Contesting Human Knowledge and God: George Berkeley and the Challenges of Religious Heterodoxy

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D.Phil. in History

Pages: vi + 344 pp.

Thesis Abstract

This dissertation is as much a study of Enlightenment intellectual history as a reflection on the Enlightenment as a historiographical concept. It reconstructs George Berkeley's writings so as to explore his dialectics of Enlightenment in terms of the conceptual conflicts between two languages of Enlightenment. It challenges (1) the predominant philosophical explication of Berkeley's thought that places him in philosophical traditions such as idealism and empiricism, (2) recent histories of Berkeley's 'non-philosophical' writings that tend to interpret him in the light of historiographical arguments about Enlightenment political economy and, in turn, take him as a case for the Irish participation in European Enlightenment, and (3) the historiographical conception of the Enlightenment that is preoccupied with the secular modernity thesis.

The Introduction analyses the two historiographical grounds of this dissertation – Berkeley studies and Enlightenment intellectual history, and explains how this thesis intends to interact with these discourses. Chapter I explicates how Berkeley exposed the methodological failure of the new science, and shows why Berkeley thought a mathematically informed natural philosophy would threaten the stability of a protestant state. Chapter II delineates Berkeley's argument for the reasonableness of Christianity by tracing his demonstration of the divine being through a cooperation between metaphysics and natural philosophy.

Chapter III shows Berkeley's criticism of the new science's theories of progress that defined 'an Enlightened age' as an improved human condition after the emancipation of rational agency from ecclesiastical and political authorities. Chapter IV turns to Berkeley's own theory of improvement based on his understandings of the

socio-economic difficulties in eighteenth-century Ireland. Chapter V examines Berkeley's concern about the actual, social consequences of free-thinkers' theories of progress. Chapter VI explores Berkeley's argument for a genuine, theological Enlightenment as a counterpart to the religiously heterodox Enlightenment. The Conclusion asks the question about the relevance of this thesis, drawing attention to the idea of a critical and self-critical historiography as a way to re-accessing secular modernity's sense of historicity.

Acknowledgments

One can hardly be surprised by the amount of intellectual and personal debts that one has incurred in four years of research and writing. My greatest debt is to Brian Young, whose warm and wise guidance has been invaluable to my journey in the misty past. His insightful sense of the complex nature of historical narrative shapes the thesis's historiographical awareness, and his kind reminders remain helpful when, at times, I dive too deep into sources and lose sight of the significance of intellectual relevance.

I am profoundly grateful to Richard Bourke, Jeng-guo Chen, and Avi Lifchitz. Both Richard Bourke and Jeng-guo Chen helped me into forming my thoughts in a scholarly way. It was Jeng-guo Chen who first introduced the world of Enlightenment intellectual history to me, before Richard Bourke encouraged me to explore the writings of George Berkeley. Richard Bourke and Avi Lifschitz read the whole thesis, and provided critical comments on my reflections on the relations between the history of Enlightenment political thought, contemporary moral philosophy, and political theory. The historiographical reflections and the theoretical articulations of the thesis would not be as satisfying as it might be now without their helps.

I am also grateful to many colleagues, friends, and teachers, especially to Michael Brown at Aberdeen; Yang Fu, Liam Klein, and John Robertson in Cambridge; Chien-yuen Chen in Edinburgh; Shiru Lim, Vanessa Lim, Niall O'Flaherty, Max Skjönsberg, and Adam Sutcliffe in London; Joya Ko and Scott Yong in Norwich; Matteo Bonifacio in Turin; Michael Bentley, Michael Freeden, Perry Gauci, Robert Harris, Max Howells, Dmitri Levitin, Renzhi Li, Andrea J. Liu, Chieh-hsiu Liu, Sarah Mortimer, Jon Parkin, Jonas Pollex, and Blair Worden in Oxford; Gregory Brown in

Las Vegas; Iain McDaniel in Sussex; and Hui-hung Chen, Jien-shou Chen, Cheng-hua Han, Fan-sen Wang, and Chih-wei Yu in Taiwan.

Chapters of this thesis have been presented at different conferences and seminars. I am grateful to the organizers of and commentators at Oxford Seminar in Mainly British History 1680–1850; 2016 Annual Conference of Eighteenth-Century Ireland Society; Seventh Annual London Graduate Conference in the History of Political Thought; IHR History of Political Ideas Early Career Seminar; 2017 Conference for the International Society for Intellectual History; and Post-Doc Workshop in the History of Political Thought.

I would also like to thank the librarians of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Reading Room, Bodleian Library; Manuscripts Reading Room, British Library; Christ Church Library; Codrington Library, All Souls College; English Faculty Library, Oxford; History Faculty Library, Oxford; and Social Science Library, Oxford.

Embarking on an academic career in humanities and social science is difficult. And the road seems to go ever on and on. It would be insufferably lonely without the (sometimes too) generous supports from my family. My two bright, caring, and lovely sisters, Y-Hs Chen and Y-Ts Chen, have been supportive and understanding. My parents, W-L Chen, S-Ch Cheng, and J-J Tsai, have been providing their unconditional love and warm supports throughout the years. The last, but by no means the least, space is for my wife, Peggy, without whose caring and loving accompany this thesis would not have been possible. With love from the bottom of my heart, this thesis is dedicated to them.

Abbreviations

Correspondence	Marc A. Hight ed., *The Correspondence of George Berkeley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
Works	*The Works of George Berkeley Bishops of Cloyne*, 9 Vols., eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1948-1957)

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Introduction

I

This dissertation provides a comprehensive reconstruction of George Berkeley's thought in eighteenth-century intellectual culture. It asks two questions: what was Berkeley doing; and why does it matter? This means that I am making two points, historical and historiographical. The historical point is intimately intertwined with historiographical questions. As I shall point out in this introduction, these historiographical questions can be further divided into two categories. One is about the tendency to place Berkeley in philosophical traditions such as 'idealism', 'immaterialism', or 'empiricism'. This is more closely related to one's interpretation of Berkeley's philosophy, and hence is directly connected to the first question of this dissertation. The other is about ways in which historians have come to conceptualise the intellectual milieus, in which Berkeley wrote his works, in terms of an age of 'Enlightenment'. Engaging this question indicates that this study is also reassessing 'Enlightenment' as a historiographical concept. There are, of course, detailed questions in each of these two general categories that one has to tackle before presenting an adequate reassessment of the existing historiographical ground, on which this dissertation operates. These questions will be duly examined in this introduction. Before turning to explaining the way in which this dissertation is designed to answer the proposed questions, the historiographical foundations of this study need to be elaborated.

II

Like most historical researches, this study engages in one or more historiographical

arguments that shape its enquiries. Identifying these arguments therefore is essential to understanding its intended interlocutors, as well as demarcating its scope. But, in this case, there might be some meta-historical difficulties that require some clarifications. Historical enquiry is informed, if not shaped, by the historian's knowledge of related historiographical accounts. And historical writing itself, as a response to such an enquiry, might well be either criticisms of or contributions to the historiographical thesis. So, for example, one's enquiry into the American political discourse in the revolutionary period might be informed by a historiographical argument that the creation of the American republic is the threshold between republican and liberal political thinking. And the historical writing in response to this enquiry might lead to a criticism of such an argument, showing that American political thinking at the time was preoccupied with appropriating republican thought in a setting that was different from European city-states. But, as historical writing, this criticism itself is an instalment of the historiography of American political thought, meaning that it could become a subject of historical debates shaping further historical enquiries.

In this sense, one might say that the relation between historical writing and historiography is dialectical. Through these exchanges between historical writing and historiographical thesis, we might have a better understanding of the complexity of the past. But in the case of Berkeley scholarship, this dialectical relationship soon faces certain difficulties. Most of the 'histories' about Berkeley's thought are written without an awareness of their questionable historiographical thesis.

Berkeley has been an important subject of philosophical expositions of conundrums such as the theory of human knowledge, the phenomenological notion of

being, and the mechanical connection between vision and perception.[1] Accordingly, the history of his philosophical development has received much scholarly attentions as an important way to scrutinising his philosophical positions in these conundrums.[2] This means that the historical approach to Berkeley's thoughts has mostly been presented in two forms of historical narratives: the history of philosophy and biography[3]. These are histories presented as an exposition of historical texts in order to accommodate them in one or more historiographically constructed philosophical paradigms.[4] Whilst that does not mean that this kind of history necessarily fails to provide insights into one's understanding of historical texts, lacking critical reflection on the historiographico-philosophical presumption underlying one's interpretation might well result in shaping an interpretation that exposes the interpreter's ideological position.[5]

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[1] These are well-explored themes in philosophical research, and I only provide some classic studies as references. Margaret Atherton, *Berkeley's Revolution in Vision* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Daniel E. Flage, 'Berkeley's notions', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 45:3 (Mar., 1985), pp. 407-25; Noel Fleming, 'The tree in the quad', *American Philosophical Quarterly* 22:1 (Jan., 1985), pp. 25-36; A. A. Luce, *Berkeley's Immaterialism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945); Margaret D. Wilson, 'The phenomenalisms of Leibniz and Berkeley', in Ernest Sosa ed., *Essays on the Philosophy of George Berkeley* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1987), pp. 3-22. An up-to-date, and quite useful bibliography on philosophical expositions of aspects of Berkeley's philosophy is provided in Daniel E. Flage, *Berkeley* (Cambridge: Polity, 2014). As an updated introduction to Berkeley's philosophy, Flage's *Berkeley* also provides lists of further readings at the end of each chapter.

[2] Two classic studies are: A. A. Luce, *The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1949); G. A. Johnston, *The Development of Berkeley's Philosophy* (London: Macmillan, 1923). But the best intellectual biography remains: David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[3] Jonathan Bennett's *Locke, Berkeley, Hume: Central Themes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) remains the standard text for this history of philosophy. And despite constant complaints since late twentieth century, textbooks and writings of history of philosophy are still being written in this manner. Stephen Priest, *The British Empiricists*, second edition (London: Routledge, 2007); R. S. Woolhouse, *The Empiricists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). This touches on the tension between academic research and educational practice in humanity and social science that is worth bearing in mind but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

[4] For a clear analysis of this problem in history of philosophy, see: Leo Catana, 'Philosophical problems in the history of philosophy: what are they?', in Mogens Lærke, Justin E. H. Smith, and Eric Schliesser eds, *Philosophy and its History: Aims and Methods in the Study of Early Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 115-33.

[5] Michael Ayers's article in the first volume of *Ideas in Context* series, for example, delivers a careful reconstruction of Hume's intellectual relationship to Berkeley as a counter argument against those criticisms of the much-questioned British empiricist tradition in history of philosophy. Whilst the tradition's exclusionism that Hume could only be 'influenced' by Locke and Berkeley is question begging, Ayers argues that critics who thus exclude and ignore how Hume shape his arguments in response to

The relative absence of professional historians in these approaches to interpreting Berkeley is a curious phenomenon. The recent *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley* serves as a timely example. Amongst its twelve contributors, only one is professional historian.[6] By showing the absence of professional historians, I am not arguing that philosophers' history is characteristically less historical than that of historians', nor am I suggestng that historians' history contains more historiographical awareness and is more critical to the historiographico-philosophical presumption underlying historical narratives. The significance of historiography as the discursive contexts of one's historical research does not always reside in historians' mind.[7] The point I am making is that histories of Berkeley's philosophy have been conditioned by philosophical labels that are produced by attempts to blend Berkeley into certain history of philosophical tradition.

This is the difficulty which this dissertation encounters. Philosophers' histories of

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Berkeley are no less questionable. See: Michael Ayers, 'Berkeley and Hume: a question of influence', in Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner eds., *Philosophy in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 303-27.

[6] Kenneth P. Winkler ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[7] As part of one's professional upbringing, a historian should be quite familiar with the scholarship of her professional field. But it does not naturally insert in the historian's mind the sense of reflecting on the historiographical ground on which she operates. The significance of historiography as an informing and a constitutive part of one's understanding of the past, which effectively shapes one's vision of the politics of historicity and temporality, has been pointed out by many historians whose works have been constant inspirations to the present study. To give but some examples: François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, trans. Saskia Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Arnaldo Momigliano, *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography*, ed. Anthony Grafton (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Hugh Trevor-Roper, *History and the Enlightenment*, ed. John Robertson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Allen Lane, 2001). However, despite that the field of historiography 'has developed rapidly over the last half century or so,' it 'has not yet arrived at a provisionally canonical form.' And we can still see historical writings being produced without careful sense of how they have been shaped by their respectful historiographical contexts. The quotation is taken from J. G. A. Pocock, 'Response and commentary', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 77:1 (Jan., 2016), pp. 157-71. Pocock is specifically describing the state of arts of studying early modern European historiography, but I think this comment can be expanded to describing the study of historiography in general.

Berkeley have too often been produced with the premise that Berkeley was an 'empiricist', 'idealist', and 'immaterialist' philosopher. And these histories accordingly tell stories of how Berkeley develop his mature 'idealism' and 'immaterialism', or how Berkeley's 'empiricism' bridges two philosophical giants in long-eighteenth-century Britain.[8] Admittedly, this is an old-fashioned narrative, yet alternative histories are written without challenging this historiographico-philosophical premise.

Recent scholarship has shifted away from forging a canon of British empiricism, and has turned to identifying the national context of Berkeley's philosophy. But this scholarship only redefines the character of the story without changing the plot. Berkeley is now an Irish philosopher whose philosophical genius has much to do with his philosophical upbringing in Trinity College Dublin.[9] What has not changed is that the story is still about how Berkeley became an empiricist, idealist, and immaterialist. There is no doubt that, through tracing Berkeley's connection with Irish philosophical culture, this line of history has provided much richer accounts of eighteenth-century Irish intellectual setting. It raises the issue that Ireland has been a periphery in philosophers' and historians' understanding of 'Enlightenment', and it opens the possibility of thinking about an Irish Enlightenment whose intellectual and literary contributions – by nourishing figures such as Berkeley, Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith, and Jonathan Swift – to 'Enlightenment' are by no means less significant than the Dutch Republic, England, France, and Scotland.[10] Yet the same difficulty –

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[8] Bennet, *Locke, Berkeley, Hume*; Luce, *Life of Berkeley*.

[9] Berman, *Berkeley*; Idem., *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2005).

[10] Michael Brown, 'Was there an Irish Enlightenment? The case for the Anglicans', in Richard Butterwick and Simon Davies eds., *Peripheries of the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2008), pp. 49-63. The argument of this article is developed into Michael Brown, *The Irish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

writing history without critically engaging with historiographical points – persists.

I now turn to historians' histories, as 'Berkeley and "Enlightenment"' is a theme in which one is most likely to find professional historians in Berkeley scholarship. And it would be suitable to say that this dissertation is a contribution to this literature. One early account takes Berkeley as a counter-enlightenment figure in Irish philosophy on the basis of Berkeley's position in the so-called Deist controversy.[11] This operates on one type of reductionism which reduces 'Enlightenment' to an ideological benchmark that has been abandoned by more sophisticated historians. Instead of arguing whether Berkeley is for or against an Enlightenment ideology, historians now tend to situate Berkeley in different historiographical contexts of 'Enlightenment'. Scott Breuninger's *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, for example, examines Berkeley's socio-economic thought in the light of István Hont's and John Robertson's studies of the Enlightenment discourse of political economy.[12] Similarly, James Livesey's recent article and Michael Brown's *The Irish Enlightenment* both historicise Berkeley and the Irish Enlightenment with reference to the historiographical argument that political economy is the Enlightenment discourse.[13] Brown's book actually defines the Irish Enlightenment in three historiographical moments: Jonathan Israel's argument for a Dutch radical enlightenment; studies of an English social enlightenment that emphasise the significance of manner and sociability; and Robert Darnton's thesis of a French

[11] This is an argument of David Berman, 'Enlightenment and counter-enlightenment in Irish philosophy', in Idem., *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*, pp. 79-105.
[12] Scott Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley: Virtue and Society in the Anglo-Irish Context* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); István Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and the Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2005); John Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[13] James Livesey, 'Berkeley, Ireland and eighteenth-century intellectual history', *Modern Intellectual History*, 12:2 (Aug., 2015), pp. 453-73; Michael Brown, *The Irish Enlightenment*, pp. 16-8.

political enlightenment showing the people's mental transition as reflected by the public's reading habitus.[14]

These histories are not conditioned by the historiographico-philosophical premise that we have visited in philosophers' histories, but their arguments rely on certain historiographical thesis. Arguments that (1) Berkeley's contribution to a discourse of political economy brings Ireland into the map of Enlightenment Europe, and (2) Berkeley is an important figure in the Irish Enlightenment, are subjected to Hont's and Robertson's arguments about political economy and the Enlightenment. These histories thus presuppose a meta-history. They are historical because the historiographical structure which they furnish is historically valid.

There might not be problems in this kind of history. To a certain degree, all historical narratives entail historiographical elements. However, a history entailing historiographical elements is quite different from basing a history on historiographical arguments. One visible difficulty is that when a history is written as an extension of a historiographical argument, the conceptual precision of that argument might be sacrificed in the course.[15] This is presented by the loose conception of the Irish Enlightenment in these histories. In this literature, the Irish Enlightenment is either conceived as eighteenth-century Irish encounters with different national enlightenments, or as Irish men of letters' participation in one or more enlightenment discourses.

[14] Cf. Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (London: Fontana Press, 1996).

[15] This is essentially Ian McBride's criticism of James Livesey's *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Ian McBride, 'The edge of enlightenment: Ireland and Scotland in the eighteenth century', *Modern Intelelctual History* 10:1 (2013), pp. 135-51.

Conceiving the Irish Enlightenment in either sense tells no more than experiences of Irish men of letters in different intellectual milieus. This is not an Enlightenment taking place in Ireland, but rather enlightenments as experienced by individual Irish writers. There is a gap between talking of Berkeley's enlightenments in terms that are similar to Pocock's exposition of the enlightenments of Gibbon, and making a claim of Berkeley being part of an Irish Enlightenment.[16] So far, historians' histories of Berkeley seem to blend these two themes.

Other questions arise from reflecting on historians' histories of Berkeley. In addition to the reliance of their arguments on historiographical points made by other eighteenth-century historians, these histories do not challenge the historiographico-philosophical premise that shapes philosophers' histories. Breuninger's history, being the only monograph-length history produced by professional historians, claims to enrich our understandings of Berkeley's intellectual life by recovering the part of his works that have not been taken as his 'idealist' or 'immaterialist' writings.[17] He effectively divides Berkeley into two personae: the idealist or immaterialist philosopher, and the good Bishop of Cloyne.

This shows how historians silently accept the historiographico-philosophical premise about Berkeley's idealism and immaterialism, as historians rarely attempt to historicise that part of Berkeley's works. Most historians are interested in Berkeley's socio-economic writings, and virtually none of researches done by professional historians to which I have referred in this introduction spend adequate space to

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[16] J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. I: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[17] Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley.*

contextualise Berkeley's alleged philosophical position. Again, the recent *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley* can be taken as an indication: the only article by a professional historian is a study of Berkeley's economic thought.[18] Historians' emphasis on Berkeley's social and economic thought can be further exemplified by a recent, bilingual volume of essays: *Berkeley Revisited : Moral, Social and Political Philosophy*, as the editor Sébastien Charles announces in the introduction that the idea that Berkeley's writings other than those on immaterialism are of little significance is outdated.[19] But what Charles is arguing is that other aspects of Berkeley's writings are not less important than his immaterialist philosophy. This, however, does not lead to questioning Berkeley's alleged idealism and immaterialism.

In fact, these histories rather implicitly reinforce the historiographico-philosophical assumption, as this division is itself another part of philosophers' histories of Berkeley's thought that attempt to illuminate his idealism or immaterialism by recourse to his other writings.[20] This is most apparent in yet another recent contribution to revisit aspects of Berkeley's intellectual life. Silvia Parigi's edited volume enquires the relationship of Berkeley's view of natural philosophy to what has been celebrated as his main philosophical achievement: his 'immaterialism' in the *Principle* and the *Three Dialogues*.[21] Parigi's volume attempts to bridge Berkeley's other writings with his immaterialist philosophy. But articles in Parigi's volume more often than not share the methodological vision of philosophical history. They attempt to delineate philosophical

[18] Patrick Kelly, 'Berkeley's economic writings', in Winkler ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, pp. 339-51.
[19] Sébastien Charles, 'Introduction' to Idem ed., *Berkeley Revisited: Moral, Social and Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015), p. 1.
[20] Paul J. Olscampt, *The Moral Philosophy of George Berkeley* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970).
[21] Silvia Parigi ed., *George Berkeley: Religion and Science in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Springer, 2010).

systems that were to constitute the philosophical background of Berkeley's philosophy, in order to reconcile the 'possible "inconsistencies"' in Berkeley's writings. In other words, Parigi's volume argues for a systematic philosopher by recourse to writing a history of philosophical systems in Berkeley's philosophy. We therefore see articles divided into sections that study certain aspect of individual philosopher's thought in order to explain the corresponding part in Berkeley's philosophy. We also have articles that emphasise one or more philosophers' or philosophical traditions' arguments in order to explicate questions that obscure the assumed coherence of Berkeley's philosophy.[22]

By now it shall become clear that, despite renewing interest in aspects of Berkeley's philosophy, histories of Berkeley's thought are still preoccupied by the historiographico-philosophical assumption that Berkeley was an idealist and immaterialist philosopher. This might well explain as to why a comprehensive history of Berkeley's thought is yet to be produced, as philosophers and historians have restricted their interests in certain aspect of Berkeley's writings. A strong argument shared by recent scholarship is that, in addition to his immaterialism, there were other aspects of Berkeley's intellectual life that would significantly help us understand Berkeley's thought. This is based on two implicit assumptions: (1) Berkeley was an immaterialist philosopher, and (2) there were other aspects of the immaterialist philosopher's thought that were worth recovering. In other words, by emphasising these other aspects of Berkeley's thought, the emerging scholarly interest did not challenge the first

[22] Parigi ed., *Berkeley: Religion and Science*, pp. ix-xix; David Berman, 'The distrustful philosopher', in Ibid., pp. 145-53; Caterina Menichelli, 'Was Berkeley a Spinozist? A historiographical answer (1718-1751)', in Ibid., pp. 171-88; Geneviève Brykman, 'Berkeley, Spinoza, and radical enlightenment', in Ibid., pp. 159-70; Sébastien Charles, 'The animal according to Berkeley', in Ibid., pp. 189-99.

assumption. It indirectly reinforces the philosophical label attached to Berkeley in posterity.

Another question arises from historians' histories is that about Enlightenment. As I have shown, the present reconstruction of Berkeley and the Irish Enlightenment is based on a mixture of Berkeley's biophical origin and the existing historiography of Enlightenment intellectual history. I have also shown that this is the result of a confusion as historians seem to have mistaken the enlightenments of Berkeley as Berkeley's participation in an Irish Enlightenment. This opens up two questions. Was Berkeley's experiences of enlightenments identical to the Enlightenment as a historiographical conception in modern Enlightenment intellectual history? Do all the uses of the term 'Enlightenment' in this regard share the same meaning? The second question requires further elaboration. When Pocock reconstructs Gibbon's encounters with the enlightenments, he carefully explores different 'enlightenment' discourses across eighteenth-century Europe, and eruditely presents ways in which eighteenth-century conceptions of Enlightenment was to be understood in a historiographical sense as a counterpart of ancient knowledge of the trajectory of civil society.[23] But in what sense should one understand the meaning of 'Enlightenment' in reconstructing Berkeley's experiences of the enlightenments? For Breuninger and Livesey, that Enlightenment is the Enlightenment of Hont and Robertson, whereas for Brown, the Enlightenment is constituted by Enlightenments of Israel, Klein, and Darnton. But surely these historians' conceptualisations of Enlightenment cannot be Berkeley's experiences of the enlightenments. This effectively means that, despite

[23] Pocock, *The Enlightenments of Gibbon*.

historians' efforts, Berkeley's experiences of the 'enlightenments' remain unexplored.

