneels with bowed head and joined hands:

And now—behold him kneeling there
By the child's side in humble prayer,
While the same sunbeam shines upon
The guilty and the guiltless one. (LR .152)

Finally, the heavenly gate finally opens at the triumph of a Soul forgiven. Here, Moore links the fate of the hero fallen on the battlefield, the state of the self-sacrificing of lovers, and the need for repentance and reconciliation between the guilty and the guiltless. The poet's prophecy is that only when all three journeys of the Peri have been accomplished shall peace between and within countries be achieved.

Tenniel's illustrations of "The Fire-Worshippers" unearth the great passion at the heart of this tale, in which Moore weaves together the rebellion of the persecuted Ghebers in the Islamic world, Robert Emmett's failed 1803 rebellion against England, and Irish-style remembrance of the sacrifices of its revolutionary heroes among the fair and the brave.

A just war breaks out in the name of Liberty when the Zoroastrians rebel against their Islamic conquerors in Persia:

Full well his Chieftains, sworn and true
Through life and death, that signal knew;
For 'twas the appointed warring-blast,
The alarm, to tell when hope was past,
And the tremendous death-die cast! (LR 254)

Like Emmet, the embattled Hafed transforms himself into a self-sacrificing leader. Tenniel draws an angel on the ocean bed half kneeling beside Hafed's drowned lover Hinda, an image of Emmet's lover Sarah Curran:

Farewell—farewell—until Pity's sweet fountain
Is lost in the hearts of the fair and the brave,

They'll weep for the Chieftain who died on that mountain,
They'll weep for the Maiden who sleeps in this wave. (LR 277)

Tenniell's illustrations also convey the profound lyricism and optimism with which Moore concludes *Lalla Rookh*. A dramatic unveiling occurs when Nourmahal and Selim rekindle their love after—while still in disguise—Nourmahal has sung an enchanted song during the Feast of Roses:

The mask is off—the charm is wrought –
And Selim to his heart has caught,
In blushes, more than ever bright,
His Nourmahal, his Haram's Light! (LR 320)

Feramorz lays to one side his minstrel's mask and shows himself as the future husband of Lalla, much to the consternation of Fadladeen. The storytelling of the Minstrel on the journey has succeeded in so moving Lalla that ever afterwards, Queen Lalla insists on calling her husband by the name of Feramorz. The analogy with Moore's valuation of the role of those who tell the national tale—in other words, with his role as the National Bard—is clear: the Cashmerian minstrel becomes a mirror image of Moore, the Irish Minstrel.

The romantic resolution of *Lalla Rookh* especially challenges Irish readers to use Islamic symbolism as a means to view the Irish nation's long fight for liberty. In proposing this symbolism, Moore was suggesting new metaphors for the form of cultural nationalism that he had earlier evoked in *Irish Melodies*. Nonetheless, Moore himself recognized that his Oriental writings would not attain the lasting status that his Irish works had earned; in 1837, he wrote, "I am strongly inclined to think that, in a race into future times (if any of mine could pretend to such a run), those little ponies, the 'Melodies,' will beat the mare, *Lalla Rookh* hollow."⁵⁵ As Moore wrote this, *Lalla Rookh* was gaining international circulation, but few readers saw its Irish dimensions.⁵⁶ Those dimensions remained submerged throughout the twentieth century; as the bicentenary year of the *Irish Melodies*' publication approaches, it does not seem unlikely that the later work will also receive renewed attention.⁵⁷ But for now, *Lalla Rookh* remains an unacknowledged, but momentous landmark in Moore's search for an Ireland. And perhaps one day soon, the mare might catch up, and maybe once again outstrip, the little ponies.

—jcmnolan@aol.com

55. Moore to WHOM? 23 November 1837, in Dowden, *Letters*, PAGE KNOWN?

56. See Jordan for a good account of the work's initial early popularity, including the remark that "in America . . . it pushed forward with the Bible into the frontier." Jordan, pp. 271–73.

57. The first part of *Irish Melodies* was published early in April, 1808. DETAILS??