One can always ask a follow-up question: did Berkeley have a conception of enlightenment? If so, was that enlightenment different from the Enlightenment as a historiographical concept? Here we arrive at the second question of this dissertation. The question of 'why does it matter' can be reshaped as followed: what can a comprehensive, historical study of Berkeley's writings contribute to our understanding of Enlightenment? The question might appear superficial at the first sight, as I seem to stress the historiographical significance of Enlightenment on my study of Berkeley. But it is the central argument of this dissertation that Berkeley did consciously develop a conception of enlightenment in order to refute the other language of enlightenment, by which he felt threatened. This was Berkeley's encounters with the enlightenments. He experienced a language of enlightenment that has become a familiar theme in modern historiography, and attempted to refute it by a language of enlightenment which, in his view, contains the genuine meaning of 'the Enlightenment' in terms of God's enlightenment of human beings from darkness, the Enlightenment that is recorded in Genesis and was endorsed by St. Augustine. My emphasis on Berkeley and Enlightenment only emerges after Berkeley's words.

Exploring Berkeley's experiences of the enlightenments lead to a reflection on the Enlightenment as a historiographical concept. This is the final remark on the historiographical foundations of this study. Despite some historians' insistence on the significance of reconstructing a pan-European, unifying Enlightenment project in the eighteenth century, by ways of which these historians argue for the meaning of studying

history as a vindication for modern democratic and liberal values,[24] more careful historians have come to explore the conceptual complexity of Enlightenment that intertwines eighteenth-century philosophy, theology, and historiography. Theology is of particular significance in recent scholarship, as an increasing number of works is showing that understandings of divinity, as well as the nature of human religiosity, underpinned the ways in which eighteenth-century thinkers historicised and philosophised the connections between human agency and civil society that were instrumental to their reflections on cultural, political, and socio-economic questions.[25] These historians' narrative constitutes a historical criticism of a historiographical claim. Enlightenment was not an ideological transition through which the world was disenchanted and became modern.[26]

In a broad sense, these histories of Enlightenment share one same target: the

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[24] Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*; Idem., *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Idem., *A Revolution of the Mind: Radical Enlightenment and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Idem., *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[25] Thomas Ahnert, *The Moral Culture of the Scottish Enlightenment, 1690-1805* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014); Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and Its Enemies 1660-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Avi Lifschitz, *Language and Enlightenment: The Berlin Debates of the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. V: Religion: The First Triumph* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Adam Sutcliffe, *Judaism and Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); B. W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Still more recently, Dmitri Levitin, in his *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), has argued that adequate knowledge of seventeenth-century theological and philosophical trainings in universities is of particular significance to a careful, historiographical rendition of the meaning of Enlightenment.

[26] For arguments that 'Enlightenment' was intrinsically a historical criticism of ideology of ecclesiastical history, the history of political society, and sacred history, see: Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988); Pocock, *Religion: The First Triumph*; John Robertson, 'Sacred history and political thought: Neapolitan responses to the problem of sociability after Hobbes', *The Historical Journal* 56:1 (Mar., 2013), pp. 1-29.

tendency to reduce Enlightenment as a secularisation and modernisation story.[27] That Enlightenment had a deep religious dimension is not a novel argument. Fifty years ago, Hugh Trevor-Roper has argued for ways in which Reformation theological debates constituted the ideological origins of the Enlightenment.[28] It is an argument worth revisiting as the historiographical myth that the Enlightenment was disenchanting and secularising persists. Intellectual historians have been arguing that thinkers that have been taken as contributors to the Enlightenment were not outright atheists or sceptics, as the myth would have it. They were religiously heterodox, believing in the form of Christianity which they found comfortable with their intellectual aspirations.[29] This leads to an argument that Enlightenment debates on moral, natural, and socio-political philosophy were underpinned by, if not stemmed from, disparate theological positions that were closely related to the study of the history of religion and scholarship in earlier centuries, culminating to the point that 'Enlightenment' as a historiographical concept requires more careful conceptual demarcation.[30] Once the argument that theological positions substantially shaped ways in which eighteenth-century thinkers philosophised

[27] This, of course, is not to say that previous histories which contain arguments that Enlightenment was about secularisation or hostility towards religion are badly written or loosely researched. Paul Hazard's classic *The Crisis of the European Mind,* trans. James Lewis May (New York: New York Review Books, 2013) is an eminent case against such criticisms. One has to avoid becoming a reductionist when attempting a criticism of reductionism.

[28] Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'The religious origins of the Enlightenment', in Idem., *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1967), pp. 179-218.

[29] Roger D. Lund ed., *The Margins of Orthodoxy: Heterodox Writing and Cultural Response 1660-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); John Brooke and Ian Maclean eds., *Heterodoxy in Early Modern Science and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson eds., *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy, 1600-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

[30] Dmitri Levitin, 'From sacred history to the history of religion: Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity in European historiography from Reformation to "Enlightenment"', *The Historical Journal* 55:4 (2012), pp. 1117-1160; John Marshall, *John Locke, Toleration and Early Enlightenment Culture: Religious Intolerance and Arguments for Religious Toleration in Early Modern and 'Early Enlightenment' Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ann Thomson, *Bodies of Thought: Science, Religion, and the Soul in the Early Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

the human condition is taken, narratives of Enlightenment in the structure of a binary opposition between reason/religion and secularity/superstition becomes crudely superficial.[31]

There is, however, one difficulty in recent scholarship that is inherent in criticism. Narrative of criticism might be modified by its subject as the critic engages and reconstructs one's antithesis in order to justify the meaning and the necessity of criticism. It might well become a process in which the critic frames her criticism in a meta-critical, binary framework that consolidates other interpreters' sense of the antithesis from the opposite end.[32] This process does exist in what we have seen in recent scholarship on Enlightenment and religion. Recent studies provide persuasive arguments against the historiographical myth that Enlightenment was a unified intellectual project for a set of secularised, modern liberal values. They achieved this by proving the profound religiosity of the allegedly irreligious Enlightenment thinkers, meaning that the study of the religious dimensions of Enlightenment is essentially recovering the religions of these philosophers.[33]

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[31] It is precisely in this sense that Richard Bourke counter argues the mischaracterisation of Edmund Burke's thought as against Enlightenment. See: Richard Bourke, *Empire and Revolution: The Political Life of Edmund Burke* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 67-222.

[32] I develop this idea from reading Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000). See also Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015). The process in which criticism is conditioned by its subject and further strengthen its target can be seen in Gadamer's analysis of Romanticism's criticism of Enlightenment's historical consciousness. See: Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method,* trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Crossroad, 1975), pp. 238-53.

[33] This can be seen in a very recent introduction to the theme. See: Sarah Mortimer, 'Religion and Enlightenment', in Richard Whatmore and Brian Young eds., *A Companion to Intellectual History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 345-357. This reconstruction of religion and Enlightenment is only made possible by works showing how, for example, Biblical criticism constituted a significant part of Thomas Hobbes's philosophy, and how Bernard Mandeville's much criticised account of human sociability actually developed from engaging Jansenist literature on human nature. E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Noel Malcolm, 'Hobbes, Erza, and the Bible: The history of a subversive idea', in Idem., *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 383-431; J. G. A. Pocock, 'Time, history and eschatology in the thought of Thomas Hobbes', in Idem., *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Chicago: Chicago Unviersity Press, 1989), pp. 148-201.

But this is liable to be mistaken by interpreters, who might argue that Enlightenment as criticisms of priestcraft made by religious heterodoxy is essentially another way of saying that Enlightenment is a project in which rational religion attempts to dismiss authoritarian superstition. Putting it this way, the discovery of the religious aspects of Enlightenment thinkers only reinforces the fact that there was a cross-European consensus amongst religiously heterodox thinkers in the eighteenth century, for whom the key to improving the human condition is to liberate rational agency from intellectual immaturity caused by ecclesiastical and political authority.[34]

Moreover, emphasising religion and Enlightenment in terms of religious heterodoxy might strengthen the sense that Enlightenment's character was essentially secularising, as its narrative might become a story of how Enlightenment philosophy emerged from theological disagreements, matured through formulating responses to such disagreements in the face of the present socio-economic and political predicaments, and completed in the form of a new philosophy articulating and reflecting on questions that are beyond the scope of previous theological disputes.[35] This is a subtler narrative of secularisation. I will return to this theme in the conclusion of this dissertation, after reconstructing Berkeley's conception of the Enlightenment and after showing that, for Berkeley, the meaning of Enlightenment is theological in terms of its close relationship to eschatology and soteriology.

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[34] This misinterpretation of recent historiography of Enlightenment is best performed by Laurence Brockliss, who quite recently argues that recent historiography of Enlightenment does not challenge Peter Gay's thesis of Enlightenment as the spirit modern paganism contra institutionalised Christianity, and that, within decades, only Jonathan Israel provides a narrative substantially reworking Gay's paradigm. See: Laurence Brockliss, 'Introduction' to Laurence Brockliss and Ritchie Robertson eds., *Isaiah Berlin and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 3-18.

[35] This is the narrative of John Robertson's *Case for the Enlightenment*, in which the Enlightenment is conceptualised as the rise of political economy from challenges of Epicurean ideas of human nature to Catholic and Protestant theology.

By tracing Berkeley's experiences of the enlightenments, this dissertation contributes to recent historiographical reflections on Enlightenment and religion. It argues that, as an Anglican cleric, Berkeley's experiences reveal that the religious aspects of Enlightenment were not exclusively heterodox, and that the boundary between orthodoxy and heterodoxy was far from fixed. In Berkeley's case, heterodoxy was a label employed to dispute arguments that he considered to be of danger to the established Church. This means that heterodoxy, as it appears in this dissertation's title, already entails Berkeley's conceptualisation of arguments which he intended to refute. These were arguments made by those whom Berkeley called 'minute philosophers', including a wide range of his contemporary thinkers such as René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, John Locke, Nicolas Malebranche, Bernard Mandeville, Isaac Newton, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, Benedict de Spinoza, Matthew Tindal, and John Toland.

Consequently, Berkeley's experiences of the enlightenments were constituted by two conceptualisations of the Enlightenment. There was a conceptual reconstruction of the Enlightenment of 'minute philosophers'. In Berkeley's view, these philosophers, notwithstanding their different claims in natural, moral, and socio-political philosophy, shared the same intellectual ambition. They devoted their writings to challenging the ontological order underpinning human knowledge and the socio-political stability of political society in order to deliver human beings from an age of darkness to an 'enlightened age'. This end of the heterodox Enlightenment conceived by Berkeley would not appear unfamiliar to students of Enlightenment intellectual history. In fact, Berkeley's conception of the heterodox Enlightenment strikingly resembles the myth of

Enlightenment: it is an Enlightenment that, to borrow Professor Israel's words, is characteristically a revolution of the mind, tending to introduce a revolution to political society.

But, for Berkeley, this heterodox Enlightenment was anything but improving the human condition. The main argument of his *An Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain* shows that Berkeley took this Enlightenment as bringing unprecedented threat to the stability of the British state and as the intellectual origin of the socio-economic difficulties in eighteenth-century Britain, culminating to the crisis of the so-called South Sea Bubble.[36] Minute philosophers had led Britain into an age of darkness, and the only solution was to recover the genuine meaning of the 'Enlightenment'. For Berkeley, this genuine Enlightenment is teleological, as the end of secular life is the universal well-being of humankind intended by God. The meaning of this teleology in secular terms is two-fold: the end of human cognition is to discover the teleological design for the well-being of God's creatures, whilst the end of one's life in civil society is to co-operate with that design. In *Siris: A Chain of Philosophical Reflextions and Enquiries…*, Berkeley argues that this is the universal truth which God makes available to human beings, and which ancient philosophers, notably Plato, had discovered, but which had been ignored by Berkeley's contemporary 'minute philosophers'.[37] It can be argued that this is an Augustinian moment in Berkeley's participation in *la querelle des Anciens et des Moderne*.[38]

[36] *An Essay toward Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, in *Works VI*, pp. 69-87.
[37] *Siris: A Chain of Philosophical Reflexions and Inquiries… etc.*, in *Works V*, pp. 27-165.
[38] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. R. W. Ryson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Book VIII. Here la querelle is taken out of its initial, institutional context. And the fact that Berkeley was thinking in a way that constantly juxtaposing ancient and modern philosophical arguments means that Dan Edelstein's argument for the Enlightenment's French character in terms of la querelle

Like Augustine, Berkeley saw his age as a time when the divine design was threatened by irreligiosity in the secular world, tending to the separation of the closely intertwined courses between human history and divine teleology. Berkeley's conceptualisation of the genuine Enlightenment intends to restore the bond between human history and divine teleology. Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments were constituted by delineating such a historical nature of Enlightenment. Whilst the heterodox Enlightenment intends to expel divinity from human history, the genuine Enlightenment reveals that human history is essentially the practice of divine teleology. For Berkeley, there would be an end of history, and the meaning of human activities is about how to bring about that end. This is clearly presented in his *Verses on America*. 'Planting Arts and Learning in America' was both an episode in human history and a movement towards the fulfilment of divine teleology:

> Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way;
> The four first Acts already past,
> A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day;
> Time's noblest Offspring is the last.[39]

III

The previous section's discussion introduces a meta-historical argument of this thesis: a comprehensive, historical analysis of Berkeley's philosophy is equally a history of Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments. Apparently, the meaning of the 'historical' in this dissertation is different from the histories of Berkeley's thought that we have visited in the previous section. There are at least two senses of history in that literature. On the one hand, there is a history of the philosophical development of

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can be expanded beyond France. See: Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010)

[39] *Verses on America*, in *Works VII*, p. 373.

Berkeley, where 'history' means the progress of Berkeley's mature philosophy. On the other hand, there is an employment of 'history' as an explanatory instrument that crystallises the perplexity of Berkeley's philosophy by distilling it into several philosophical moments constructed by Berkeley's philosophical predecessors.

As we have seen, both forms of history are preoccupied with the historiographico-philosophical assumption of Berkeley's idealism and immaterialism, and both turn to 'history' for reinforcing their assumption. One might argue that the persona of these histories is a Kantian philosophical historian who 'has the moral and intellectual authority', endowed by posterity, to harmonise 'opposed philosophies'.[40] This dissertation does not write a history tracing the development, nor delineating the perplexity, of Berkeley's philosophical system. It is historical in the sense that it is historiographical, taking a historical study as an empirical case contributing to a historiographical debate about Enlightenment and religion. But more importantly, it revisits the historical moments that occasioned Berkeley's writings for recovering what Berkeley was doing in his works. It argues that a historical reconstruction of Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments will dismiss the historiographical-philosophical assumption underlying previous histories of Berkeley's thought.

This quite naturally reminds one of Skinnerian contextualism, as it appears to be suggesting a history of Berkeley as an agent operating in various linguistic conventions that rendered his speech acts meaningful. But this dissertation is more than a story of reconstructing (1) the agent's intention by placing it in his historical and linguistic context, and (2) the linguistic conventions that make the agent's speech acts possible for

[40] Ian Hunter, 'The history of philosophy and the persona of the philosopher', *Modern Intellectual History*, 4:03 (Nov., 2007), pp. 571-600.

meeting his intention. Before going further, I should emphasise that, so far as I am concerned, all forms of analysis concerning the historicity of their subject demand different degrees of contextualisation.[41] What distinguishes, say, a Skinnerian historical agency in intellectual history from a Gadamerian effective-historical consciousness in hermeneutics is more Skinner's and Gadamer's disparate thoughts on the way in which contextualisation works with understanding, which is clearly presented in how they frame their questions, than their attitudes toward the significance of contextualisation to understanding.[42]

In this study, the agent's acts constitute a significant context to understanding his acting. It argues that what Berkeley was doing is essentially interwoven with his experiences of the Enlightenment. The word 'experience' in a Berkeleian sense entails encountering and conceptualising. In this sense, his experiences contain ways in which he perceived the threats of 'minute philosophers', conceptualised their language of Enlightenment, and criticised and dismissed that language by formulating an antithetical concept. Contextualisation in this dissertation is reconstructing Berkeley's conceptualisations that were basically his formulation of two languages of Enlightenment. In other words, concepts and languages are inseparable in this dissertation, making its approach closer to Reinhart Koselleck's 'hermeneutical circle' that is partly constituted by 'concepts and discourses'.[43] Yet what best characterises this

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[41] Richard Whatmore, *What is Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2016), pp. 21-44.
[42] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 305-41, 345-66, 460-91; Idem., *Gadamer in Conversation: Reflections and Commentary*, ed. Richard E. Palmer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 36-60; Quentin Skinner, 'The practice of history and the cult of the fact', and 'Interpretation, rationality and truth', in Idem., *Visions of Politics, Vol. I: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 8-26, 27-56.
[43] Reinhart Koselleck, 'The temporalization of concepts', *Finnish yearbook of Political Thought* 1 (2007), pp. 16-24; Jan-Werner Müller, 'On conceptual history', in Darren McMahon and Samuel Moyn eds., *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 74-93.

dissertation's approach is Pocock's argument about 'languages' as 'a linguist device for selecting certain information, composed of facts and the normative consequences which these facts are supposed to entail, and enjoining these upon a respondent' that is 'interested in and extending sometimes as far as the articulation of a world-view or ideology.'[44] In fact, this is an understanding of language that is not too distant from Berkeley's conception of language.[45] Putting it this way, this dissertation becomes a study of ways in which Berkeley articulated a world-view of ideological war between two concepts of Enlightenment. And a study of this process is quintessentially a study of Berkeley's languages of the Enlightenments.

A significant part of this dissertation is therefore about the way in which Berkeley systematises the languages of natural, moral, and socio-political philosophy of 'minute philosophers', leading to a unified conception of the heterodox Enlightenment. According to Berkeley, the normative principles of this Enlightenment are expressed in minute philosophers' confidence that rational agency alone is adequate to direct the course of human history towards an 'enlightened' future. Its political end is an intellectual, institutional, and constitutional emancipation of rational agency. In other words, its political ideology is against the state of affairs that would be historiographically conceived as *l'ancien régime* by later generations of historians. In Berkeley's view, this was why these minute philosophers crowned themselves as 'free-thinkers', and was why

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[44] J. G. A. Pocock, 'Concepts and discourses: A difference in culture? Comment on a paper by Melvin Richter', in Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter eds., *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte* (Washinton D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1996), pp. 47-58; 'The reconstruction of discourse: towards the historiography of political thought', in Idem., *Political Thought and History: Essays on Theory and Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 67-86.
[45] Kenneth L. Pearce, *Language and the Structure of Berkeley's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

they called their project for an 'enlightened' age a project of 'free-thinking'.[46]

Throughout this dissertation, religious heterodoxy, 'minute philosophers', and 'free-thinkers' are used interchangeably denoting the subjects of Berkeley's articulation of the heterodox Enlightenment, whereas the term heterodox Enlightenment is used as a synonym to the kind of 'free-thinking' systematised by Berkeley. There is another point. My study of Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments in the sense of his articulations of the languages of the Enlightenment means that my analyses of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century thinkers are guided by the principle that they constitute the discursive contexts of our understandings of Berkeley's conceptions of the Enlightenments. For example, the analysis of Leibniz's *Specimen Dynamicum* in the first chapter cannot be taken as a contribution to Leibniz scholarship. It is a context of understanding Berkeley's criticism of free-thinkers' attempt to dismantle the existing diagram of human knowledge.

This thesis has six chapters, which can be further divided into two parts. The first part – constituted by the first two chapters – examines Berkeley's criticism of minute philosophers' celebrated, 'modern' knowledge, particularly their vision of *mathesis universalis* that sees mathematical method as the only approach to conceiving the truth of natural phenomena, as forcefully presented in Descartes's, Hobbes's, Spinoza's, Malebranche's, Newton's, and Leibniz's writings. In Berkeley's view, this kind of mathematisation of natural philosophy entails an argument that human beings as rational agency is capable of delineating natural phenomena without revealed providence. The infidel implication of this argument is two-fold: on the one hand, it

[46] *Alciphron or, the minute Philosopher…*, in *Works III*, esp. dialogue I.

remains agnostic about the relationship of revealed providence to the search after truth; on the other, it undermines the theological responsibility of reason, implying a contradiction between human rationality and occult messages, resulting in the tendency of using reason to explore minute, speculative subjects that have very little to do with truth.

The first two chapters explore Berkeley's engagement in the contemporary debates about the mathematisation of human knowledge. They argue that what has been commonly taken as Berkeley's immaterialism has to be read in this context. Part I of the dissertation thus provides a history against the historiographical-philosophical assumption of Berkeley's philosophy. Chapter I examines the way in which Berkeley came to demonstrate the inadequacy of these philosophers' mathematical method, as well as his attempts to restore the priority of the Aristotelian 'first philosophy' – metaphysics and theology – against the new science. It argues that Berkeley's early writings, which become the corpus of what modern philosophers called his 'heroic' philosophical writings, were produced whilst Berkeley was a tutor of Trinity College Dublin, and that they were written in a strictly defined scholarly context; that is, in the context of the debate about *scientia* (knowledge) in universities. Chapter II proceeds to argue that Berkeley's 'immaterialism' and 'idealism' are arguments demonstrating the being of God. It shows that Berkeley's *The Principles of Human Knowledge* was characteristically closer to Samuel Clarke's Boyle Lectures than John Locke's *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*. Once being rendered in this context, Berkeley's famous immaterialist motto '*esse* is *percipi*' was, for Berkeley, more an indication of one's cognitive status in the system of the natural world than an extraordinary

philosophical statement. The second chapter ends with Berkeley's argument that ancient wisdom comes closer to understanding the laws of the natural world than their modern counterparts, as the latter failed to conceive the divine system of the world. For Berkeley, modern free-thinkers' mistaken ontological revolution paves the way for their Enlightenment project that threatens to dismantle the existing political society. This is the theme of Part II of this thesis.

The remaining four chapters — the second part of this thesis — turn to examine Berkeley's criticism of the part of free-thinkers' science of human society, which emerged from an analogical thinking of their science of the natural world. This, for Berkeley, was the intellectual consequence of 'modern' knowledge, and was of greater danger to his contemporaries than the part of mathematical method. Here Berkeley's targets were free-thinkers who argued for the self-realisation of rational agency in terms of their dismantling of the existing political and ecclesiastical authority as the way to arrive at an 'enlightened age'. This 'enlightened age', as envisioned by free-thinkers, is an age of freedom of thought and an age of genuine happiness. The 'enlightenment' as a process leading up to the 'enlightened age' is accordingly consisted of the spread of free-thinking and the practice of free-thinkers' projects for improving the human condition. For Berkeley, this 'enlightenment' is misinformed by free-thinkers' system of knowledge, derived from their misleading anatomy of human nature that gives rise to theories of human progress dismissing the divine and natural law about theodicy and the teleology of human history.

Chapter III reconstructs the way in which Berkeley conceptualised the art of free-thinking and free-thinkers' arguments about 'an enlightened age' through analysing

his criticism of them in *Alciphron*. It begins with a study of the hostile context against the Anglican church in England, and shows how Berkeley was affected by this atmosphere. For him, such hostility was the consequence of the spread of free-thinking. And *Alciphron* was Berkeley's attempt to expose the dismantling nature of this tenet of thought. Having demonstrated Berkeley's criticism of free-thinkers' theory of human progress, Chapter IV turns to explore how Berkeley himself thought about the proper way of promoting public well-being. It argues that Berkeley's *The Querist* can be taken as his plan of improving a Protestant society, and that, as Berkeley himself indicates, it is a challenge to free-thinkers whose theory of progress would lead to nothing but despair. This chapter examines Berkeley's urge for public reflection on the true source of the wealth of nations, as well as his idea that Ireland's improvement has to be viewed in the context of an Anglo-Irish, protestant nation. In so doing, this chapter also responds to the historiographical argument of Berkeley as an Irish Enlightenment figure on the basis of biographical fact.

In Chapter III and IV, I explore Berkeley's concern about free-thinkers' theory of Enlightenment and his proposal for a more truthful plan of social improvement. Chapter V examines Berkeley's diagnosis of the social consequences of free-thinkers' Enlightenment. It embarks on Berkeley's tracing of the cause of the so-called problems of commercial society in England, and demonstrates the way in which he arrives at the conclusion that the spread of free-thinking has already corrupted the public spirit. This chapter shows that, in his view, the spread of free-thinking would inevitably lead to the ruin of Great Britain unless one can find an immediate remedy. For Berkeley, the most effective remedy would be the banishment of free-thinkers and their writings. It also

explores a more sophisticated part in Berkeley's argument for this remedy. The issue here is the tension between free-thinkers' idea of Enlightenment and Berkeley's conception of sociability. Free-thinkers seem to suggest that one has to dismantle the existing Protestant society in order to arrive at 'an enlightened age'. Yet, in Berkeley's view, human sociability is providential, and is part of the divine, general will for the universal well-being of human beings. An argument for the destruction of society is an argument against this providential sociability. There is therefore social, political, and theological reason to banish free-thinkers.

This idea of providential sociability and the divine, general will leads to a point that histories of human society, being part of the divine order, shall lead to the universal well-being in accordance with God's intention. There is an implication of teleology here. Chapter VI explores Berkeley's conception of the relation between human history and the divine order. It shows that, in Berkeley's view, human history is teleological as the direction of history is moving towards the universal well-being, as intended by the divine, general will. Alongside this idea of history is Berkeley's conception of enlightenment. For Berkeley, a careful study of human history tells a story of the ways in which human beings are gradually enlightened by God from darkness. The end of human knowledge, as well as the end of one's uses of reason, is to appreciate this fact, to make sense of ways in which political society and the natural world are integrated in this divine design, and to co-operate with the divine, general will.

Here we arrive at the heart of this thesis. Previous chapters have demonstrated how Berkeley refutes the heterodox enlightenment. Chapter VI recovers Berkeley's conception of the genuine, theological enlightenment, and shows that underlying

Berkeley's philosophical, political, social, and theological writings is his preoccupation with an argument for the reasonableness of the Christian idea of God. In order to do so, this chapter analyses Berkeley's sermons and reconstructs his conceptions of divine jurisprudence, his idea of human history, and his notion of divine justice. It concludes Berkeley's dialectics of the heterodox enlightenment with his own conception of the Enlightenment. The 'Enlightenment', for Berkeley, means the process through which human beings come to the 'light' so as to understand and to co-operate with the divine will.

This brings the thesis back to the historiographical debate on Enlightenment and religion that I have been discussing in this introduction. By conceptualising, systematising, and then dismissing the heterodox Enlightenment, Berkeley effectively provided an alternative project of Enlightenment that appeals to one's understanding and use of reason, which, once cultivated properly, shall lead to an argument for the reasonableness of Christian religion. In his view, the relationship of the use of reason and the meaning of the genuine Enlightenment can be easily conceived when one comes to recognise the existence of a providential order which is actively governed by the divine will.

Part I. Human Knowledge and The Great Chain of Being

Ch. I The Danger of the New Science and the Problem of Mathematics

I

This chapter explores ways in which Berkeley contested his contemporaries' mathematisation of natural philosophy. It shows that, in Berkeley's view, this was more a methodological debate than a dispute over certain philosophical content. The underlying question was about the best possible means to achieving the ends of natural philosophy. But the question about means is often determined by one's understanding of the end. For Berkeley's contemporary counterparts – such as Sir Isaac Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz – for whom the end of natural philosophy is explaining the truth of the natural world, the best approach is through mathematical language as it provides an accurate description avoiding sensual deceptions. Yet as Berkeley saw it, this was a misunderstanding of the end of natural philosophy in the diagram of human knowledge.

This diagram, in Berkeley's mind, was in accordance with an Aristotelian division of physics and metaphysics that was commonly practised in early modern universities. It shapes Berkeley's idea that the end of natural philosophy is collecting and analysing data of natural phenomena in order to provide empirical information for metaphysical speculation about the truth of the natural world. From this point of view, attempts to mathematise natural philosophy entail a two-fold implication that a mathematised natural philosophy can sustain itself in studying the natural truth, and that the metaphysical department of the diagram of knowledge can be dismissed as it is reduced to irrelevance in scholarly pursuits of the truth. This chapter reconstructs Berkeley's criticism of such implications, going through his early writings in Trinity

College Dublin and works that were published after his return from North America, and suggests that, although the question first occurred to Berkeley when he was a student and then a Junior Fellow in Dublin, it preoccupied his entire intellectual life.

This means that this chapter is making two historiographical points by counter arguing two claims about Berkeley in the history of philosophy. The first claim is that there was a 'heroic period' in Berkeley's life. It allegedly began in 1709, two years after Berkeley received his MA from Trinity College Dublin. This was the year when he published his first major writing, *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision*, which impressed groups of readers in the British Isles and the continent. A year later, he published his *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, which was ridiculed by generations of leading intellectuals in eighteenth-century Europe, yet still fascinates modern philosophers. As Berkeley's letters to Jean le Clerc impart, these works were intended for learned circles in Protestant Europe, whilst the major arguments of *The Principles* were rearranged and re-presented in the form of philosophical dialogue in *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* in 1713, in order to engage a broader audience beyond the learned.[47] Berkeley left Dublin, passed through Coventry, and, after a fortnight, arrived in London in late January 1713.[48] London provided Berkeley with vast opportunities to encounter some of the most active literary figures at the time, resulting in his engagement with Sir Richard Steele's new periodical, the *Guardian*. Yet it also brought an end to his 'heroic period'.

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[47] Berkeley drafted a letter to Le Clerc in 1711 in the hope that he would give the *Principles* more public exposure by publishing it in *Bibliothèque Choisie*. Later in the year, Berkeley received a copy of *Bibliothèque Choisie* containing an abridgement of *Theory of Vision*, to which he replied with a series of corrections. The drafts of the letters are available in BL. Ad. Mss. 39304, whilst the letters themselves are in the Le Clerc Papers in the University of Amsterdam Library. These are printed and translated in Letters 27, 28, 32, 33 in *Correspondence*, pp. 55–60, 62–71.

[48] Berkeley to Percival, Letter 38, in *Correspondence*, pp. 78–80.

For historians of philosophy, this is the period when Berkeley's philosophical genius was fully demonstrated, a period 'in which he developed his immaterialist philosophy'.[49] In fact, A. A. Luce was so fascinated with the time that he attempted to trace the foundation of Berkeley's 'immaterialism' to an earlier stage of his life, and claimed to have found a piece of work that 'touch[es] the heart' of his philosophy, precisely because it is 'vitally connected with the massive argument for immaterialism'.[50] The work in question is 'On infinities', a paper that Berkeley presented at the recently revived Philosophical Society of Dublin on 19 November, 1707.[51] But were Berkeley's writings in this period an attempt to lay the foundation for a grand philosophical system? Could it be more likely that his writings at the time were reacting to a spreading phenomenon, the consequence of which he faced with a certain anxiety?

The second claim is much more recent than the first. It suggests that Berkeley's philosophical development in Dublin represents a characteristically Irish intellectual culture that nourished a distinctive Irish Enlightenment as well as an Irish counter Enlightenment.[52] The underlying question of this claim shifts from time to time, from Berman's argument for an Irish philosophical tradition to Brown's enquiry about Ireland's experiences of European Enlightenment(s). But the general direction of these questions remains the same, as they are informed by a biographical emphasis on ways in which one's upbringing shapes one's thinking and on ways in which one's thinking represents the local culture in which that upbringing takes place. This is a

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[49] Berman, *Berkeley*, p. 71.
[50] Luce's introduction to *Of Infinities*, in *Works IV*, p. 233.
[51] BL. Ad. Mss. 4812, ff. 30–1. 'A Discourse of Infinities by Mr. Berkeley read before the Dublin Society November the 19th 1707'.
[52] A standard example that makes both claims is Berman, *Berkeley*, pp. 21-70.

commonplace in contextualising intellectual life. Gibbon's memoir serves as a prominent case for tracing one's intellectual development through one's encounters with different local settings.[53] The question of this claim is that it presupposes a national character of local settings, and accordingly forces such national character on individual cases.

The question can be seen in Berman's characterisation of Irish philosophy as constituted by Irish Enlightenment and Irish Counter-Enlightenment. The distinction is determined by Irish thinkers' polarised adaptation of Lockean empiricism as featured in the confrontation between John Toland and Berkeley.[54] But Toland received his university training in Scotland, and most of the debates in which he participated were beyond Ireland.[55] It is difficult to link Toland's intellectual activities to an Irish national character apart from the biographical fact that he was born and lived for a while in Ireland. Berkeley, admittedly, had more connections to Ireland, and there have been more attempts to nationalise Berkeley than Toland. There are arguments that Berkeley's reflections on vision were occasioned by an Irish philosophical question about visual perceptions, and that Berkeley's political economy was conditioned by Ireland's socio-economic difficulty.[56] However, as this chapter argues, Berkeley's reflections on vision should be placed in a series of discursive moments in which he attempted to refute his contemporaries' mathematisation of natural philosophy.[57] Most

[53] Edward Gibbon, *Autobiography of Edward Gibbon, as Originally Edited by Lord Sheffield*, intro. J. B. Bury (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972 reprinted).
[54] Berman, 'Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment in Irish philosophy' and 'The culmination and causation of Irish philosophy', in Idem., *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*, pp. 79–105, 106–37.
[55] Justin Champion, *Republican Learning: John Toland and the Crisis of Christian Culture, 1696–1722* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
[56] Berman, *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*; Brown, 'Was there and Irish Enlightenment?', in Butterwick and David eds., *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, pp. 49–63.
[57] I discuss Berkeley's political economy and his alleged 'Irishness' in the fourth chapter.

of these contemporaries were not Irish, and more evidence is required to support the argument of the alleged claim of 'we Irish think otherwise'.

'We Irish think otherwise' is a modern aphorism of Berkeley's commentaries in his Commonplace Book, which he began to write in 1705. This has been taken as an indication of Berkeley's 'Irishness' by historians of philosophy. The standard argument is that this aphorism reflects two prospects of Berkeley's 'Irishness': one philosophical, the other political.[58] This chapter examines the philosophical part of the claim, whilst the political part is analysed in Chapter 4 when I discuss Berkeley's political economy. According to Richard Kearney, there is a weak and a strong argument for Berkeley's philosophical 'Irishness'. The weak argument is that Berkeley's philosophy is against English empiricism, and the strong argument is that Berkeley's writings are part of an Irish literary tradition that stretches down to W. B. Yeats. But if we take a closer look at the original notes, it becomes perplexing as to how Berkeley's notes about 'Irish' lead to an indication of an 'Irish' way of thinking. What is actually written in the Commonplace Book is:

> There are men who say there are insensible extensions, there are others who say the Wall is not white, the fire is not hot ... etc. We Irish Men cannot attain to these truths.
>
> The Mathematicians think there are insensible lines, about these they harangue, these cut in a point, at all angles these are divisible ad infinitum. We Irish men can conceive no such lines.

[58] Accounts of Berkeley's 'Irishness' are summarised in Richard Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland: Politics, Culture, Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 117-26.

> The Mathematicians talk of w[ha]t they call a point, this they say is not altogether nothing nor is it downright something, now we Irish men are apt to think something and nothing are next neighbours.[59]

The counterparts of 'We Irish men' in these notes are mathematicians who ridicule common sense by their mathematical truth. As I shall soon demonstrate, these mathematicians are thinkers such as Réne Descartes, Nicolas Malebranche, Leibniz, and Newton. It is more likely that, when Berkeley talks about 'We Irish men' in these notes, he was thinking of 'we the mob with common opinion', as in the note: 'The Mob use not the word Extension tis an abstract term of the Schools.'[60]

This chapter first argues that Berkeley's early writings in Trinity College Dublin cannot be reduced to a state of preparation for 'the heroic period' by showing that they were writings intended to participate a scholarly debate about the nature of natural philosophy; that is, what is the end of natural philosophy, and what is the best possible mean to achieve it? There was a local, institutional context, as Berkeley's experiences of a crisis of legitimacy in metaphysical trainings took place in Dublin. But, as this chapter demonstrates, Berkeley's intended interlocutors and his sources were beyond Ireland and were, in fact, across Protestant Europe. Moreover, Berkeley's concern about the mathematisation of natural philosophy still preoccupied his writings after he left Ireland. To confine Berkeley's writings to either an institutionally 'Dubliner' setting or to a culturally Irish context would be oversimplifying. This chapter also argues that, notwithstanding the initial, local and institutional context of Berkeley's problematisation

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[59] *Commonplace Book*, in *Works I*, p. 47.

[60] Ibid., p. 18. For an argument that Berkeley's 'Irish men' in these notes mean 'the ordinary people', see: George Berkeley, *Philosophical Commentaries: Generally Called the Commonplace Book*, ed. A. A. Luce (London: Nelson, 1944). However, I remain sceptical about Luce's confidence that 'Berkeley certainly always regarded himself as an Irishman'.

of a mathematically grounded new science, Berkeley's criticism cannot be taken as representing an Irish philosophical culture.

A few empirical remarks might help illuminate this point. In October 1703, Rev. Lawrence Howell received a letter from his former pupil, John Shadwell, from Trinity College Dublin. The letter reports Shadwell's observation on the lectureships and professorships that constituted Dublin's educational system. These include chairs in Hebrew and Greek language, in Theology, and a recently founded professorship in Mathematics. In the second half of the letter, Shadwell provides a brief account of the state of philosophical teaching in Trinity College Dublin. The teaching was conducted 'in such a way that it sometimes appears to be a farrago of hypotheses' (ita ut miram quoandam farraginem hypothesem). In addition to the *corpus Aristotelicum* and its commentaries, which remained the bulk of philosophical curriculum well into the eighteenth century, there were extracts from poems of Lucretius (Lurcretii ... Carmine Eximio fretus) and works by some recent philosophers, such as Descartes (cum Cartesio), Gassendi (necnon eruditi Gassendi), Malebranche (Alterum ... Gallorum Malebranchius), and John Locke (cum ... Lockio).[61]

A few months after Shadwell's report, Berkeley would gain his BA from Trinity College Dublin, and, a few years later, would become a Junior Fellow, as well as a Junior Lecturer in Greek language of the College. The 'farrago' observed by Shadwell

[61] Bod. Ms. Row. D842, f35. The practice of teaching and lecturing can be seen in: Robert Bolton, *A Translation of the Charter and Statutes of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin: 1749), pp. 69–80. Aristotelian textbooks, such as Martinus Smiglecius's *Logica* and Franco Burgersdijck's *Institutionum Logicarum Libri Duo*, remained in the curriculum well into the eighteenth century, and were the subjects of criticism in the writings of some of the College's famous alumni, such as the case of The Logicians Refuted, the authorship of which has been attributed to either Jonathan Swift or Oliver Goldsmith. Constantia Maxwell, *A History of Trinity College, Dublin 1591–1892* (Dublin: The University Press, 1946), pp. 148–9; Oliver W. Ferguson, 'An early Goldsmith reprint in the "London Chronicle"', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 36:2 (Feb., 1973), pp. 163–7.

was certainly what Berkeley had experienced. In fact, Berkeley himself was amongst the intellectual successors to the previous generation that continued to practice this mixture of doctrines in the philosophical training of Dublin.[62] In the last decades of the seventeenth century, some fellows of Trinity College Dublin made a series of attempts to reform the philosophical curriculum of the College. Amongst them was William Molyneux, a friend of Locke and the founder of the Philosophical Society of Dublin.[63] It was Molyneux's effort that sent Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* into the Logic curriculum immediately after its publication. Although the Society Molyneux founded was suspended after his death in 1698, it was in the spirit of Molyneux that Berkeley began to organise a secret reading society in 1706, the business of which is to 'discourse on some part of the new Philosophy'.[64] The Philosophical Society of Dublin was briefly revived in August 1707, and, as we have seen, Berkeley presented his 'On Infinities' in November. The significance of this local context cannot be reduced to a state for explicating Berkeley's 'immaterialism' – whether this is done by taking the context as exemplifying the nature of 'Irishness' in Berkeley's thought, or by making it an indication of Berkeley's bright, young, philosophical genius in

[62] Despite its popular reputation of having a relatively 'modernised' curriculum contra Oxford and Cambridge, the philosophical curriculum of Trinity College Dublin in this period is yet to be fully explored. Some useful information is provided in R. B. McDowell and D. A. Webb, 'Courses and teaching in Trinity College Dublin during the first 200 years', in *Hermathena* 69 (May, 1947), pp. 9-30. Some useful comparative studies are: M. A. Stewart, 'The curriculum in Britain, Ireland, and the Colonies' in Knud Haakonssen ed., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 97–120; Sarah Hutton, *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Ch. 2.

[63] The minutes of the society, including correspondences with the Royal Society and copies of records of the minutes of the Oxford Society, are available in BL. Add. Ms. 4811.

[64] Berkeley drafted the 'statutes' which are 'now agreed to and sign'd by the Society consisting of eight persons' in the 10th of January in 1706, and the secret society was officially founded in the 7th of December in the same year. BL. Add. Ms. 39305, ff.96-101, and f. 103. In f. 102 are a series of questions regarding Locke's *Understanding*. However, we lack evidences to prove that these were questions discussed in their meetings.

preparation for his 'mature' idealism.[65]

This chapter places one of the allegedly major immaterialist writings in a series of discursive moments that show Berkeley's reflections on a recent, significant development in philosophy, to which he was fully exposed in Dublin: the increasingly popular trend towards mathematising natural philosophy and excluding metaphysics and theology from being capable of attaining the truth of the natural world. It argues that the allegedly 'idealist' or 'immaterialist' argument in the *Theory of Vision* is but a part of a broader criticism of the mathematical approach to natural philosophy, and that such criticism substantially shapes Berkeley's argument in *De Motu*, published in 1721. This means that Berkeley's early writings cannot be reduced to a status of preparation for his mature philosophy; that the *Theory of Vision* is not a fruit of such preparation; and that what concerned Berkeley in Dublin did not cease to be pertinent after he moved to London. The label of a 'heroic period' imposes a superficial reading, is liable to misinterpret what Berkeley is doing in his works, and undermines the broader intellectual milieu in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Europe.

II

In the concluding section of an understudied text, *Miscellanea Mathematica*, Berkeley sketches an historical account of modern knowledge.[66] What characterises modern knowledge is its intimate relationship with mathematical abstraction, with the expansion of mathematics into the study of medicine and natural philosophy.[67] With an allusion

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[65] Luce, *Life of George Berkeley*, pp. 37–9; Berman, 'George Berkeley' in Idem., *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*, pp. 21–57.

[66] For the editors – including Alexander Campbell Fraser, A. A. Luce, and E. E. Jessop – of Berkeley's *œuvre*, this is the text only of biographical interest. See their introductions to the text in their respective editions.

[67] *Miscellanea Mathematica*, in *Works IV*, p. 219.

to Francis Bacon's definition of pure mathematics, 'which handle Quantitie determinate merely seuered from any Axioms of NATVRALL PHILOSOPHY', and its uses, Berkeley summarises the virtue of mathematics: 'the study of mathematics, in addition to its own use and end, also has a collateral use as it abstracts the mind from the senses, and sharpens and improves talent.'[68] This principle is acknowledged by ancient as well as modern philosophers.[69] Yet it is the moderns who put this into practice. Descartes and Malebranche are the first modern philosophers to employ mathematical method in studying natural philosophical questions, whilst Locke becomes the most successful thinker to crystallises the nature of human knowledge with the concept of *mathesis universalis* (*cum universæ matheseos*).[70]

The *Mathematica* was published in 1707, before Berkeley obtained his MA, together with *Arithmetica, absque Algebra aut Euclide Demonstrata* (*Arithmetic, as demonstrated without Algebra or Euclid*). The two texts reveal the way in which the philosophical training that Berkeley received in Trinity College Dublin was deeply intertwined with philosophers' recent emphasis on mathematics. A page dedicated to Samuel Molyneux, the chief contributor to the revival of the Philosophical Society and the son of William Molyneux, in the *Mathematica* shows that such integration might have been implemented by William Molyneux, whilst both texts are indication of Berkeley's reflections on the state of mathematical teaching and its relationship to philosophical training in the College.[71] The *Arithmetica*, for example, was intended to

[68] Ibid.. Sic disciplinæ mathematicæ, præter fines ac usus singulis proprios, illud etiam collaterale habent, quod mentem a sensibus abstrahant, ingeniumque acuant et figant. Also, Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 88–90.
[69] *Miscellanea Mathematica*, in Works IV, p. 219. Idem hoc tam olim veteres, quam hodie e modernis cordatiores quique agnoscunt.
[70] Ibid., pp. 219–20.
[71] Ibid., pp. 203–4.

be a replacement for Andrea Tacquet's arithmetic textbook *Arithmeticæ Theoria et Praxis* (1665), which, for Berkeley, one can hardly comprehend without the foreknowledge of Euclid's algebra.[72]

But Berkeley's attitude towards mathematical abstraction was not without reservation. As commentators have argued, the *Arithemetica* and the *Mathematica* might well be works which Berkeley submitted for the College's Junior Fellowship, a position that only became vacant in June 1707.[73] This means that one cannot simply take these two texts as demonstration of Berkeley's familiarity with mathematical abstraction.[74] They might have broader indications. That Berkeley writes positively about the uses and the contributions of mathematics to the improvement of arts and science in human society is very likely to be a strategy for successful application, considering the fact that his application would be examined by colleagues who endorsed mathematical principles. In fact, the *Mathematica* does convey an implicit message implying Berkeley's actual thought about mathematical abstraction that appears to be contradicting its alleged positivity.

The message is hidden in Berkeley's allusion to Bacon's definition of pure mathematics. He emphatically draws from Bacon's analogy between the learning of pure mathematics and the game of tennis.[75] Tennis game is 'of noe vse in it selfe, but of great vse, in respect it maketh a quicke Eye, and a bodie readie to put it selfe into all

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[72] *Arithmetica*, in *Works IV*, p. 167. Tacqueti vero *Arithmeticam* legamus, eam autem nemo probe intelligat, qui algebra non prælibarit.
[73] Joseph Stock, *An Account of the Life of George Berkeley* (Dublin, 1777), p. 2; Luce, *Life of Berkeley*, p. 32, 37; Berman, *Berkeley*, pp. 2–3.
[74] As Luce apparently did. See: Luce, *Life of Berkeley*, p. 37
[75] *Miscellanea Mathematica*, in *Works IV*, p. 219. Verulamius ... analogiam quondam inter pilæ palmariæ et mathesin notat.

Postures'.[76] With this notion in mind, Berkeley might be implying that mathematics is useful in helping one sharpen one's mind, yet mathematical abstraction in itself might be of little use. As a matter of fact, once mathematical abstraction becomes the subject of enquiry and the underlying premise of natural philosophy, it can easily become a useless art, as it is the case in modern philosophers' methodological assumption about *mathesis universalis*. This idea is explicitly noted in his Commonplace Book: 'We have learn'd from Mr. Locke that there may be, and that there are, several glib, coherent, methodical discourses, which nevertheless amount to just nothing. This by him intended with relation to the Scholemen. We may apply it to the Mathematicians.'[77]

The concept of *mathesis universalis* was certainly celebrated by early members of the Philosophical Society, and was to preoccupy Berkeley's intellectual life.[78] His hostility towards it is a significant element in his criticism of 'modern' knowledge. The problem, in Berkeley's view, was its implication. *Mathesis universalis* implies a methodology with the contention that *algebrae et geometriae studium* is adequate to avoid the deception of sensual perceptions, and to reveal the truth of the natural world. One significant instance of the way in which mathematical language recovers truth from the defects of sensual perceptions is provided by Malebranche, who, in the first book of *De la Recherche de la Vérité*, announces that 'our senses are given to us only for the preservation of our body' and that 'the reports they make to us must be doubted'.[79] The 'errors of senses', as Malebranche demonstrates, require an attentive mind so as to

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[76] Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, p. 89.

[77] *Philosophical Commentaries*, in *Works I*, p. 62.

[78] E.g., BL. Add. Ms. 4811, ff. 31v–35, 'Computatio Univsersalis seu Logica Rerum. Being An Essay Atempt in the Geometrical Method demonstrate an universal standard whereby one may judge of the real value of every thing in the world by Mr. Foley'.

[79] Nicolas Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, eds. Thomas M. Lennon and Paul J. Olscamp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 85–6.

avoid false judgment from one's sensations. For Malebranche, the errors accompanied by sensations can be checked by mathematical reflection, as the case of vision amply demonstrates.[80]

Berkeley's attitude towards Malebranche's natural philosophy was predominantly critical. He told Sir John Percival that Malebranche's writings 'are thought too fine spun to be of any great use to mankind', a sign of mathematicians' crime for 'hav[ing] trifling subjects'.[81] What had caused Berkeley's criticism was his reading of Malebranche's methodological premise that took mathematical abstraction as the key to uncovering the truth. The first book of the *Recherche* contains Malebranche's examination on the 'errors of vision', which is 'the most noble' of 'all the senses', that would become one of the main targets for Berkeley's criticism in the *New Theory of Vision*. Malebranche's endorsement of Cartesian methodology as 'the general rule' to unveiling the natural truth is constantly criticised in Berkeley's Commonplace Book, alongside the names of Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza, Newton, and Leibniz; the latter two's theories of motion would then be put into dispute in *De Motu*.

It would, however, be misleading to conclude that Berkeley was entirely against 'modern' knowledge and its mathematical methodology. What Berkeley argued against was the arbitrary idea that mathematical method was the only valid approach to searching for the truth, as well as the use of such method in vain speculation about matters beyond human understanding, such as some mathematicians' obsession with

[80] This is the subject of the first book of *Recherche*. The case of vision is in Ibid., pp. 25–47.
[81] Berkeley to Percival, Letter 21, in *Correspondence*, pp. 48–9; BL. Add. Ms. 39305, f.5.

infinitesimals. One of Berkeley's earliest criticisms appears in 'On Infinities'.[82] The paper acknowledges that 'some mathematicians of this last age have made prodigious advances, and open'd divers admirable methods of investigation unknown to the ancients'. Yet, in the spirit of Locke, the paper complains that '"I guess we cause great confusion in our thoughts when we joyn infinity to any suppos'd idea of quantity the mind can be thought to have, and so discourse or reason about an infinite quantity, *viz.* an infinite space or an infinite duration."'[83] The logical foundation of this complaint is Locke's argument that the idea of infinity is the result of the extension and expansion of our ideas of space and duration, and is furnished by the use of 'the *Ideas* and Repetitions of Numbers'. In other words, infinity does not actually exist. It is an abstraction of repetitions of ideas. This leads to Locke's summary that infinity is not a positive idea.[84]

Berkeley shared this Lockean notion of the idea of infinity in his criticism of the concept of infinitesimals. For Berkeley, the mathematical concept of infinitesimals is a representation of modern mathematical method's problematic tendency to lapse into minute speculation. After all, both Leibniz and Newton had confessed that their studies of calculus could be conducted 'after the manner of the ancients ... without the supposition of quantitys infinitely small.'[85] The paper's criticism was to be further developed in *The Analyst*, published in 1734, in which Berkeley openly criticised mathematicians' ambition in exploring the idea of infinity by the method of calculus.[86]

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[82] *Of Infinities*, in *Works IV*, pp. 235-9. The paper was dated January 10, 1705-6, and was delivered in Novenber 1707.
[83] Here Berkeley is quoting Locke's *Human Understanding*. See John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 213–14.
[84] Ibid., pp. 209–23.
[85] *Of Infinities*, in *Works IV*, pp. 237–8.
[86] See section V.

In Berkeley's view, this enterprise attempts to replace metaphysics and theology with a mathematical explanation of the natural world. But its emphasis on infinitesimals only gives rise to mathematical metaphysics that satisfies the pride and infidelity of modern mathematicians.

To a certain degree, this argument is given in the spirit of Locke's idea of infinity: the arithmetical and geometrical elements that constitute mathematical method are not part of natural phenomena and do not exist in the natural world. But there is fundamental difference between Locke's and Berkeley's conception of mathematics. For Locke, in the case of arithmetic, the idea of number comes from various combinations – both extension and extraction – of the simple idea of unity, which is the centre of 'every Object [of] our Senses' and 'every *Idea* in our Understandings'; is 'the most intimate to our Thoughts'; and is 'the most universal *Idea* we have.'[87] This indicates that the idea of unity is no more than the consequence of abstraction. Abstraction requires a transition of the status of the mind from the end of passively receiving sense data (simple ideas) in perception to actively re-arranging the order of such data for the mind to make sense of its perception.[88] In this mechanism of the mind, abstraction is a step in which the mind acquires abstract ideas by separating its perceived and re-arranged ideas from the perceived actuality. In so doing, the mind abstracts and generalises one's experience of perception, and that is instrumental to the development of human knowledge.[89] In this Lockean mechanism, abstraction has to be occasioned by one's perception of actuality, although not necessarily conditioned by it.

[87] Locke, *Human Understanding*, pp. 205–9.
[88] For Locke, this is the way in which the mind obtains complex ideas and develops a more accurate understanding of its perception by delineating the relations between its simple and complex ideas. Ibid., pp. 159–64.
[89] Ibid., p. 385–6.

Abstraction is the mind's capability of transcending that actuality by which the mind grasps a much purer and more accurate understanding of the empirical world.

To say that the idea of number is the combination of the idea of unity is equally saying that the idea of number exists in abstraction. This means that arithmetic operates in abstraction, and is a more accurate mode of making sense of natural phenomena. Here Locke adopts a view of mathematics that was not uncommon amongst his contemporaries. Late seventeenth-century mathematicians' attempts to bridge mathematics and natural philosophy turned to re-evaluate the history of mathematics by placing it in the heart of enquiries about natural phenomena.[90] One argument that famously developed from such historical reconstruction is that mathematics is an art of studying natural phenomena through abstraction, and that, as the abstraction of 'particular subjects' in the natural world, it is in fact the primitive *scientia*, whose property is 'common to all Sciences.'[91] This is the argument of Sir Isaac Barrow's mathematical lectures delivered at the University of Cambridge. Barrow embarks on a definition of the etymological origin of mathematics as *disciplinae* (study), and distinguishes its abstract and practical parts. The abstract 'investigates and demonstrates Truths (or true Propositions) agreeable to its Object', whereas the practical explores ways in which these truths 'may be referred to Use, and reduced into Practice.'[92] The abstract part of mathematics consists of arithmetic and geometry, which had been historically identified as the 'pure', 'prime', and 'principle' mathematics. The other

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[90] For useful contextual information, see: Paolo Mancosu, *Philosophy of Mathematics and Mathematical Practice in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 15–24. For an erudite analysis on the attempt to re-historicise mathematics, see: Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 313–25.

[91] These lectures had been translated into English in 1734. Berkeley certainly had read Barrow, as the latter's optical lectures were the target of *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*. Isaac Barrow, *The Usefulness of Mathematical Learning Explained and Demonstrated... etc.*, trans. John Kirkby (London, 1734), esp. Lectures I, II, IV–VII, pp. 1–14, 14–28, 50–117.

[92] Ibid., p. 50.

'impure' and 'secondary' part examines the application of abstraction to 'certain Bodies and particular Subjects, conjunctly with the Force of Motion and other physical Accidents'; in other words, the 'secondary' mathematics constitutes what 'Aristotle called *Physical*'.[93]

Barrow's definition leads to the conclusion that mathematical abstraction is the method of studying natural phenomena. In the eyes of Berkeley, this exemplifies modern knowledge's assumption of *mathesis universalis* that takes abstraction as the epistemological foundation of understanding the empirical world. Contra Locke, Berkeley does not take abstraction as providing a more accurate way of conceiving natural phenomena. For him, abstraction is not so distinguished from imagination. Both are activities of the mind, and exist only in the mind without actual presence. Both indicate the activity of the mind's representation of 'those particular things I have perceived and of variously compounding and dividing them.' This means that the mind can only abstract/imagine to the extent that 'some particular parts or qualities' of the object of abstraction/imagination actually exist. In other words, for Berkeley, abstraction is conditioned by the mind's perception of the world: 'my conceiving or imagining power does not extend beyond the possibility of real existence or perception.'[94] This shows 'how entirely the science of numbers is subordinate to practice, and how jejune and trifling it becomes when considered as a matter of mere speculation.'[95]

Mathematics, that 'great branch of speculative knowledge', has its limit. 'Mathematicians, though they deduce their theorems from a great height of evidence,

[93] Ibid., pp. 10–11.
[94] *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, pp. 29–33.
[95] Ibid., p. 96.

yet their first principles are limited by the consideration of quantity: and they do not ascend into any inquiry concerning those transcendental maxims [of natural phenomena]'.[96] Berkeley does not deny that 'the principles laid down by mathematicians are true, and their way of deduction from those principles clear and incontestable'. But, 'how celebrated soever the[ir principles] may be', 'mathematicians are ... concerned in the errors arising from the doctrine of abstract[ion]'.[97] Mathematicians fail to understand the limit of abstraction, and pursue it in order to expand this intrinsically erroneous method to natural philosophy. The result of this is the separation of natural philosophy from metaphysics which gives rise to the mischaracterisation of rationality and the spread of irreligiosity.[98] These two troubling consequences are intimately related as the notion that mathematical abstraction is adequate to exploring natural phenomena asserts the potentiality of being omniscient.

Berkeley's criticism of modern *mathesis universalis* revolves around dismissing this mischaracterisation of reason. His principle is that rationalisation is conditioned by perception and that the meaning of abstraction cannot be rendered without empirical context. In so doing, he problematises the assumption about mathematical abstraction in the new science. The first instance which he took in order to demonstrate this principle was a reassessment of the nature of human vision, contesting, in particular, the way in which this subject had been analysed in geometrical terms. It has to be stressed again that this argument of Berkeley's was largely raised in response to a strictly defined scholastic debate; the increasing emphasis on the method of mathematical abstraction

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[96] For Berkeley, enquiries about these 'transcendental maxims' belong to metaphysics and theology. This has much to do with Berkeley's diagram of sciences. See below, section IV, and the next chapter.
[97] *Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, pp. 94–5.
[98] Berkeley tries to restore the significance of metaphysics in natural philosophy in *De Motu*. See below, section IV.

was most evident in universities, as demonstrated by the cases of Barrow's lectures, of the papers presented in the Dublin Philosophical Society, and of Berkeley's criticism of such method articulated and written when he was a fellow of Trinity College Dublin.[99]

In *Theory of Vision*, Berkeley argues that geometrical language celebrated by leading experts in optics, such as Descartes, Gassendi, Barrow, and Molyneux, had failed its enquiries. This scepticism about arguments derived from mathematical abstraction was to be carried into many of Berkeley's later writings in natural philosophy, such as *De Motu* and *The Analyst*. In *De Motu*, for example, Berkeley demarcates the nature of philosophy. The end of natural philosophy is to discover the principles that can sufficiently explain natural phenomena. As for enquiries about the cause of phenomena and about whether or not there is a primary cause that is responsible of generating movements of the objects in the natural world, these are questions that belong to 'some superior science'; that is, 'first philosophy, or metaphysics and theology'.[100] Berkeley visualises a division of labour in the study of the natural world. The experimental, natural philosophy provides data and information that allows theology to improve its search for the truth regarding the relationship between God and its creation. What Berkeley was doing in his last major publication, *Siris*, can be taken as an exposition of the ways in which this division of labour can contribute to

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[99] There are many entries in Berkeley's Commonplace Book showing his reflections on the application of mathematics in theorising vision and motion, as well as his criticism of the idea of infinity. However, for the sake of space, I am not able to reproduce them here. These reflections were later published in *De Motu* and *The Analyst*. Meanwhile, the point I am making resonates an important argument in recent scholarship that the intellectual change which has been known as 'scientific revolution' 'happened not because a few radical outsiders toppled a conservative mainstream [i.e. university and educational institutes], but because the mainstream was able to accommodate change within traditional frameworks', and that the significance of intellectual activities within these institutional frameworks cannot be undermined in scholars' search for the intellectual origin of 'Enlightenment'. This quotation is taken from Dmitri Levitin, 'Such matters as the soul: Review of *The Invention of Science: A New History of the Scientific Revolution*', *London Review of Books*, 38:18 (2016), pp. 29–32.

[100] *De Motu*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 254.

establishing a sound understanding of God and the natural world; a theme in which Berkeley had shown great interest in the early stage of his intellectual life, an early presentation of which is his first major publication: *Theory of Vision*.

III

Theory of Vision was a philosophical reflection on natural philosophers' questions. Berkeley's main argument is that the techniques employed by natural philosophers, and their knowledge in optics, were insufficient to explain the nature of vision. This was because natural philosophers failed to understand the true nature of vision. Berkeley contravened modern optics' principle, which conceives human vision in terms of refractions of light on the retina, and which conceptualises activities of the faculty of sight as what initiates one to see. Under this principle, natural philosophers provided a system of geometrical analysis of ways in which vision is determined by invisible angles and lines that shape the route of lights between the object being perceived and one's eyes. This means that the mechanism of visual perception can be fully explicated by geometry. But, as Berkeley sees it, the sort of activities that allow one to see things also take place in the mind. 'The common errour of the opticians', Berkeley notes, 'strengthens men in their prejudice that they see things without and distant from their mind.'[101]

That the mind plays a substantial role in visual perception can be easily observed when one comes to reflect on the experience of seeing something at a great distance:

> Having of a long time experienced certain ideas, perceivable by touch – as distance, tangible figure, and solidity – to have been connected with certain

[101] *Philosophical Commentaries*, in *Works I*, p. 75.

> ideas of sight, I do upon perceiving these ideas of sight forthwith conclude what tangible ideas are, by the wonted ordinary course of nature, like to follow. Looking at an object I perceive a certain visible figure and colour, with some degree of faintness and other circumstances, which from what I have formerly observed, determine me to think that if I advance forward so many paces or miles, I shall be affected with such and such ideas of touch.[102]

Berkeley implements in this passage a mechanism of vision which indicates that visual language has to be interpreted in cognitive context. We can say that we see something because the sensations that we have perceived from the object in sight bring to our mind the quality of the object. Our knowledge of the quality of the object is in turn informed by the experience of our previous encounter with it. In other words, seeing requires the mind's judgement on the perceived sensations in order to determine the object on sight. Seeing is therefore part of cognition, and the nature of vision is no less a question in optics than that in human understanding.

This argument is further elaborated when Berkeley comes to review the discussion of what has become known as Molyneux's question. The question was raised in a letter by William Molyneux to John Locke in 1693, and is regarding the relationship between perceptions of touch and those of sight. Molyneux asked whether a blind man, who now recovers his sight, could successfully bridge his knowledge of something that he has previously experienced by touch with the same thing that is now being perceived on sight.[103] Molyneux's answer was negative. The experience of vision is strictly separated from that of touch. Locke's response was incorporated in the

[102] *Theory of Vision*, in *Works I*, pp. 187–8.
[103] William Molyneux to John Locke, 2 March 1693, Letter 1609, in E. S. de Beer ed., *The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke: The Correspondence of John Locke, 8 Vols, Vol. 4: Letters Nos. 1242–1701* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 648–52.

second edition of the *Essay*. He agreed with Molyneux, noting that 'the Blind Man, at first sight, would not be able with certainty' to identify the object 'whilst he only saw them: though he could unerringly name them by his touch'.[104] Berkeley agreed with Locke and Molyneux in principle. If a blind man suddenly restored his sight, 'He would not consider the ideas of sight with reference to, or as having any connexion with, the ideas of touch.'[105] But this statement has nuance, and the common interpretation of Berkeley's response to Molyneux's question in the history of philosophy should be carefully examined.

Berkeley's answer has been interpreted in two veins. On the one hand, there is a tendency to treat Berkeley's response as a typical empiricist reaction to the question. His similarity with Locke is emphasised: experience is required for one to bridge visual perception with tactile knowledge.[106] On the other, scholars in the history of early modern Irish philosophy have recently attempted to assign Molyneux's question its Irish nationality, and have taken Berkeley's discussion of it as revealing the 'Irishness' of his philosophy.[107] Both interpretations are informed by certain presupposition, one by the impression of Berkeley's place in the canon of British empiricism, the other by the preoccupation with finding an Irish philosophical tradition. However, both

[104] Locke, *Essay*, II. ix. 8, pp. 145–6.
[105] *Theory of Vision*, in *Works I*, pp. 203–4.
[106] This is a commonplace in the history of philosophy. For one most recent example, see: Alison Simmons, 'Perception in early modern philosophy', in Mohan Matthen ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Perception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), esp. pp. 90–1.
[107] For a pioneering study, see: David Berman, 'Francis Hutcheson on Berkeley and the Molyneux problem', in Idem., *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*, pp. 138-149. But this characterisation is problematic. Indeed the question was raised by an Irishman. But the discourses surrounding the question that had made it a significant theme of eighteenth-century philosophy were European. It was Locke who publicised the question, which was then addressed by European men of letters, amongst whom were Berkeley, Condillac, Diderot, Hutcheson, and Leibniz. There are dangers in taking the biographical origin of the question as the character of the corresponding discourse. One of these is to overlook the fact that Berkeley was arguing against the thesis of the homogeneity of perceived objects, and its related theory of visual perception, that were mainly discoursed by continental philosophers, particularly Descartes and Malebranche.

interpretations have failed to capture what Berkeley was doing with Molyneux's question.

In the *Theory of Vision*, Molyneux's question serves as a case for reinforcing Berkeley's argument about the nature of vision. More specifically, Berkeley addresses Molyneux's question, and both Locke's and Molyneux's responses to the question, for at least two purposes. The first is to reinforce Berkeley's distinction between visual and tactile perceptions. This principle has been laid down early in the *Theory of Vision*:

> ... it must be acknowledged that we never see and feel one and the same object. That which is seen is one thing, and that which is felt is another. If the visible figure and extension be not the same with the tangible figure and extension, we are not to infer that one and the same thing has divers extensions. The true consequence is that the objects of sight and touch are two distinct things.[108]

For Berkeley, visual and tactile perceptions, and subsequently the object being perceived, have too often been confused. When he brings up Molyneux's question in the latter part of the *Theory of Vision*, he uses it to advance this argument.

Berkeley did not employ Molyenux's question to stress the importance of experience to human understanding; rather, he emphasises the nature of the object being perceived. The distinction between visual and tactile perceptions cannot simply be construed in terms of activities of different faculties of perception. The data being perceived by different faculties has to be distinguished as well. This means that the object being perceived by different perceptual faculties is heterogeneous: the table that

[108] *Theory of Vision*, in *Works I*, p. 189.

we are seeing is distinct from the tangible table. Otherwise, 'if a square surface perceived by touch be of the same sort with a square surface perceived by sight, it is certain the blind man here mentioned might know a square surface as soon as he saw it. It is no more but introducing into his mind by a new inlet an idea he has been already well acquainted with.'[109] Thus Berkeley diverges from Locke and Molyneux. His agreement with Locke's and Molyneux's answers to Molyneux's question is not based on a series of analyses of perceptions. It is informed by the idea that the distinction of visual and tactile perceptions is the extension of the distinction of the object being perceived.

Molyneux's question is discussed in order to raise this problem of the object of perception. Berkeley furthers the question, and asks: 'If the same angle or square which is the object of touch be also the object of vision, what should hinder the blind man at first sight from knowing it?' Locke's explanation is insufficient. It is true that different experiences of perceptions bring in distinct information about the object being perceived. The visual perception of the blind man in question shall naturally provide him new data of the object that is previously unknown to him. However, insofar as the object remains the same, there has to be information which is 'old and known', and which 'he cannot choose but discern'.[110] In other words, insofar as the object being perceived on sight and that by touch is the same object, the blind man in question will be able to discern the connection between his visual and tactical perceptions, and to identify the object in question eventually. Berkeley therefore concludes that Locke's and Molyneux's answers are bound to be rooted in his principle that the object being

[109] Ibid., pp. 225–6.
[110] Ibid., pp. 226–7.

perceived on sight, and that being known by touch, must be two different objects, notwithstanding that we tend to see them as the same thing.[111]

The distinction of object on sight and tangible object gives rise to a problem of the confusion of the object of perception. This is the second purpose of Berkeley's engagement with Molyneux's question: the exploration of the cause of this confusion. Imagine that we are sitting in front of a table in the Upper Reading Room of the Bodleian Library. We have been habituated to allege that the table on sight is the same table on which we place our books. For Berkeley, this confusion of the object of visual and tactile perceptions is partly due to the problematic nature of language. We use the same word 'table' to denominate objects of two distinct perceptions. However, that 'visible extension and figures come to be called by the same name with tangible extension and figures' does not mean that they are 'of the same kind'. The reason is plain. 'We can no more argue', Berkeley urges, 'a visible and tangible square to be of the same species from their being called by the same name [i.e. square], than we can that a tangible square, and the monosyllable consisting of six letters whereby it is marked, are of the same species because they are both called by the same name.'[112]

The separation of the tangible from the visual is significant to Berkeley's emphasis on the cognitive context of vision in two senses. The demarcation supports Berkeley's contention that the statement that 'we see something' is misleading, and that that something which we claim to see is in fact an idea informed by our experiences of previous visual and tangible perceptions of the object. The mechanism of seeing things is not so distant from that of seeing another person's sentiments. When we say that we

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[111] Ibid., p. 225.
[112] Ibid., pp. 227–8.

see 'shame or anger in the looks of a man', what we actually see is 'colours and alterations of countenance' on that man's face. But such changes 'signify them [i.e. the sentiments] for no other reason than barely because they [i.e. changes of colours] have been observed to accompany them [i.e. the sentiments].' In other words, the judgement that one's face turning red indicates one's anger rather than shame depends on our previous encounter with the person's facial expression of anger. This reinforces Berkeley's argument that visual perception alone has its limit, and that its meaning cannot be rendered out of the context of our cognition.[113]

An analogy might be drawn between Berkeley's understanding of vision and the contextualist approach to intellectual history. Contextualism argues for reconstructing the linguistic context in which the author produces the text in order to recover the illocutionary intention of the author. One underlying principle of this argument is that the meaning of the author's utterances might be significantly different from provisional interpretation when the text is read in its specific, historical context. The meaning of historical text in the sense of the way in which the author intends it to be meaningful can be best restored when its historical context is recovered. Berkeley was well aware of the relationship of linguistic signification and its context. '[It] is known a word pronounced with certain circumstances, or in a certain context with other words, has not always the same import and signification that it has when pronounced in some other circumstances or different context of words.'[114] For Berkeley, the same principle is also applicable in understanding the nature of vision. The way in which we see things, and the way in which visual sensations which the action of seeing project to our mind, is

[113] Ibid., pp. 192–4.
[114] Ibid., pp. 198–200.

closely bound by tangible ideas in our experience. This combination constitutes the cognitive context of visual perception, and it is this context that shapes our judgement of the object on sight.[115]

The cognitive context is the locus of the meaning of vision, without which vision can hardly be meaningful. This is a much more profound attack on modern treatises of optics. 'Many attempts have been made by learned men to account for this appearance.' 'Gassendus, Descartes, Hobbes, and several others have employed their thoughts on that subject' of visual perception without recognising the fact that the meaning of vision cannot be rendered without understanding its relationship to cognition.[116] The failure of these modern philosophers was twofold. On the one hand, they failed to understand the fact that angles and lines have no existence in the empirical world, and they were preoccupied by explaining empirical phenomena with mathematical abstraction, which is limited by our experiences of the empirical world. On the other, they were obsessed with using the language of mathematical abstraction for explicating the mechanism of vision, but they lost sight of the real nature of vision as part of human cognition.

One question about modern philosophers' theories of optics was their tendency to be misled by the defect of human language.[117] Modern philosophers' failure in recognising the importance of cognition to vision was the consequence of their failure to discern the fact that visual perception is different from tangible perception. This confusion of the visual and the tangible has much to do with the nature of human

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[115] Ibid., pp. 200–1.
[116] Ibid., pp. 201–2.
[117] Berkeley's emphasis on the cognitive context of vision, and the conception of vision as natural language, resonates a broader topic: language and its relationship to human artifice and the formation of civil society. We will encounter this in the final chapter of the thesis. In the meantime, a very useful introduction is: Avi Lifschitz, 'Language', in Aaron Garrett ed., *The Routledge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 663–683. The topic is expertly analysed in Idem., *Language and Enlightenment.*

language, not only because we use the same word to denote two different objects, but also because the verbs we employ to describe visual perception tend to compound the complex mechanism of cognition into the activity of the eyes. Moreover, as Berkeley points out, one cannot understand the nature of vision without considering the resemblance of the connection between vision and cognition and the mechanism of language. The resemblance of vision and language is explicitly expressed in Berkeley's principle that 'visible figures represent tangible figures much after the same manner that written words do sounds.' The idea is straightforward. Each written word consists of more than one character with a distinct sound:

> Thus the single letter *a* is proper to mark one single uniform sound; and the word *adultery* is accommodated to represent the sound annexed to it, in the formation whereof, there being eight different collisions, or modifications of the air by the organs of speech, each of which produces a difference of sound, it was fit the word representing it should consist of as many distinct characters, thereby to mark each particular difference or part of the whole sound.[118]

The same mechanism is applicable to explaining the nature of vision. Each idea that we have taken as derived from vision consists of more than one independent tangible idea in our experience. When we claim that we see something, what we actually perceive are visible signs that suggests ideas such as the distance and the magnitude of the object. It is the connection of these signs with tangible ideas in the mind that inform our judgement on the perceived object. 'Visible figures are the marks of tangible

[118] *Theory of Vision*, in *Works I*, p. 229.

figures'. They are 'constant and universal' signs, whose connection with tangible ideas 'has been learnt at our first entrance into the world'.[119] What we think to be visible is 'neither immediately of it self perceived by sight, nor yet apprehended or judged of by lines and angles ... But by a connexion taught us by experience ... after the same manner that words of any language suggest the ideas they are made to stand for.'[120]

There is a profound religious sense in this resemblance. Having genuine knowledge of the nature of vision requires proper understanding of the end of vision. Berkeley's emphasis on the significance of vision and its cognitive context is to be understood in this vein. Visual and tangible perceptions are necessary media of cognition without which human beings can hardly perceive and conceive the natural world, which is itself a language of God. Underlying this is an under-appreciated theological perspective of early modern theory of language, as God's 'words' were instrumental in his creation of the natural world.[121] In other words, visual and tangible perceptions constitute a mode of cognition that permits human agency to receive and understand the message of the creator of the natural world by perceiving and conceiving the divine language of nature. There is a sense of arbitrariness in this argument, as human beings are *obliged* to understand the existence of God by their cognitive mechanism, including visual and tangible perceptions. In fact, this is also what constitutes the teleological obligation that Locke takes to be regulating the course of human understanding.[122]

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[119] Ibid., pp. 228–30.

[120] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p. 58.

[121] Genesis 1. A classic case of examining the relationship of the divine language to the natural world can be seen in Book XI of Augustine's *City of God*, see: Augustine, *City of God*, pp. 471–7.

[122] Hannah Dawson, *Locke, Language and Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 278–85.

The nature of vision is therefore a form of language that determines ways in which human agency understands the divine design, and 'the proper objects of vision constitute an universal language of the Author of nature, whereby we are instructed how to regulate our actions in order to attain those things that are necessary to the preservation and well-being of our bodies, as also to avoid whatever may be hurtful and destructive of them.'[123] In other words, 'visible ideas are the language whereby the governing spirit on whom we depend, informs us what tangible ideas he is about to imprint upon us, in case we excite this or that motion in our bodies.'[124] The genuine principle of vision can only be fully comprehended when the defect of human language is discerned, and when the fact that the nature of vision is part of the language of nature that enables human agency to understand the divine message is properly received.

Berkeley reinforces this argument in *Theory of Vision* in *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, a response to his critics published in 1733, after the previous year's re-publication of *Theory of Vision* with *Alciphron*. *Theory of Vision* 'affords to thinking men a new and unanswerable proof of the existence and immediate operation of God, and the constant condescending care of his providence'.[125] He restates his conclusion that '*Vision is the Language of the Author of Nature*'.[126] He reiterates that understanding the theory of vision requires sufficient knowledge of the nature of language, and stresses the distinction between artificial and natural languages. Language is constituted by 'various and opposite' signs. If the 'connexion' of signs is 'instituted by

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[123] *Theory of Vision*, in *Works I*, p. 231.
[124] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p. 59.
[125] *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, in *Works I*, p. 251.
[126] Ibid., p. 264.

men, it is an artificial language; if by the Author of Nature, it is a natural language.'[127] The 'artificial language' that Berkeley had in mind was the mathematical language of modern philosophers, whose contemplations on the nature of vision had been refuted.

Berkeley's criticism of mathematical method and his emphasis on the religious significance of vision imply a specific approach to studying human understanding of the natural world. 'In treating of vision, it was my purpose', Berkeley explains, 'to inquire how one idea comes to suggest another belonging to a different sense, how things visible suggest things tangible'.[128] The connection is made possible by the Divine will, whilst ways in which that Divine will can be perceived by the natural language belong to the enquiries of human knowledge. This gives rise to an analysis of cognition and perception. Berkeley's analysis crystallises the apparatus of cognitive activity in terms of the function of ideas and imagination. Ideas are immediate perceptions of the objects. We have the idea of the table in front of us because we immediately perceive the table by our senses. The table is therefore a 'sensible object' as it is 'immediately perceived'. In the meantime, there are 'objects of the imagination'. These are objects that are not immediately perceived, but are suggested to the mind by their connection to the ideas.[129]

Sitting in the Upper Reading Room of the Bodleian Library, we know that a group of tourists has just arrived at the quadrangle not because that we actually perceive the image of a group of tourists, but because that the sound they produce – which we actually perceive – has implemented in our minds the image of tourists in the

[127] Ibid., p. 265.
[128] Ibid., p. 257.
[129] Ibid., pp. 255–7.

quadrangle.[130] In this case, the sound produced by the tourists is the 'sensible object', which then suggests to our minds the 'object of the imagination' – that is, an image of tourists in the quadrangle. According to Berkeley, we must have experienced an immediate perception of a group of tourists producing sounds in the quadrangle before. The idea of the sound and that of the image of tourists is thus connected, and perceived. Otherwise we would not have adequate information to generate this imagination.

This analysis further strengthens Berkeley's argument that the nature of vision has to be studied in cognitive context. He argues that, in terms of the theory of vision, we should carefully distinguish ideas actually being perceived by sight from imaginations being suggested by experience. It appeared to Berkeley that proper knowledge of cognition and perception is indispensable to understanding the theory of vision. The conclusion that vision has to be interpreted in cognitive context seemed inevitable and natural. 'For it hath been shewn', Berkeley declares, taking our perception of the size of the perceived object as example, 'that the judgment we make on the magnitude of a thing, depends not on the visible appearance alone, but also on divers other circumstances, any one of which being omitted or varied may suffice to make some alteration in our judgment.'[131]

IV

Berkeley's argument that the nature of vision cannot be fully understood without recognising its cognitive context and its religious significance delivers a strong message to his contemporaries. The science of optics, and its geometrical method, is apparently

[130] Berkeley's own example is perceiving a coach passing by whilst sitting in his study. See: *Theory of Vision, in Works I*, pp. 188-9.
[131] Ibid., p. 199.

inadequate to search after the true principle of vision. Modern philosophers' preoccupation with mathematical method has its limit. Their 'speculations are of use in practice', crystallising the complexity of visual perception in terms of the refraction and reflection of light. However, questions regarding one's understanding of the natural world belong to a different branch of knowledge, as these are questions explicating one's interpretation of God's will through natural language. Other branches of knowledge are therefore indispensable to understanding 'the true nature of vision', since optics is only accountable for 'assist[ing] the defects and remedy[ing] the distempers of sight'.[132]

This turns Berkeley's refutation of the new science's mathematical method into a theological direction, a direction that shapes his diagram of knowledge, which in turn constitutes *De Motu*. The diagram begins with a general division of 'first philosophy' (*philosophia prima*) and natural philosophy. The function of natural philosophy is to investigate natural phenomena. 'To discuss God', however, 'and to demonstrate how all things depend on the highest and true being' are enquiries of 'the most excellent part of human knowledge', and 'belong to the first philosophy or metaphysics and theology'. In Berkeley's eyes, natural philosophy provides empirical evidence for the *philosophia prima* 'to show and prove the wisdom, goodness, and power of God.'[133] The core argument of *De Motu* is to criticise natural philosophers' attempts at responding to questions that are beyond the scope of natural philosophy, and the confusions that they have thus caused. He distinguishes knowledge that is 'to be used in computation and mathematical demonstrations, and something else to reveal the nature of things', in

[132] *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, in *Works I*, p. 266.
[133] *An Essay on Motion*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 254.

order to dismiss the principles of the 'more recent and more sensible philosophers of the current period', particularly Leibniz and Newton.[134]

This attempt to reinforce the significance of metaphysics to enquiries concerning the truth is a vindication of a strictly defined scholastic system of philosophy; one can easily see how Berkeley brings Aristotle's division of the study of 'being *qua* being' and 'theology' into union in his definition of *philosophia prima*, a definition that resonates with some early modern understanding of 'metaphysics' as natural theology that was criticised by Bacon.[135] The local context of philosophical teaching recurs.[136] Students of philosophy at the time were required to study either natural, moral, or metaphysical philosophy, hence independently yet inter-relatedly studying human and natural phenomena, as well as the cause and origin of such phenomena, in the form of investigating the relationship of God to his creation.[137] For Berkeley, modern philosophers' arguments for the exclusion of metaphysics from philosophy by rendering the latter an exclusively mathematical foundation threatens to dismantle this system. This was the case in Thomas Hobbes's *De Corpore*, where philosophy is defined as 'such knowledge of effects or appearances, as we acquire by true ratiocination from the knowledge we have first of their causes or generation', whilst 'ratiocination' is to be understood as 'computation'.[138]

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[134] Ibid., p. 248.

[135] Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, pp. 76-88. Sachiko Kusukawa, 'Bacon's classification of knowledge', in Markku Peltonen ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bacon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 47–74; Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 242–3.

[136] For an introduction to philosophical training in British universities in this period, see: Richard Serjaantsen, 'Becoming a philosopher in seventeenth-century Britain', in Peter R. Anstey ed., *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Seventeenth-Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 10–29.

[137] Maxwell, *History of Trinity College Dublin*, pp. 49–53.

[138] Thomas Hobbes, *De Corpore*, in Sir William Molesworth ed., *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury*, Vol. 1 (London: John Bohn, 1839), p. 3. A new critical edition of *De Corpore*

The implicit message of this exclusion is that one cannot be certain about God being the cause and origin of human and natural phenomena, hence the search for their cause and origin does not require enquiries into divine providence and can be fully explicated in natural philosophy. This exclusion provides a convenient method for one to express one's scepticism or agnosticism towards the necessity of relying on a certain theological premise in philosophical questions. This concerned Berkeley, as this means that philosophical dispute over the theological status of natural phenomena is liable to become a pretence of one's atheism. In fact, as Berkeley later expresses, atheism is 'the very top and perfection' of this sort of philosophical enquiries that constitutes the spirit of 'free-thinking'.[139] What Berkeley intended to do in *De Motu* was to restore the theological significance to the study of natural phenomena by demonstrating that the cause and origin of motion is beyond the scope of a natural philosophy that firmly embraces mathematical abstraction as its method.

Berkeley's first step is to deconstruct the existing arguments about motion. This deconstruction has two phases: Berkeley's ridiculing of the language in which these arguments are constructed, and his problematisation of the fundamental concepts that shape these arguments. The first phase appeals to a recurring argument about ways in which modern philosophers tend to be misled by the natural defect of human language. These philosophers, struggling with the most suitable way to present the clarity of their arguments, turn to build their discourses on vocabularies that are coined specifically for their theories.

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is available in Latin, see: Hobbes, *De Corpore: Elementorum Philosophiae Sectio Prima*, ed. Karl Schuhmann (Paris: Vrin, 1999).

[139] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 43–6.

The result is a series of debates over the subject in question, generated by confusions caused by their extraordinary selection of words. For Berkeley, it is unsurprising that a theory built on words such as 'solicitation of gravity' (*solicitation gravitatis*), *conatus*, and 'dead forces' (*vires mortuœ*) would give rise to controversy over its meaning.[140] As he sees it, that 'we should avoid being obstructed by words that are poorly understood in order to discover the truth' is an idea that 'almost all philosophers advice', yet 'few observe'.[141] The implication is clear. That modern philosophers, with their ambition to discover the truth, should be trapped in this linguistic chaos is an irony itself. Whilst ancient philosophers' contemplations about motion were left in obsolescence (*in desuetudinem*) due to their difficulty and absurdity, modern philosophers are caught in the predicament constituted by words whose meanings are too abstract and obscure.[142] Modern philosophers have failed to understand the fundamental principle of philosophical thinking, and have shadowed the work of a philosopher with metaphor.[143] 'Unless we take care to clear the first principles of knowledge from the embarrass[ment] and delusion of words, we may make infinite reasonings upon them to no purpose; we may draw consequences from consequences, and be never the wiser.'[144]

As in *Theory of Vision*, Berkeley thinks this is the consequence of mistaking mathematical abstraction as the method for searching after genuine knowledge of nature, an indication of one's confusion of the appearance of things with the nature of

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[140] *De Motu* in *Works IV*, p. 11.

[141] I slightly modify Clarke's translation in *Philosophical Writings*. Latin text is taken from *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, p. 11. Ad veritatem inveniendam praecipuum est cavisse ne voces male intellectae nobis officiant: quod omnes fere moment philosophi, pauci observant.

[142] Ibid., p.11.

[143] Ibid.

[144] *Principles*, in *Works II*, p. 40.

things. The confusion leads to a misimpression that one can arrive at a theory of natural phenomena from observing and explaining the state of things, hence the inevitable misconception of the nature of things. For Berkeley, notwithstanding the fact that both Newton and Leibniz understand, in different degree, the distinction between an abstraction of the appearances of things and the genuine knowledge of the nature of things, they have failed to realise that certain concepts, such as 'force' and 'gravity', are 'useful for reasoning, and for calculations about motion and moving bodies, but not for understanding the simple nature of motion itself'.[145] Berkeley advances this argument by exemplifying the way in which concepts relating to motion, again in the case of 'force' and 'gravity', become meaningful in common experience. This then allows Berkeley to problematise Newton's and Leibniz's conceptualisation of motion.

The meanings of 'force' and 'gravity' are derived from primitive abstraction of sensual perception. 'Gravity', for example, is an abstraction of the cause of 'an accelerating motion towards the earth's centre', which we perceive in falling bodies. It is the same for 'force', which is also an abstract quality for explaining natural phenomena. This means that both 'gravity' and 'force' are 'occult quality' (*qualitas occulta*) contra 'sensible quality' (*qualitas sensibilis*) precisely because these qualities are without corporeal existence, and hence cannot be perceived by sensual faculties.[146]

The demarcation of 'occult quality from 'sensible quality' gives rise to two inter-related arguments. The first argument is based on a distinction between common and philosophical languages. Berkeley noticed that in daily usage, these abstract concepts are often reified so as to describe one's observation of moving objects.

[145] *On Motion*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 248.
[146] Ibid., p. 244.

Berkeley finds no problem in such usage, for, in this case, the meaning of these concepts is established on a common ground of sensual perception. But this common ground would soon be lost once these concepts become elements of philosophers' theorisation of motion. The course of philosophical abstraction means that these concepts 'are cut off and abstracted from' the objects of sensual perception, and become subjects of theorisation which 'are not the objects of the senses and cannot be understood by any power of the mind or framed by the imagination'. They become 'abusing words that do not express anything distinctly', and 'eventually give rise to errors and confusion.'[147] The second argument is the stratum of *De Motu*. Berkeley's distinction between sensible and occult quality implies that attempts to philosophise perceivable phenomena relying solely on concepts of occult quality is wrongheaded. This notion leads to Berkeley's dismantling modern philosophers' system of motion by criticising their confusion of the sensible with the occult.

The set of concepts which Berkeley addresses at the beginning of *De Motu* – 'solicitation of gravity', *conatus*, and *vis mortua* – are taken directly from Leibniz's *Specimen Dynamicum*, in which Leibniz reconfigures Descartes's idea of motion as the transformation of the object from one vicinity to others which leads to the notion that motion can be measured by the object in motion. In Leibniz's view, this materialises motion, 'as if motion were something real and absolute.' What is 'absolutely real' is force, whereas space, time, and motion are 'something akin to a mental construction' that is discerned by the effects of force.[148] In other words, a theory of motion has to be constructed on the basis of genuine knowledge of force.

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[147] Ibid., pp. 244–5, 250.

[148] Leibniz, *Specimen Dynamicum*, in *Philosophical Papers*, p. 445.

Leibniz self-consciously invokes the Scholastic concepts of form and matter to elaborate his principle of force. By using the word '*soul* or *substantial form*', Leibniz wrote, 'I am not trying to return to the word battles of the more popular Scholastics'; however, 'a knowledge of form is necessary ... for philosophizing rightly'.[149] He distinguishes derivative force from primitive force, noting that derivative force is 'the force by which bodies actually act and are acted upon by each other', whereas primitive force is the form of forces. Derivative and primitive force can in turn be denoted as active and passive, determined by whether the force is acting or resisting. Active force is significant in Leibniz's reflection on motion. He borrowed Johannes Kepler's idea of '*natural intertia*', and held that body contains this natural passive force that 'resists being moved': it only 'strives toward motion with an active force proportional to its magnitude.'[150]

Motion therefore requires constant engagement of active force, which can be further categorised as elementary and ordinary force. Elementary force is dead force (*vis mortua*), as it indicates the potentiality of motion, but not the actual motion *per se*, 'because motion does not yet exist in it'. For Leibniz, this force is therefore 'a solicitation to motion', for which gravity and centripetal force are typical cases. Ordinary force, on the other hand, is living force (*vis viva*) which is 'combined with actual motion'. Provided that objects have *inertia* that naturally resists motion, a moving object would necessarily involve sufficient *vis viva* to maintain its motion.

Leibniz thought *vis viva* would demonstrate his originality, as 'the ancients had a

[149] Ibid., p. 436.
[150] Idem., *On Nature Itself, or On the Inherent Force and Actions of Created Things*, in Ibid., pp. 503–4.

knowledge of dead force only, and it is this which is commonly called mechanics'.[151] The argument is that the ancients and, particularly, the Cartesians had confused force with the 'quantity of motion' that was actually determined by the mass of the object. This confusion consequently led to their misconception of motion. Unlike the Cartesians, who think motion can be measured by the 'quantity of motion', for Leibniz, the nature of 'Motion' can only be understood once one grasps the concept of *conatus*. He redefines the Cartesian rendition of *conatus* as the compound of the velocity with the direction of motion. It means that 'Motion' is the 'present or instantaneous element of motion' that either has occurred, or is still happening. The 'quantity of motion' is the 'motion' 'extended through time'.[152] To give one example, when an apple is falling from a tree, the moment when the apple fell is the 'motion' of the fall, whereas the present falling is the extension of that 'motion'.

This allows Leibniz to argue that force can only be measured by its effects, which are presented by the velocity of the object in motion and its mass.[153] At 'the beginning of the motion', the force is 'elementary' – hence it is *vis mortua*. The space it passes through is 'proportional ... to the velocities or to the *conatuses*' of the motion. But as the 'motion' extended, the 'extension of motion' consists of the aggregation of an infinitesimal velocities that pass through spaces in the duration of time since the 'motion' occurred. As the result, the *vis viva* that is combined in this motion has to be measured by the mass of the object and the interval of the infinitesimal velocities.[154]

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[151] Idem., *Specimen Dynamicum*, in Ibid, pp. 438–9.
[152] Idem., *Discourse on Metaphysics*, in Ibid., pp. 313–15, and *Specimen Dynamicum*, in Ibid., p. 437.
[153] Idem., *A Brief Demonstration of a Notable Error of a Notable Error of Descartes and Others Concerning a Natural Law*, in Ibid., pp. 296–8.
[154] Therefore, the mathematical language of *vis viva* is mv^2. Leibniz, *Specimen Dynamicum*, in Ibid., p. 439.

The problem of the Cartesian conception of the 'quantity of motion' becomes self-evident.[155] Provided that their 'quantity of motion' is in fact the 'extension of motion', the Cartesian 'quantity of motion' as the multiplication of mass by velocity overlooks the infinitesimal velocities that pass through the space-time. More significantly, this allows Leibniz to refute Descartes's argument that God 'always preserves the same quantity of motion in the universe'. Descartes deduced from his vision of God's conservation of motion the conclusion that 'if one part of matter moves twice as fast as another which is twice as large, we must consider that there is the same quantity of motion in each part'.[156] This 'quantity of motion' is determined by the mass of the moving object, whereas velocity remains positive. Leibniz criticised it as the materialisation of motion, and provided an alternative theory of motion based on the conception of *vis viva*.

But Berkeley found Leibniz's theorisation of motion somewhat dissatisfying. Leibniz's theory of motion implies that both the measurement and the cause of motion can be theorised from observing the object in motion. In Berkeley's eyes, Leibniz's *vis mortua* and *conatus* indicate nothing other than that a corporeal object has the 'natural tendency' (*naturæ indigentia*) or appetites (*appetitu*) to move. This effectively means that Leibniz's theory of motion is conceived on the ground of materialisation. Leibniz's argument remains substantially Cartesian, and he complicates Descartes's relatively explicit philosophy by his mathematical abstraction.[157]

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[155] A helpful introduction is: Carolyn Iltis, 'Leibniz and the *vis viva* controversy' *The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the History of Science Society*, 62:1 (Spring, 1971), pp. 21–35.
[156] René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, in René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 240.
[157] *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, pp. 15, 18.

Berkeley's criticism is based on his distinction of sensible and occult quality, which, for him, shows a straightforward answer to the question of motion. The principle indicates the 'two supreme classes of things' (*Duo sunt summa rerum genera*): body (*corpus*) and soul (*anima*), as well as their heterogeneous quality. The body 'itself contains no principle of motion nor the cause that makes it able to move'.[158] Corporeal qualities, such as the impenetrability, the extension, and the shape of a body, are 'genuinely passive' (*revera passivas*), and possess nothing active for generating motion. This is best demonstrated in gravity. When we talk about gravity, what we actually conceive is nothing other than that an object is carried downwards, instead of the cause of its falling.[159] This means that the cause of motion cannot be found in body and sensible quality, and that motion is generated from the engagement of occult quality, which 'we call "soul" (*animam*), "mind" (*mentem*), and "spirit" (*spiritum*)'.[160]

When we claim that we observe the motion of an object, all that we perceive is the sensible effects of the moving object. Motion, in other words, can only be observed by its effects, meaning that motion can be measured by knowledge of sensible quality. 'Thus, no force is known except by its action, by which it is measured'.[161] It implies a demarcation of the measurement of motion from the cause of motion, and only the former can be explained by natural philosophy, as the explanation of the cause of motion requires an understanding of occult quality that belongs to a different branch of knowledge; that is, *philosophia prima*: metaphysics and theology.[162] The responsibility

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[158] Ibid., pp. 15–16. Totum id quod novimus, cui nomen *corpus* indidimus, nihil in se continent quod motus principium seu causa efficiens esse possit.
[159] Ibid., p. 16. Cf. *On Motion*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 250.
[160] Ibid., p. 18. Hanc *animan*, *mentem*, *spiritum* dicimus.
[161] *On Motion*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 246.
[162] *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, p. 34.

of natural philosophy is 'to provide only the rules, and not the efficient causes, of impulses or attractions and, in a word, the laws of motion.'[163]

Berkeley is making two claims in this argument. The first is a criticism of modern philosophers' rendition of the study of nature exclusively in terms of a mathematised natural philosophy, whereas the fact is that natural philosophy only allows one to understand rules of the sensible effects of natural phenomena. For Berkeley, the genuine knowledge of nature can only be pursued in metaphysics and theology, and the enquiries of both realms of knowledge surpass the technique of mathematicians. Mathematics is inadequate in exploring the Aristotelian definition of metaphysics as 'being *qua* being' precisely because mathematical entities are notions defined by mathematicians, and do not have real essence in the 'nature of things'.[164] To use mathematics in studying the nature of things is to confuse abstraction with corporeal substance.[165] Nor is mathematics capable of answering theological question about causation and occult quality. Mathematics and natural philosophy are studies of physics. Their intrusion into *philosophia prima* is the error of modern philosophers.[166]

The second claim is an exposition of the cause of motion. With recourse to Greek philosophers, Berkeley argues that the occult quality–the soul, the mind, or the spirit–is the cause of motion. This is an argument first introduced by Anaxagorus, and is later confirmed as well as elaborated by Plato and Aristotle in *Timaeus* and *De Anima* that

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[163] *On Motion*, in *Philosophical Writings*, p. 254.
[164] *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, pp. 28–9.
[165] Ibid., p. 15. Sed aliud est computationi & demonstrationibus mathematicis inservire, aliud, rerum naturam exhibere.
[166] That Berkeley did not attempt to separate 'being *qua* being' from theology might be taken as an indication of his attitudes towards seventeenth-century scholarly attempts to demarcate natural philosophy from metaphysics, of which Hobbes and Henry More, whose principle of *Principium Hylarchicum* is criticised in *De Motu*, were prominent figures. See: Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 242–52.

the visible and corporeal world is moved by a mind. The argument is also adopted by Descartes, according to whom the principle of natural motions is in God. This is the truth not only established in Scripture, but also supported by learned scholars. The scholastic notion that the cause of motion and rest is nature has to be supplemented by the concept of *natura naturans* and the principle that *natura naturans esse Deum.*[167] This truth, however, is corrupted by philosophers who render the mind, the soul, or the spirit corporeal qualities, an erroneous consequence of modern philosophers' ambition to expand natural philosophy so as to include the subjects of *philosophia prima*. Here Berkeley reminds his readers of the problem of Leibniz's argument that nature can be explained exclusively by mechanical principles in *Specimen Dynamicum*, and Henry More's *Principium Hylarchicum* that treats soul as the intermediary between God and corporeal phenomena. For Berkeley, these only show how this problem has hindered one from understanding the truth.[168] Yet above all, it was Newton's theorisation of motion in terms of the distinction of absolute space that exacerbates the problem.

The 'main Business of natural Philosophy', Newton declared in the *Opticks*, 'is to argue from phænomena without feigning hypotheses'.[169] The *Preface* to the *Principia* is explicit that modern '*mathematics*' is the proper science for studying the phenomena of motion, rather than the ancient arts of '*mechanics*'.[170] Accordingly, Newton's

[167] *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, pp. 18–19.
[168] Ibid., p. 15. Also, Leibniz, *Specimen Dynamicum*, in *Philosophical Papers*, pp. 441-2; Daniel Clifford Fouke, *The Enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More: Religious Meaning and the Psychology of Delusion* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 35–9.
[169] Isaac Newton, *Opticks, or A Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections & Colours of Light* (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), p. 369.
[170] Idem., *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. I. Bernard Cohen and Anne Whitman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016, reprinted of the 1999 edition), pp. 381–3.

concepts of 'absolute time' and 'absolute space' have to be understood in mathematical terms, as opposed to their 'common' meanings that 'are very familiar to everyone'. For Newton, these concepts provide the reference without which the laws of motion cannot be mathematically meaningful. The importance of 'absolute time' to a mathematically informed study of the laws of motion can be easily understood, as it is the temporal standard for measuring the acceleration and retardation of motions. But the concept of 'absolute space' may require further explication. 'Absolute space', Newton explains, 'always remains homogeneous and immovable', whereas 'relative space' 'is any movable measure or dimension of this absolute space'. The relationship of an object to the space can be understood in terms of 'absolute' or 'relative place', 'depending on the space' in question. The movement of the object in space can in turn be known as 'absolute motion' – 'the change of position of a body from one absolute place to another', and as 'relative motion' – that from 'one relative place to another.' In this sense, one cannot arrive at an understanding of 'absolute motion' without the reference to 'absolute space'.[171]

The significance of this principle should be appreciated in Newton's implicit differentiation of the sensible status of 'absolute' and 'relative motion'. 'Relative motion' is the movements of objects that we have discerned in everyday life, and hence is determined by empirical perception that easily leads to misinterpreting the laws of nature. 'Absolute motion', on the contrary, can only be learned through mathematical deduction. The earth is 'relatively' at rest because we cannot perceive its motion. But, if the universe was immovable (setting aside our knowledge in astrophysics that the

[171] Ibid., pp. 408–10.

universe is in fact expanding), the earth in truth is 'absolutely' moving 'in unmoving space'. In this case, the universe is the 'absolute space', and the motion of the earth is 'absolute motion'. For Newton, 'absolute motion' is therefore the 'true motion'. More importantly, 'all motions away from places that move' – that is, all 'relative motions' – 'are only parts of whole and absolute motion', and the 'whole and absolute motion can be determined only by means of unmoving places'.[172] In other words, we are epistemologically incapable of comprehending the true laws of motion without the concept of 'absolute space'.

Mathematical principles suffice to crystallise the laws of motion, and to deduce from phenomena the properties of God. However, they do not lead to the scholastic conclusion of God as the first cause of natural phenomena. 'This most elegant system' of nature, Newton expounds in General Scholium, 'could not have arisen without the design and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being', who 'rules all things, not as the world soul but as the lord of all.' The supremacy of God, and his relationship to the natural world, has to be understood in terms of his dominion 'not over his own body as is supposed by those for whom God is the world soul, but over servants.'[173] Here Newton clearly rejects the Platonic idea of *anima mundi*. It is here that Leibniz and Samuel Clarke would dispute over the concept of God as *intelligentia supramundana*, and it is from this point on that Berkeley deemed Newton's theory of motion to have departed dangerously from the truth.[174]

Newton carefully distinguishes God's properties from his substance, as well as

[172] Ibid., pp. 411–12.
[173] Ibid., pp. 940–1.
[174] 'Mr. Leibnitz's second paper', in *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, pp. 18–20.

his role in the system of the natural world. God 'is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient, that is, he endures from eternity to eternity, and he is present from infinity to infinity'. These are God's properties. But God is not 'absolute time' nor 'absolute space'. 'He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite; he is not duration and space, but he endures and is present.' The implication is two-fold. On the one hand, we know from God's being omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient that 'In him all things are contained and move'. However, these properties of God cannot be confused with the idea that '[beings in] the world were parts of the supreme god'; the confusion that Newton takes to be the mistake of idolaters. On the other, we can learn the properties of God from mathematical deduction, but it can by no means confirm that God is the cause of natural phenomena. We have little idea of 'the substance of God', and 'know him only by his properties and attributes'.[175]

Newton's agnostic attitude is further elaborated by his scepticism with regard to finding the final cause of motion. 'The impenetrability, mobility, and impetus of bodies, and the laws of motion and the law of gravity have been found by this [mathematical] method. And it is enough that gravity really exists and acts according to the laws that we have set forth and is sufficient to explain all the motions of the heavenly bodies and of our sea.' This satisfies the pursuit of the experimental, natural philosophy. As for 'hypotheses, whether metaphysical or physical, or based on occult qualities, or mechanical', they 'have no place in experimental philosophy'.[176] Thus in the much-quoted Query 31 of the *Opticks*, Newton lists that 'Bodies act on upon another by the Attractions of Gravity, Magnetism, and Electricity; and these Instances shew the

[175] Newton, *Principia*, pp. 940–2.
[176] Ibid., p. 943.

Tenor and Course of Nature, and make it not improbable but that there may be more attractive Powers than these.' But 'I do not here consider', he announces, 'How these attractions may be perform'd'. He insists that 'we must learn from the Phænomena of Nature what Bodies attract one another, and what are the Laws and Properties of the Attraction, before we enquire the Cause by which the Attraction is perform'd.' Newton goes on to reject the 'occult Qualities' as the cause of the motions, and maintains that their 'Causes be not yet discover'd.'[177]

Newton closes the *Opticks* conjecturing that 'if natural Philosophy in all its Parts, by pursuing this Method [of experiment], shall at length be perfected,' 'we can know by natural Philosophy what is the first Cause', and accordingly 'what Power he has over us, and what Benefits we receive from him' 'will appear to us by the Light of Nature'. This in turn will 'also enlarged' 'the Bounds of Moral Philosophy'.[178] But conjecture cannot be taken as reality, which is portrayed in the last sentence of the *Principia*: 'there is not a sufficient number of experiments to determine and demonstrate accurately the laws governing the actions of this spirit' that could be the cause of motions.[179]

Newton's agnosticism invites criticisms, and Berkeley develops one that accuses Newton of replacing God with the concept of absolute space. In Newton's theory, absolute space becomes an indispensable being without which the laws of motion cannot be properly explained. This effectively makes absolute space the only thing like God that cannot be annihilated in a thought experiment, and instils in it certain divine attributes.[180] For Berkeley, the whole Newtonian theory of motion operates on the

[177] Newton, *Opticks*, pp. 375–6, 401–2.
[178] Ibid., pp. 405–6.
[179] Newton, *Principia*, p. 944.
[180] *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, p. 25. Cf. *Essay on Motion*, in *Philosophical Writings*, pp. 260–1.

ground of this quasi-divinity of the concept, whose destruction only requires a careful examination of the nature of the concept itself.

The nature of absolute space, according to Newton, is 'infinite, immobile, indivisible, insensible, without relation [to], and without distinction [from others]'. In other words, what constitutes its nature are negative and private attributes, suggesting that it is most likely to be a 'mere nothing'.[181] The only positive attribute it possesses is extension, as absolute space extends infinitively. But this only begs more questions. How could an infinite, immobile, and indivisible being extend, and how could its extension be noted and measured provided that it is also insensible? Here Berkeley seems to be modifying a classic, scholastic theological question.[182] But Newton's absolute space is more vulnerable to such a question than the complex nature of God, precisely because absolute space is insensible. It cannot be part of human experience nor intellect, as being insensible necessarily signifies the impossibility for it to be perceivable and conceivable. Absolute space, in short, possesses neither the sensible nor the occult quality to become an existence in human cognition. It is, as Berkeley himself reiterates in the same section, a 'mere nothing'.[183]

Nevertheless, Newton is correct in one thing: 'Without space, motion is unable to be conceived.'[184] Following the Newtonian language, Berkeley argues that, since the concept of absolute space has been readily dismissed, all motions are necessarily relative, as they are determined by relative spaces. The evidence for this argument is

[181] Ibid., p. 24. Porro spatium illud est infinitum, immobile, indivisible, insensibile, sine relatione & sine distinction. Hoc est, omnia ejus attributa sunt privative vel negative: videtur igitur esse merum nihil.

[182] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, Questions on God*, eds. Brian David and Brian Leftow, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Questions 7–9, pp. 69–91.

[183] *De Motu*, in *Works IV*, p. 24.

[184] Ibid., p. 25. Motus autem sine spatio concipi non potest.

straightforward. Motion can only be observed by the changing relations of an object to its various locations during its movement; that is to say, the observation of motion necessarily entails examining its direction.[185] It is in this perspective that the Newtonian laws of motion become useful. For Berkeley, Newton's theory fails in undermining the occult quality as the cause of motion by the abstract concept of absolute space, but it can nevertheless be employed in studying the 'communication of motion'. This brings back the notion of the distinction between the cause and the measurement of motion. Modern philosophers can employ mathematics in the mechanical principles for explicating the way in which the motion of an object might give rise to that of another object, insofar as they are studying the way in which motion is transferred between affected bodies. This is because the communication of motion can be measured by sensible qualities of the object in question, and do not necessarily entail enquiries about the primary cause that initiates the movement in the first place. It is therefore possible for natural philosophers to discover causes of such phenomena by mechanical principles. But these are 'secondary, corporeal causes' (causæ secundæ corporeaæ), and cannot be confused with the primary cause which can only be understood in metaphysical and theological terms.[186]

V

Previous sections have reconstructed ways in which Berkeley developed his criticism of the mathematisation of natural philosophy through turning mathematical question into theological controversy. This turning away from mathematics to theology indicates the reason why Berkeley thought such mathematisation religiously dangerous. His

[185] Ibid., p. 26.
[186] Ibid., pp. 28–30.

reformulation of Newtonian physics almost as a Spinozist assimilation of God to natural qualities exemplifies that his concern was primarily the implication of mathematising natural philosophy: by replacing *philosphia prima*, mathematics now becomes the new 'metaphysics'. One can now either be an agnostic because God's being cannot be adequately explained in mathematical terms, or a materialist because divine attributes are nothing different from natural qualities.

Berkeley's concern about this implication culminated in *The Analyst, or a Discourse addressed to an Infidel Mathematician*, published in March 1734, a treatise which Edmund Gibson, the Bishop of London, warmly expected to be of 'good service to religion ... against such adversaries'.[187] *The Analyst* makes two points. Firstly, mathematical abstraction is more mythical than metaphysics and theology. Secondly, a mathematically informed science only leads one into trivial speculation. These points are based on the question-begging nature of mathematical abstraction. As Nicolò Guicciardini argues, Berkeley did not 'direct his criticism at particular aspects of the calculus: his objective was to denounce the lack of rigour in the foundations of the new analysis of Leibniz and Newton.'[188]

The Analyst's argument can be divided into three parts. Berkeley first questions the connection between mathematical abstraction and empirical knowledge. His point is that mathematical thinking consists of equations whose meanings are conveyed by marks, such as 'X' and 'Y', that are products of abstraction and do not exist in actual, empirical phenomena.[189] In fact, if we look into the foundation of mathematical

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[187] Gibson to Berkeley, letter 238, in *Correspondence*, pp. 390–1.
[188] Nicolò Guicciardini, *The Development of Newtonian Calculus in Britain 1700-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 39.
[189] *The Analyst*, in *Works IV*, pp. 90–95.

expressions, 'we shall discover much emptiness, darkness, and confusion'.[190] This leads to Berkeley's argument that mathematical abstraction is much more fictional and mythical than the Christian idea of God.[191] God, after all, can be perceived through experiencing various natural phenomena or be revealed by divine intervention. The second part is a critique of the logical error in mathematical abstraction, whilst the third part is a series of questions on the nature of mathematical enquiries. For Berkeley, the errors in Leibniz's and Newton's principles of calculus are prominent cases for a more general problem in mathematical reasoning: it is derived from a series of presuppositions and is essentially a practice of abstract reasoning.

This can be further elaborated in the case of Newtonian fluxional calculus. To provide an exceedingly rough summary, Newton's fluxional calculus begins with supposing infinitely small differentials or moments as components of a finite magnitude or a period of time in which motion occurs. This then gives rise to an argument that the intended result of the intended magnitude or motion can be achieved by calculating these infinitely small components, which, as they are infinitely small in comparison to the subject in question, can be eliminated at the end of calculation.[192] For Berkeley, this is a practice for accurate abstraction and is not meaningful to the empirical world. But more devastatingly, its abstraction is far from being accurate, as the mathematical truth as such is derived from negating the fundamental proposition of the method, and is

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[190] Ibid., pp. 66–69; quotation in p. 69.

[191] Ibid., p. 102.

[192] For a concise summary of the propositions of Newtonian fluxional calculus, see: Guicciardini, *Newtonian Calculus in Britain*, pp. 5-6. A demonstration of this principle in practice in Newton's *De Analysi* can be seen in Idem., *Isaac Newton on Mathematical Certainty and Method* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 183–6.

often arrived by fortunate compensation of errors in propositions.[193]

Berkeley thus exhibits the problem of calculus: this is a study founded on ideas that do not actually exist, whose existence as necessary propositions of the study is cancelled by the practice itself. This explains why calculus is the 'most incomprehensible metaphysics.'[194] The attempt to replace metaphysics by mathematical abstraction is therefore an attempt to move the foundation of knowledge from studying divine mystery to exploring artificial mystery. Berkeley's scepticism about this culminated in a series of enquiries that summarized *The Analyst*: 'Whether there may not be sound metaphysics as well as unsound? Sound as well as unsound logic? And whether the modern analytics may not be brought under one of these denominations, and which?' 'Whether there be not really a *philosophia prima*, a certain transcendental science superior to and more extensive than mathematics, which it might behove our modern analysts rather to learn than despise?' 'Whether anything but metaphysics and logic can open the eyes of mathematicians and extricate them out of their difficulties?' 'Whether such mathematicians as cry out against mysteries have ever examined their own principles?' 'Whether mysteries may not with better right be allowed of in Divine Faith than in Human Science?'[195]

There is a more dangerous implication that only took shape in the debates occasioned by the publication of *The Analyst*. Berkeley's attacks on Newtonian calculus provoked a series of debates on the principles of fluxions, led by Newtonian

[193] This is shown in a series of geometrical cases in which Berkeley demonstrates the fundamental mistakes in the prepositions of fluxions. *The Analyst*, in *Works IV*, pp. 77–85. My intention here, however, is not to analyse Berkeley's expositions, but to pursue what Berkeley intended to do with these expositions.
[194] Ibid., p. 94.
[195] Ibid., pp. 101–2.

mathematicians in Cambridge.[196] Amongst the responses was a pamphlet entitled *Geometry No Friend to Infidelity*, which immediately appeared in the same year, by 'Philalethes Cantabrigiensis', who was believed to be James Jurin, a physician educated in Trinity College, Cambridge. Like the above analysis, Jurin summarises *The Analyst*'s criticisms in three points: the problem of mathematical thinking being infidel; the mathematicians' attempts to spread infidelity by propagating the achievements of the new science that is informed by mathematical method; and the logical errors committed in mathematical abstraction.[197] Jurin accuses Berkeley of polemically abandoning the definitive article in the subtitle of the tract ('the' infidel mathematician), hence turning all mathematicians to 'infidels' who 'make use of their reputation and authority, as being esteemed the greatest masters of reason, to pervert other persons to infidelity.'[198] What further discomforted Jurin is Berkeley's argumentation. As Jurin saw it, Berkeley deliberately distorts the end of Newtonian calculus, turning it from a method to the truth amongst branches of *scientia* to the end of human knowledge. Berkeley does so by placing Newtonian principles alongside divine teachings, thus making divine teachings commensurable with mathematical abstraction.[199] For Jurin, it was Berkeley

[196] This is recorded in Charles Hutton's *Mathematical and Philosophical Dictionary: Containing an Explanation of the Terms, and an Account of the Several Subjects... etc.* (London, 1796), pp. 201-2. There were more than twenty pamphlets written by professional mathematicians in between 1734 and 1736 as immediate responses to *The Analyst*. These include John Walton, professor of mathematics in the University of Dublin, and Benjamin Robins, who would become the engineer general of the East India Company. See: John Walton, *A Vindication of Sir Isaac Newton's Principles of Fluxions, Against the Objections Contained in the Analyst* (Dublin, 1735); Idem., *The Catechism of the Author of the Minute Philosopher Fully Answer'd* (Dublin, 1735); Benjamin Robins, *A Discourse Concerning the Nature and Certainty of Sir Isaac Newton's Methods of Fluxions ... etc.* (London, 1735). A fuller list can be found in Hutton's *Mathematical Dictionary*, p. 202.
[197] James Jurin (Philalethes Cantabrigiensis), *Geometry No Friend to Infidelity: Or, a Defence of Sir Isaac Newton and the British Mathematicians, in a Letter to the Author of the Analyst* (London, 1734), p. 6.
[198] Ibid., pp. 10.
[199] Ibid., pp. 7–9.

who provided a way of thinking that makes mathematical abstraction infidel.[200] But in Berkeley's view, Jurin's argument only confirms the implication that creators of mathematical principles, as creators of artificial mystery, are like deities to their followers.

In his response to Jurin's accusation, Berkeley clarifies that his target is mathematicians who use abstraction as excuse for their unbelief. These were mathematicians who replaced divine mystery with artificial mystery; *philosphia prima* with mathematical abstraction; and the Christian God with inventors of mathematical principles.[201] Modern philosophers' critique of Christian myths now constitutes a new form of religion. Moreover, this is a religion that is far more authoritarian than Anglicanism. As Berkeley shows, his own Anglican position would tolerate dissenters insofar as they do not constitute threats to political constitution, whereas this mathematical religion would not allow liberty to dissent from doctrines established by its founders.[202] For Berkeley, Newton's followers transform Newtonian physics into an institutional religion. Its church is based in Cambridge; its gospel is the *Principia*; its doctrines are Newtonian calculus; and its disciples are scholars in the university. Accordingly, Berkeley argues that Jurin and other Cambridge mathematicians' responses to *The Analyst* were occasioned by their passion to defend their master, and that the whole dispute was the consequence of these idolaters' religious enthusiasm.[203] This was why Jurin, in his response to *A Defense of Free-Thinking*, stressed on his

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[200] Ibid., pp. 20–6.
[201] *A Defence of Free-Thinking in Mathematics*, in *Works IV*, pp. 110–11.
[202] Ibid., p. 113.
[203] Ibid., pp. 136-9.

'calm and cool state' when writing *Geometry*.[204]

In exchange to Berkeley's criticism of religious enthusiasm, Jurin issued another response ridiculing Berkeley's integrity as a clergyman and as a philosopher. Jurin attempted to show that Berkeley's vindication of Christianity against mathematical abstraction was actually a disguise covering his desire for intellectual fame and that Berkeley's criticism of mathematics being mysterious was a proof of Berkeley's lack of capability in logical, philosophical thinking. He developed his earlier criticism, arguing that most mathematicians shared the general view that 'Truth and the Christian Religion are one'; that the application of Newtonian calculus and physics is in the service of truth and Christianity; and that it was Berkeley who demarcated them and who initiated an unchristian way of thinking.[205] In Jurin's view, that Berkeley chose debates about fluxional calculus over alternative, arguably more effective, ways of defending Christianity, such as preaching, shows that Berkeley's real motivation was less his concern about irreligiosity than his vanity.[206] Here Jurin was consciously playing with Berkeley's argument. It was Berkeley's point that modern mathematicians were preoccupied by their philosophic pride, which led them to separate studies of truth from studies of divine messages and which turned the new science into an infidel study. But as Jurin saw it, Berkeley's criticism is based on a hypothetical infidel, whom Berkeley created for advancing his reputation in learned circles. Berkeley was the one who made such demarcation and was the one who opened the door for infidel mathematicians. The hypothetical infidel was Berkeley's alter ego, and Berkeley was

[204] James Jurin (Philalethes Cantabrigiensis), *The Minute Mathematician: Or, The Free-Thinker no Just-Thinker ... etc.* (London, 1735), pp. 1–2.
[205] Ibid., pp. 7–9.
[206] Jurin, *Geometry No Friend to Infidelity*, pp. 22–4.

literally the creator of this minute philosopher who philosophises against the Christian truth.[207]

Berkeley did not respond to *The Minute Mathematician*, partly because the major part of the tract is occupied by Jurin's demonstration of how to make sense of fluxional calculus.[208] In fact, apart from Jurin's *Geometry*, Berkeley did not reply to the flood of professional mathematicians' complaints. Berkeley's own reason was that these mathematicians, including Jurin, were only indulging themselves in scholarly reasoning without giving any answer to questions that conclude both *The Analyst* and *A Defence of Free-Thinking*.[209] For Berkeley, none of these mathematical treatments provides adequate counter arguments against *The Analyst*'s criticism. Taking mathematical abstraction as an alternative foundation of knowledge to metaphysics leaves open the possibility for constructing a Lucretian picture of the natural world without the supreme creator. That Hobbes can have a science of political society derived from his *elementorum philosophiae* founded on *computatio*, and that Spinoza can effectively assimilate God to nature by reducing divine attributes to corporeal qualities in terms of nature's extension and movement, are striking examples of its dangerous implication.[210]

Notwithstanding Berkeley's position, Jurin was right in pointing out that Berkeley's explication of a religiously heterodox science gives it a more systematic character. As we shall see throughout this dissertation, Berkeley's reconstruction of free-thinkers' arguments more often than not consolidates the project of Enlightenment which

[207] Idem., *The Minute Mathematician*, pp. 12–14.
[208] Ibid., pp. 18–22.
[209] 'Reasons for not replying to Mr. Walton's *Full Answer*', in *Works IV*, pp. 147–156.
[210] Hobbes, *Leviathan, Vol. 3*, ed. Noel Malcolm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 1052–1103, 1132–42; Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *A Spinoza Reader: The Ethics and Other Works*, ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 86–115.

Berkeley intended to contest. This is most evident in the way in which Berkeley delineates Mandeville's and Shaftesbury's theories of human progress and the way in which he traces the origin of the question of commercial society. I analyse these themes in the third and the fifth chapters. But for the moment, I shall continue to explore Berkeley's response to the challenges promulgated by the new science. His criticism of modern knowledge as a heterodox religion founded on the methodological presumption of *mathesis universalis* intimately corresponds to his endeavour to reconstruct the order of a providential, natural world. This is the subject of the next chapter, which studies Berkeley's idea of human knowledge and its relationship to the providential order. It argues that Berkeley's epistemological reflections in *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues* are attempts to reconfigure the system of knowledge contra modern philosophers so as 'to demonstrate the reality and perfection of human knowledge, the incorporeal nature of the soul, and the immediate providence of a Deity'.[211] It explains why, for Berkeley, the ancients' model of *anima mundi* is much preferable than the moderns' *mathesis universalis*, and how Berkeley expostulates modern philosophy on the ground of its effects on the health of political society – the theme of the second part of this thesis.

[211] This is the subtitle of the *Three Dialogues*, in *Works II*, p. 164.

Ch. II The Proper Study of Nature and the Christian Idea of God

I

The previous chapter demonstrated how Berkeley reveals the problematic nature of the new science by challenging its methodological premise. It argued that, by this criticism, Berkeley attempts to restore the diagram of human knowledge, the ultimate goal of which is to conceive the existence of God. This chapter further explores this theme by analysing the way in which Berkeley rearticulates the nature of human knowledge and its purpose and by reconstructing Berkeley's demonstration of how a rightly informed understanding of natural philosophy leads to a conception of the divine, natural order that proves the being of God.

Like the previous chapter, this chapter makes one historiographical argument. It argues that the widely accepted notion about Berkeley's 'idealism' and 'immaterialism', coined by the phrase '*esse* is *percipi*', should be carefully reassessed, as the phrase cannot be easily taken as a philosophical position generating a self-sufficient system of epistemology. It is an ontological argument leading to a demonstration of the being of God. This effectively means that the purpose of that argument in *The Principles of Human Knowledge* is not radically different from the argument for the divine order that embarks on an analysis of the attributes of tar in *Siris*, Berkeley's last major publication. The scholarly claim that there was a shift in Berkeley's philosophical position from immaterialism to materialism between the publication of *The Principles* and the appearance of *Siris* might well benefit from a more historically informed understanding of Berkeley's intention, as well as of the kind of question that preoccupied him when he wrote these works.

Interpretations of *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* are dominated by philosophers' obsession with Berkeley's 'idealism' and 'immaterialism'. It is not the intention of this chapter to engage with the never-ending debates between modern philosophers on ways in which one can successfully make sense of Berkeley's point that nothing exists except ideas in the context of twentieth- and twenty-first-century.[212] Rather, this chapter shall reconstruct Berkeley's intention in *The Principles*, and shall argue that his primary question is about the way in which one can make sense of the being of God. In this sense, one has to be aware of the fact that the alleged 'Idealism' and 'Immaterialism' are arguments leading to an answer to this question, and that they should not be overstated as the main purpose of Berkeley's text. As I shall argue in this chapter, this question about the being of God preoccupied Berkeley's intellectual life: his last major publication, *Siris*, provides an approach to examining the question that is slightly more complicated than *The Principles*.

Siris was Berkeley's the most widely read work in his lifetime. It was first published in 1744, whilst a new edition would soon appear in 1747, only six years before Berkeley's death. Since its first appearance, *Siris* has provoked widespread intellectual debates over tar-water's miraculous medical effects, although modern philosophers tend to overlook that part of narrative in the work itself.[213] The main intention of *Siris* is to

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[212] Mountains of literature have been produced on explicating Berkeley's 'Idealism'. I only give but some examples published within this decade. It is worth noting how all these publications embark on their study from the 'Idealism' in *The Principles*: John Russel Roberts, *A Metaphysics for the Mob: The Philosophy of George Berkeley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Samuel C. Rickless, *Berkeley's Argument for Idealism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Flage, *Berkeley*; John Campbell and Quassim Cassam, *Berkeley's Puzzle: What Does Experience Teach Us?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[213] Some examples of contemporary responses and criticisms are: Anon., *Anti-Siris: or, English Wisdom Exemplify'd by Various Examples ... etc.* (London, 1744); Anon., *Siris in the Shades: A Dialogue Concerning Tar Water etc.* (London, 1744); Humphrey Jackson, *Reflexions concerning the Virtues of Tar Water etc.* (London, 1744); Thomas Reeve, *A Cure for the Epidemical Madness of Drinking Tar Water* (London, 1744); Stephen Hales, *An Account of Some Experiments and Observations on*

provide the society with a consumable medicine that could solve public suffering of illness due to the majority's inability to afford medical treatments. Berkeley was fully aware of problems caused by poverty in eighteenth-century British society. Part of *Siris*'s intended audiences was those men 'of low degree'. Berkeley stressed more than once on how tar-water's cheap price could be effectively beneficial for the majority of the people whose economic status was not sufficient to afford medication. For Berkeley, tar-water, 'a more efficacious remedy in all those cases [of curing] than even that costly drugs', could restore health easily without overwhelming financial concerns. This argument in *Siris* would be reinforced in several instances of Berkeley's correspondence with the republic of letters. To give but one example, in his letter to Thomas Prior concerning tar-water and plague, Berkeley noted that 'tar-water is a diet-drink' that is 'so cheap, so efficacious, and so universal' which not only would be valuable for curing but also for strengthening physical faculties.[214]

Notwithstanding this, *Siris*'s argument for medication is not entirely rested on propositions about tar-water's miraculous effects. There is a spiritual dimension as well. From analysing the composition of tar, Berkeley engages in an analysis of his contemporaries' explanations of natural phenomena on the basis of their theories of matter. This analysis allows him to reformulate his contemporaries' theories, and to argue that one can actually arrive at a notion of God from corpuscular, mechanical

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Tar-Water, etc. (London, 1745); Thomas Prior, *An Authentic Narrative of the Success of Tar-Water, etc.* (London, 1746).

[214] George Berkeley, "A [Third] Letter to Thomas Prior", in *Works V*, pp. 190-199, quotation in p. 199. This letter was with a subtitle, which was omitted by Luce and Jessop, when first published in 1747. The subtitle reads: 'concerning the usefulness of tar-water in the plague, wherein also it is considered whether tar-water, prepared with the distilled acid of tar, should be preferred to that made in the common way, by mixing tar with water and stirring them together'.

philosophy. This exposes the problem of modern natural philosophy.[215] What this demonstration of the being of God eminently shows is that modern philosophy is not necessarily sceptical or atheistic. That this has become the case is because of modern philosophers' preoccupation with their own hypothetical, theoretical reasoning that has diverted their enquiries from the proper study of the laws of nature.

This distinction between hypothetical theories and the laws of nature is the key to Berkeley's spiritual treatment in *Siris*. Whilst hypothetical theories are made from mathematical abstraction, the problem of which is the subject of the previous chapter, the laws of nature can be plainly observed by one's reflections on perceptible phenomena. Like *The Principles*, the general law of nature shows that the world is actively moved and governed by one supreme spirit, and the law of nature itself is the way in which one can make sense of the spirit's existence. Berkeley emphasises how ancient philosophers have successfully understood the true system of the world from such reflections, and suggests that this notion of the true system is important to the spiritual health of the British people.

Berkeley's arguments in *The Principles*, *Three Dialogues*, and *Siris* are directed against the tendency to irreligiosity in his contemporaries' natural philosophical theories. But *Siris* has one further intention. Its identity as a medical text is not simply a disguise for an attack on materialist natural philosophy, as some recent scholars have argued. Berkeley did genuinely believe that the text would provide a panacea for maladies that had troubled the British people. He made experiments with tar-water on his neighbours, and Adam Smith confessed to his mother that tar-water did cure his headache when he

[215] One recent, brilliant research that places Berkeley in the context of contemporary debates on matter and soul is Thomson, *Bodies of Thought*, pp. 175–215.

was studying at Balliol College, Oxford.[216] The spiritual dimension of *Siris*'s treatment also has a pragmatic purpose. It intends to provide the public with a chain of reasoning for the being of God that would be instrumental to the well-being of the British state. Its allusion to the language of 'enlightening' from the state of darkness and the teleology of well-being in the divine order resonates with Berkeley's conception of 'enlightenment' and the improvement of the human condition. This shall be further explored in the second part of this thesis. But before turning to Berkeley's dialectic of 'enlightenment', I shall first examine the way in which Berkeley argues that the law of nature demonstrates the being of God.

II

The arguments of the previous chapter pave the way to understanding Berkeley's points in *Principles of Human Knowledge*. The previous chapter shows how Berkeley problematises the methodological assumption in his contemporaries' mathematisations of natural philosophy, whilst in the subtitle of *The Principles*, Berkeley explicitly expresses the intention of the treatise: 'Wherein the Chief Causes of Error and Difficulty in the Sciences, with the grounds of Scepticism, Atheism, and Irreligion, are inquired into'.[217] The subtitle implies that 'Error and Difficulty in the Sciences' share the same causes as 'the grounds of Scepticism, Atheism, and Irreligion', and that, with reference to the title, these causes are to be found in reassessing the nature of human knowledge. That gives rise to another implication. Philosophical misunderstandings of the nature of human knowledge constitute the grounds of mistakes in the sciences and

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[216] Adam Smith to his mother, Letter 6, in Ernest Campbell Mossner and Ian Simpson Ross eds., *The Correspondence of Adam Smith* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), p. 3.
[217] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p 21.

irreligiosity. Philosophical misunderstandings already presuppose one's endeavours to understand philosophically. Accordingly, this implication can be rephrased: the causes of errors in the sciences, which are also the grounds of irreligiosity, are the philosophical misunderstandings of the nature of human knowledge that emerge in one's attempt to philosophise it.

This is affirmed in the introduction to the treatise, wherein Berkeley notes the phenomenon that scepticism about religion is more likely to appear amongst those who tend to 'reason, mediate, and reflect on the nature of things' than 'the illiterate bulk of mankind that walk the high-road of plain, common sense'.[218] For Berkeley, this opens up the question to which the treatise intends to respond. Why is it that philosophy, 'being nothing else but the study of wisdom and truth,' leads to nothing more than 'a thousand scruples… concerning those things which before we seemed fully to comprehend'?[219] There is almost an insinuation about Malebranche's *Recherche* in this question.[220] Whereas Malebranche articulates ways in which philosophy might rescue one from misleading, sensual perceptions, Berkeley's question raises the issue that, whilst one's physical faculties will unavoidably be misled by sensual errors, one's 'endeavouring to correct these by reason' will 'insensibly' bring one 'into uncouth paradoxes, difficulties, and inconsistences, which multiply and grow upon us as we advance in speculation.' Before long, 'having wandered through many intricate mazes, we find our selves just where we were, or, which is worse, sit down in a forlorn scepticism.'[221]

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[218] Ibid., p. 25.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Malebranche, *The Search after Truth*, esp. Part I.
[221] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p. 25.

The answer to the question of the failure of philosophising would equally be the argument about the causes of errors in the sciences and irreligiosity. Berkeley notices that some of his contemporaries seem to conclude that the question is caused by the fact that human faculties are inadequate to comprehend the nature of things. This is essentially a Lockean argument, as Locke argues for the impossibility of human faculties to fully comprehend the constitutions of things.[222] But for Berkeley, this argument about the natural limits of physiology gives too much licence to pardoning human beings for their mistakes in wrongly employing their rational faculties. And it entails an implication against the reasonableness of providence. That human understanding is restricted to truth by the incapacity of human faculties means that 'right deductions from true principles' might not necessarily lead to a correct understanding of the divine design because the process of deduction and understanding might be affected by the natural defects of human faculties. Furthermore, this means that God created human beings without implanting in them the capacity to know him. This clearly is 'not agreeable to the wonted, indulgent methods of Providence, which, whatever appetites it may have implanted in the creatures, usually furnished them with such means as, if rightly made use of, will not fail to satisfy them.' For Berkeley, it is more probable that the difficulties in philosophising, the misunderstandings of the nature of human knowledge, and the grounds of irreligiosity are 'entirely owing to our selves'; 'That we have first raised a dust, and then complain, we cannot see.'[223]

The purpose of *The Principles*, then, is to reconstruct ways in which rational faculties have been misemployed, as well as arguments that have been ill-informed, so

[222] Locke, *Human Understanding*, pp. 43–8.
[223] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II.*, pp. 25–6.

as to reinstate the teleological nature of human knowledge. It argues that human beings, with a right way of reasoning, shall arrive at the argument that demonstrates the being and attributes of God. In this sense, *The Principles* is actually a treatise which is closer to being a work of Christian apologetics than a philosophical emblem of empirical epistemology. Its intention is more reminiscent of Samuel Clarke's *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God* than of Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Clarke begins his *Demonstration* by distinguishing three types of atheists. One might become an atheist because one is too ignorant to use one's reason and to discover the divine design, because one is too corrupted in one's nature so that one loses the capacity to impartially observe the natural order and can only indulge oneself in being cynical regarding religious principles, or because one engages in problematic philosophy which turns one's speculation towards being sceptical about God.[224] *Demonstration* intends to persuade this last type of atheists. This is because they are the only group of atheists that actually use their faculty of reason. For that reason, they become the only group of atheists that might be rationally persuaded by showing them the correct mode of reasoning which will lead to an argument for the existence of God. The kind of philosophical atheists Clarke had in mind were Hobbes and Spinoza, particularly their assimilations of the divine attributes to matter and, accordingly, their arguments that God can be perceived in the same way in which beings in the natural

[224] Samuel Clarke, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, in Idem, *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God and Other Writings*, ed. Ezio Vailati (Cambridge: Cambridge Unviersity Press, 1998), p. 3.

world can be perceived by sensual organs.[225]

Berkeley had very similar interlocutors in mind.[226] The first part of *The Principles* is an argument against the kind of material mechanism that reduces the way in which one attains the knowledge of divine attributes to ways in which one comes to understand the natural world. This, for Berkeley, is the consequence of confusion that mixes two radically different relationships between being and the natural world. There is a relationship of human beings to the natural world, and this can be properly studied by natural philosophical questions that are shaped by mathematical methods. But the relationship of the divine being to the natural world is of different kind. And, as argued in the previous chapter, questions about this relationship belong to the first philosophy. *The Principles* is based on this distinction, leading up to its argument for the epistemological and ontological necessity of the being of God. It constitutes the ground for Berkeley to divide human knowledge into two categories, 'that of ideas, and that of spirits.'[227] The part of human knowledge belonging to the terrain of ideas concerns the relationship of an agent to the natural world, whilst that concerning spirits emphasising the relation between God and his creation.

One has to be careful about what Berkeley meant by 'ideas' in order not to arrive at the easy, reductionist conclusion about Berkeley's 'Idealism'. Berkeley is explicit that the meaning of 'ideas' in his treatment of human knowledge is not unlike what others commonly called 'things'. In the third dialogue of *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, Hylas raises the question derived from an expected misreading of

[225] On Clarke's distinction of perceivable matters in the natural world and divine attributes that are unknown to human beings, see: Ibid., pp. 29-33.
[226] See the previous chapter.
[227] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p. 78.

Berkeley's distinction of human knowledge in terms of ideas and spirits, challenging his alleged claim that 'there is nothing in the world but spirits and ideas'.[228] To this Philonous responds that the misreading is generated by confusion of words, as 'ideas' are not 'being commonly used for "things"'. The reason that Berkeley prefers 'ideas' to 'things' is because of its implication. As Philonous notes, 'idea' implies a mechanical connection between the mind and the objects being perceived, whereas 'thing' appears to suggest the existence of the thing in itself without necessarily being in relation with other beings.[229] For Berkeley, the mechanism of the mind actively perceiving and conceiving external phenomena is the genuine, cognitive foundation without which one can hardly understand the part of human knowledge concerning one's relation to the natural world.

This leads to Berkeley's explication of the mechanism. His first attempt is to clarify confusion generated by the misuse of language. When one says that 'something exists', one is actually saying that 'I know that something exists', which is a summary statement of the mechanism of the mind as the mind, through actively perceiving and conceiving the beings in question, ascertains the existence of the beings.[230] This effectively enlarges the meaning of the statement that 'things exist', as it actually denotes that 'things exist as ideas being perceived or conceived by one's mind'. Furthermore, insofar as the mind's capacity to conceive an object is empirically conditioned by the mind's experiences of the object, the mind's perception of the object is the necessary

[228] *Three Dialogues*, in *Works II*, p. 235.
[229] Ibid, p. 235-6.
[230] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p. 42.

precondition of the mind's conception of it.[231] The mind's perception of things therefore is the primary condition for the mind's having ideas of things as the mode in which things can be said to be existing. It is in this sense that Berkeley reduces the mechanism of the mind's active understanding of the natural world to the phrase '*esse* is *percipi*'.[232]

Once this line of reasoning is established, Berkeley is able to refute parameters which mechanical natural philosophy use to explore the nature of things. In the spirit of his exploration of the abstract nature of numbers, Berkeley argues that qualities such as figures, magnitudes, and shapes are equally the products of the mind's abstraction. It leads to his scepticism about natural philosophers' claim that one cannot know the actual nature of things. The claim relies on the theorem that one has to be certain about the independent existence of the nature of things before one can make the statement that one cannot know the nature of things. But for Berkeley, that anything can exist without being perceived or conceived by the mind is literally unthinkable. The theorem of natural philosophers' claim therefore cannot be proved and is invalid. The claim is therefore problematic and exposes the speculative character of modern natural philosophy.

Natural philosophy is a study whose object and method are a production of the mind's abstraction on the basis of its perception of the natural world.[233] Being a speculative science is not problematic. For Berkeley, the problem with modern natural

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[231] Berkeley seems to take abstraction, conception, and imagination as interchangeable insofar as they signify the mind's production of ideas of beings without simultaneously perceiving the beings. This resonates with Locke's anatomy of the mechanism of the mind's perception and conception. See: Locke, *Human Understanding*, pp. 143–63.
[232] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, pp. 42–3.
[233] Ibid., pp. 85–6.

philosophers is that they reject being speculative, and pretend to enquire accurately without intellectual rigidity. This has distorted the study of natural philosophy. Natural philosophy, being the part of human knowledge dealing with one's relationship to the natural world, is knowledge that explores modes in which the mind has ideas of beings in the world. Modern natural philosophers, having mistaken the end of their study, distorted its nature. They attempt to establish natural philosophy as a science of relationships of beings in the world without the necessary agency, and, on this basis, seek to develop a study of the relation between God and the natural world, which belongs to the other part of human knowledge. 'It is the searching after, and endeavouring to understand those signs instituted by the Author of Nature, that ought to be the employment of natural philosopher, and not the pretending to explain things by corporeal causes'.[234]

The argument about the end of natural philosophy paves the way for Berkeley to explicate the other part of human knowledge, 'that of spirits'. It has been stated before that this part of human knowledge explores the relationships of the divine, supreme being to other beings in the world. And Berkeley's argument about this part of knowledge chiefly emphasises ways in which it operates so as to argue for its intelligibility. This is mainly in response to one expected scepticism which has emerged from the principles of the knowledge of ideas. If one can only be certain about the existence of beings under the empirical condition that one has once encountered and perceived the beings in question, then, regarding the knowledge of spirits, one necessarily faces the question as to how can one be certain about the being of God

[234] Ibid., pp. 69–70. The same argument is reinstated in *De Motu*. See the previous chapter.

without experiences of divine revelation? In other words, how can the question about the relationships of God to his creation be genuine without the empirical ground of one's immediate encounters with God?

In Berkeley's view, the fact that questions can be raised regarding the intelligibility of God only reveals how the public has been misled by confusing the two branches of human knowledge. His explication embarks on reinstating the distinction between 'ideas' and 'spirits'. One is reminded of Berkeley's replacement of 'things' by 'ideas', a reminder that shall lead one to realise that 'ideas' actually signify the status of existence of those that are commonly taken as 'matter', 'substratum', or 'unthinking substance'.[235] The status of their existence is actually a status of 'being existing in the mind', and it is in this sense that Berkeley argues that, in the context of human cognition, their being is nothing more than 'ideas'. This means that, beyond the present, cognitive agency, there are other beings that are actively perceiving or conceiving 'ideas' without which 'ideas' cannot exist. And this sort of active, thinking beings has been commonly called 'mind', 'will', 'soul', or 'spirit'. For Berkeley, these are interchangeable terms describing 'one simple, undivided, active being' that 'perceives ideas' or 'produces or otherwise operates about them'.[236]

In the third dialogue, the figure of Philo reinforces the way in which one can ascertain the being of one's mind by reflection, and suggests that 'I have a notion of spirit, though I have not, strictly speaking, an idea of it. I do not perceive it as an idea or by means of an idea, but know it by reflection.'[237] The key terms in these sentences are

[235] Ibid., pp. 43–6.
[236] Ibid., pp. 52–5.
[237] *Three Dialogues*, in *Works II*, pp. 231–3.

'notion' and 'idea'. Berkeley seems to be suggesting a distinction between these terms on the basis of different activities of the mind. He defines the mind's perception of ideas as understanding, and the mind's conception or production of ideas as will.[238] But he appears to oppose the Lockean rendition of abstract ideas as the mind's abstraction of certain qualities from the perceived ideas.[239] For Berkeley, the mind can certainly abstract and produce ideas insofar as the ideas being produced are the same as those that have once been perceived.[240] In other words, the mind's abstraction is much closer to its re-production of its perceptual experiences than to its separation of qualities from the perceived idea and its reconfiguration of the separated qualities. Notwithstanding this, it is undeniable that the mind can come to understand the existence of active beings without actually perceiving them. Berkeley defines this process of understanding without necessarily perceiving as 'notion', particularly in the sense that one can understand meanings of words signifying the existence of those unperceived, active beings. That one cannot be said to have 'ideas' of spirit can be fully understood as 'ideas' signify passive, unthinking substance, whereas spirit is an active, thinking being. Accordingly, 'We may not I think strictly be said to have an idea of an active being, or of an action, although we may be said to have a notion of them.' 'I have some knowledge or notion of my mind, and its acts about ideas, inasmuch as I know or understand what is meant by those words.'[241]

That one can have notions of other spirits is evidently demonstrated by further explication of the relation between the mind and the natural world. Based on his

[238] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, p. 52.
[239] For Locke's conception of abstract idea, see the previous chapter.
[240] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, pp. 29–30.
[241] Ibid., p. 106.

definitions of understanding and will, Berkeley further advances that, whilst will solely depends on the mind's power over its ideas, understanding relies on a co-dependence between the mind and other minds. Understanding signifies 'ideas actually perceived by sense'. But despite the mind's action to perceive ideas, the mind does not have power to choose what ideas shall be perceived. This is a summary of everyday experiences. When I open my eyes in the morning, I do not have the power to choose which ideas shall be perceived by my mind. Understanding is therefore a two-way mechanism. Whilst the mind actively perceives ideas, the ideas are equally being imprinted on the mind. This means that the ideas imprinted on the mind 'are not creatures of my will.' 'There is therefore some other will or spirit that produces them.'[242]

The mind's capacity to have notions of other spirits testifies to an order according to which one perceives and conceives the natural world. According to Berkeley, that order is the laws of nature, which informs one's knowledge of one's proper position in the natural world and accordingly 'enables us to regulate our actions for the benefit of life.' This shall lead one to make sense of a supreme spirit that wills the laws of nature.[243] Here Berkeley establishes his chain of reasoning for the being of God. One's careful reflection on the status of one's cognition brings one to acknowledge that one can only claim to know things when they exist as ideas in one's mind. And further examination showing that these ideas are imposed on one's mind whilst one perceives them signifies the being of other spirits. That one can deduct from the knowledge of ideas to the knowledge of spirits brings up one's sense of the two-fold relationships between one's being and other beings in the world; that is, the laws of nature. And one's

[242] Ibid., p. 53.
[243] Ibid., pp. 54–5.

sense of the laws of nature means that one will have the notion of the supreme governor whose will constitutes the natural law, and that one now has responsibility to act according to this law.[244]

Following this tenet of thought, God is the immediate cause of ideas that one perceives, and, by immediately perceiving these ideas, one has immediate notions of God.[245] This leads to two significant arguments in *The Principles*. The first is a criticism of modern natural philosophy. Natural philosophers' misleading theory, which places the immediate cause of ideas and motions in the perceived ideas themselves, creates unnecessary misunderstandings in metaphysics and hinders one from having notions of the being of God. This effectively makes modern natural philosophy the cause of scepticism and atheism. The second is a reinforcement of the significance of the laws of nature. Other than some rare, necessary occasions on which God intervenes in the course of nature by revelation, 'God seems to choose the convincing our reason of his attributes by the works of Nature, which discover so much harmony and contrivance in their make, and are such plain indications of wisdom and beneficence of their Author'.[246] This means that one's knowledge of the divine, natural law, and one's co-operation with it is part of the divine will.[247] Berkeley was preoccupied by this theme throughout his intellectual life, and his last major publication, *Siris*, provides a detailed demonstration of the laws of nature and the being of God.

III

In *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues*, Berkeley provides a philosophical argument

[244] For Berkeley's argument of one's responsibility to co-operate with the divine, natural law in his socio-political thought, see Chapter 6.
[245] *Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *Works II*, pp. 62–5.
[246] Ibid., pp. 68–9.
[247] There is a notion of divine justice in this argument, which will be fully explored in Chapter VI.

for the being of God by explicating the actual way in which one comes to know the world. The key to understanding this is to realise that when one talks about one's knowledge of the existence of other beings, one is actually framing ideas of the beings in subject on the basis of one's perceptions of them. The result of this is that one can only know the phenomenon of beings insofar as one has encountered them, and that one's cognitive faculty is incapable of knowing the noumenon of beings. This emphasis on the significance of the empirical part of the mind's cognitive status leads to Berkeley's rejection of corporeal matter that exists independently outside the mind. Because if cognition is entirely constituted by the activities of the mind, then one cannot possibly know the existence of other beings independent from the mind apart from having notions of other minds.

This becomes what generations of philosophers have come to call Berkeley's 'idealism' and his 'immaterialism'. But this argument about the significance of *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues* misses the main point. The alleged 'idealism' and 'immaterialism' argument is a constituent part of Berkeley's delineation of cognitive processes. And this in turn serves to prove Berkeley's argument for the reasonableness of making sense of the being of God. This gives rise to another argument. The concept of the existence of external, material substances, derived from the mathematical principle of infinite divisibility, contributes to the misunderstanding of movements in the natural world. One tends to explain the perceived phenomena by the mechanism of the transmission of force between matter, leading to the conclusion that movement is first generated by attraction or repulsion of matter. This explanation makes it difficult to argue for the being of God within the framework of material mechanism, and, in

Berkeley's view, shapes the ground for scepticism and atheism.[248] These two arguments are of more importance to Berkeley's concern. Overemphasising idealism and immaterialism misplaces the point of the argument, and can be misleading regarding Berkeley's thought, particularly in the case of interpreting the relation between *The Principles* and *Siris*.

There is a question in the history of philosophy as to whether Berkeley changed his mind from his early immaterialism, mainly based on the arguments of *The Principles*, to materialism in his last, major work *Siris*.[249] The question can be paraphrased as follows: Berkeley develops his idealism against the corpuscularianism in *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues*. But in *Siris*, he vindicates certain positions of corpuscularianism, such as the theories of salt and acid, insofar as they can be maintained in an idealist framework.[250] Yet this way of framing the question has clearly mistaken the intention of the texts, and undermines the fact that both texts were intended to constitute arguments for the being of God. One has to note that *The Principles* was not intended to be a philosophical explication of idealism or immaterialism. On the contrary, the alleged arguments for these philosophical positions, which are in fact supplementary to Berkeley's reconceptualisation of the activities of the mind, are made in *The Principles* as part of its demonstration of the being of God. Berkeley himself was explicit on the theological significance of this point in *Three Dialogues*, as the figure of Philonous argues: 'Men commonly believe that all things are known or perceived by God, because they believe the being of a God, whereas I, on the

[248] Newton's agnosticism in *Principia* might be taken as a case for Berkeley's concern.
[249] Flage, *Berkeley*, pp. 179–80.
[250] Despite my disagreement with this general thesis in Gabriel Moked's *Particles and Ideas*, Moked's study of *Siris* remains one of the best studies of Berkeley's natural philosophy. Gabriel Moked, *Particles and Ideas: Bishop Berkeley's Corpuscularian Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988).

other side, immediately and necessarily conclude the being of a God because all sensible things must be perceived by him.'[251] This necessity requires one's use of reason. It tactically dismisses the accusation of Christians' superstition by emphasising the reasonableness of one's sense of God, and it evokes one's sense of responsibility to obeying the order of God. In this sense, *Siris* is not as inconsistent with *The Principles* as some modern philosophers have suggested.

The difference between these texts is their approaches. The argument for the being of God in *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues* is developed from exposing the errors about material substance and the tendency towards irreligiosity in modern natural philosophy. But in *Siris*, Berkeley attempts to argue that the being of God is intelligible from discoveries and hypotheses made by modern natural philosophy insofar as one does not restrict one's thinking in its theoretical framework. One might grasp the difference in Berkeley's own words.[252] In section 228 of *Siris*, Berkeley argues that 'It is one thing to arrive at general laws of nature from a contemplation of the phenomena, and another to frame an hypothesis, and from thence deduce the phenomena. Those who supposed epicycles, and by them explained the motions and appearances of the planets, may not therefore be thought to have discovered principles true in fact and nature.'[253] Whilst the previous section has shown how Berkeley arrives at the laws of nature in *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues*, this section shall explore how Berkeley argues for the being of God from hypotheses about particles and substances in modern natural philosophy.

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[251] *Three Dialogues*, in *Works II*, p. 212–4.

[252] Moked rightly notes the significance of distinction between theory and laws of nature in *Siris*. Moked, *Particles and Ideas*, pp. 27–32.

[253] *Siris*, in *Works V*, p. 109.

Siris's arguments can be divided into five themes: (1) The production and the use of tar-water for not only the healing but also the prevention of diseases; (2) A microcosm-macrocosm analogy on the physical constitution of human beings and other bodies in the natural world, leading to an argument that matters about physiological disorder are best treated according to the laws of nature. This is followed by a comparison of tar-water's healing efficacy in comparison with a series of accounts on natural treatments employed at the time, including ginseng in China, mercury, spa, and opium. And this in turn gives rise to Berkeley's suggestion that tar-water is more effective than most contemporary medications in treating diseases such as small pox, gout, erysipelas, and scurvy; (3) A demonstration of the being of spirits from modern theories of matter. This is a transitional theme marking the shift of the text's emphasis. Berkeley's argument for tar-water's medical efficacy in (2) is supported by analysing the nature of tar, which opens ways for him to develop his conception of the natural world. *Siris* then engages in a different subject, operating on the ground made available by various substratum theories in modern natural philosophy and demonstrating that these theories, despite being hypothetical, inevitably lead to an argument for the general laws of nature that we have visited in *The Principles* and *Three Dialogues*; (4) An explication of problems in the state of practices of modern natural philosophy. That Berkeley can make sense of the being of an ultimate spirit within the theoretical framework of modern corpuscular theories indicates that agnostic, sceptic, and atheistic positions held by modern natural philosophers are problematic. Here Berkeley briefly reproduces his criticism of the new science, and argues that, despite all their discoveries, modern natural philosophers have failed to surpass ancient philosophers in terms of

understanding the truth of the natural world. This guides his arguments to an exposition of ancient philosophies; (5) an exposition of ancient philosophies showing ways in which one can make sense of the being of the Trinitarian God by reason alone.

The distinction of 'laws of nature' and 'hypothesis' is made in (3), shortly after Berkeley's reformulation of modern corpuscular theories. Berkeley embarks on his demonstration of the being of God from 'hypothesis' by analysing the nature of tar. For him, tar-water's effects in treating incurable diseases are related to its property of containing both hot and cold qualities. These are in turn the qualities of tar. Tar, as the products of burned wood, contains 'an acid spirit, which is the volatile oily salt of the vegetable; herein are chiefly contained their medicinal virtues'.[254] Berkeley argues from this point that the infusion of tar in either cold or warm water would either harmonise the warm nature of tar, making it much milder for sensitive fibres, or, due to warm water's deobstruent nature, becomes easier to insinuate 'into all the nice capillary vessels'.[255] In Berkeley's view, this explains why tar-water treatment would be an ideal regimen for serious diseases such as scurvy, 'a universal malady' thought to be caused by disorders in the circulation of blood. According to Berkeley, tar-water's mild nature of harmonising heat and cold would efficiently strengthen human fibres, which in turn would reconstruct the circulation.[256]

Berkeley's analysis of tar-water's medical efficacy in terms of ways in which acid and salts contained in tar interact with cold and warm water provides space for him to direct his narrative into a different topic. Having introduced and demonstrated the

[254] Ibid., p. 46.
[255] Ibid., pp. 47–9.
[256] Ibid., pp. 61–4.

efficacy of tar-water, he turns to explore his contemporaries' corpuscular theories that shape the language in which *Siris*'s argument for tar-water is written. Berkeley's emphasis on tar's 'acid spirit' is an appropriation of arguments made by Newton, Herman Boerhaave, and Wilhelm Homberg that 'acid is a fine subtle substance, pervading the whole terraqueous globe; which produceth divers kinds of bodies, as it is united to different subjects.'[257] He follows Newton's and Homberg's theory that acid is the purest part in consisting salt, 'the pure salt' or 'the salt of the earth', which would in turn give rise to other components once it is infused with water through attraction and repulsion.[258] Meanwhile, there is an implicit reference to Jan Baptist van Helmont's refutation of the Paracelsian theory of matter. Berkeley's assimilation of 'acid spirit' with 'volatile salt' appears to be taken from van Helmont's demonstration of ways in which salt can be declined into several components, the most influential amongst which being the volatile salt.[259]

But Berkeley is sceptical about having acid as one of the substrata that constitute matters of the natural world. Without necessarily challenging his contemporaries' theories, Berkeley raises his question about whether acid can be further declined into finer substances, which would mean that acid itself is a product of attraction and repulsion. In Berkeley's view, this is reinforced by the fact that, for Homberg, 'this acid is never found pure, but hath always sulphur joined with it, and is classified by the

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[257] Ibid., p. 74.

[258] Berkeley, *Siris*, in *Works V*, pp. 74–77; Isaac Newton, 'Some Thoughts About the Nature of Acids' in his *De Natura Acidorum*, in Idem., *Isaac Newton's Papers & Letters on Natural Philosophy and Related Documents*, ed. Bernard Cohen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 257–8.

[259] *Siris*, in *Works V*, pp. 33–4. See also: Jan Baptist van Helmont, *Van Helmont's Works: Containing his most Excellent Philosophy, Physick, Chirurgery, Anatomy. Wherein the Philosophy of the Schools is Examined, Their Errors Refuted, and the whole Body of Physick Reformed and Rectified,* trans. John Chandler (London, 1664), pp. 53–62, 192–97; Anna Marie Roos, *The Salt of the Earth: Natural Philosophy, Medicine, and Chymistry in England, 1650-1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 47–52.

difference of its sulphurs, whether mineral, vegetable, or animal.'[260] For Berkeley, attempts to explain natural phenomena by tracing the minimum, indivisible substratum as the origin of motion is pursuing the wrong line of enquiry. It tends to diverge one's enquiry about natural phenomena into an endless process of dividing particles into particles. A more meaningful approach would be directly examining phenomena as they appear in our senses. And this, as Berkeley sees it, would direct one's attention to air, as all the theoretically developed particles, whether acids or salts, 'are all breathed or exhaled into the air, which seems the receptacle as well as source of all sublunary forms, the great mass or chaos which imparts and receives them.' 'The air or atmosphere that surrounds our earth contains a mixture of all the active volatile parts of the whole habitable world, that is, of all vegetables, minerals, and animals.'[261]

By emphasising the significance of air to the understanding of natural phenomena, Berkeley turns to another important theory of his contemporaries' natural philosophy; that is, Robert Boyle's characterisation of air's elasticity.[262] Berkeley notices 'some one quality or ingredients in the air, on which life more immediately and principally depends.' The most straightforward evidence is that one cannot possibly live without air. Despite its indispensability to living, air itself is not what generates life. It is only 'an aggregate of the volatile parts of all natural beings, which, variously combined and agitated, produce many various effects.'[263] But being an aggregate of all particles only explains that 'air is no distinct element' and is incapable of generating natural phenomena. It does not explain its elasticity. And this effectively leads to a significant

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[260] *Siris*, in *Works V*, pp. 76–7.
[261] Ibid., pp. 77.
[262] Ibid., pp. 80–1. Cf. Robert Boyle, *A Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Received Notion of Nature*, ed. Edward B. Davis and Michael Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 85–6.
[263] *Siris*, in *Works V*, pp. 79–80.

point in *Siris*'s reformulation of corpuscular philosophy. This observation of air shows that 'in air we may conceive two parts; the one more gross, which was raised and carried off from the bodies of this terraqueous mass; the other a fine subtle spirit, by means whereof the former is rendered volatile and elastic.'[264]

For Berkeley, the value of studying the quality of air is not to supplement corpuscular theories with another theorem, but to introduce to a more significant proposition that shows one can actually develop a sense of incorporeal, spiritual being that generates and governs natural phenomena. In fact, the 'fine subtle spirit' that renders air elastic has been plainly observed by ancient philosophers. It was Heraclitus's idea, which Newton also endorses, that 'the death of fire was a birth to air, and the death of air a birth to water', and this seems to lead to an idea that fire is the source of what renders air indispensable to living beings. One is then reminded by Berkeley that the meaning of fire in this motion of transfiguration is interchangeable with 'pure æther, or light'. The line of argument then leads to the conclusion that 'This æther or pure invisible fire, the most subtle and elastic of all bodies, seems to pervade and expand itself throughout the whole universe, it is the pure invisible fire that is the first natural mover or spring from whence the air derives its power.'[265] This effectively makes æther the 'viral spirit of the world.' One can easily make sense of this point about a spirit being the source of motions of the world by reflecting on one's actions. 'The animal spirit in man is the instrumental or physical cause both of sense and motion.' And a microcosm–macrocosm analogy shall lead one to understand that 'there is a spirit that moves, and a Mind or Providence that presides' in the natural

[264] Ibid., p. 81.
[265] Ibid. pp. 81–2.

world, being the cause of natural phenomena as ways in which the animal spirit generates motions in human body.[266]

Having demonstrated that one can actually make sense of the being of a supreme spirit from modern corpuscular theories, Berkeley soon turns to criticise 'corpuscularian philosophers of the last age', notably Descartes, Hobbes, and Spinoza.[267] Berkeley's own deduction of the being of an ultimate spirit from corpuscular hypothesis is a sharp comparison to these philosophers. That their corpuscular philosophies nourish irreligiosity indicates problems in ways in which they frame their questions and shape their arguments. In Berkeley's view, these philosophers have mistaken games of theoretical hypothesis with the end of study of natural phenomena. They have failed to provide an explanation about the laws of nature regulating natural phenomena, and have become obsessed with developing their own system of mechanical laws, resulting in their tendency to reduce natural phenomena to particular theorems. Having stated his criticism, Berkeley soon adds that the failure of corpuscularian philosophers is unsurprising. After all, corpuscular theories and its mechanical deduction are based on two wrong-footed assumptions: the misleading principle of infinite divisibility of matter in mathematical abstraction, and the ontological mistake about the existence of corporeal beings. Even with the possibility it offers to make sense of the being of God, the whole art of reasoning remains hypothetical. And, as stated in section 228, it has to be carefully distinguished from the general laws of nature.[268]

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[266] Ibid., pp. 82–3.
[267] Ibid., pp. 111.
[268] Ibid., pp. 111–12.

Berkeley's criticism of the modern hypothetical corpuscularianism implies an alternative means to prove the being of God from the laws of nature. In section 263 and 264, he gives an instruction as to how this is assessable by one's use of reason. Here we arrive at a moment when Berkeley gives his definition of enlightenment. 'It cannot be denied that, with respect to the Universe of things, we in this mortal state are like men educated in Plato's cave, looking on shadows with our backs turned to the light. But though our light be dim, and our situation bad, yet if the best use be made of both, perhaps something may be seen.'[269] 'The best use' can be found by a division of labour: 'Sense and experience acquaint us with the course and analogy of appearances or natural effects. Thought, reason, intellect introduce us into the knowledge of their causes.'[270] For Berkeley, this is by no means a novel argument. That this might have appeared unfamiliar to modern readers is because 'The successful curiosity of the present age, in arts, and experiments, and new systems, is apt to elate men, and make them overlook the Ancients.' In the remaining sections of *Siris*, Berkeley reminds his readers about ways in which the ancients have come to understand the general laws of nature by rational reflection on perceptions of the analogy of nature with the divine constitution.[271]

Berkeley's explications of ancient philosophical arguments are written in the spirit of Ralph Cudworth's *The True Intellectual System of the Universe*.[272] He follows Cudworth's arguments in the first book of *The Intellectual System*, namely that ancient

[269] Ibid., p. 124. This is a significant image in Berkeley's conception of the human condition: human beings are in a state of darkness waiting for enlightenment in order to arrive at an enlightened age. For a detailed reconstruction of Berkeley's conception of enlightenment, see Chapter 6.
[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid., pp. 124–5.
[272] Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: The First Part; Wherein, All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confused; and Its Impossibility Demonstrated* (London, 1678).

philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle, insofar as they constitute their philosophies on the principle of incorporeal substances, are not atheists.[273] Berkeley draws on Plato's story of creation and God's separation of human souls and human bodies in *Timæus*, rendering God being 'both a universal Spirit, author of life and motion, and a universal Mind, enlightening and ordering all things'.[274] This principle was largely shared by followers of Plato and Pythagoras, who successfully grasped 'a notion of the true system of the world', which conceives the being of a Mind that is 'infinite in power, unextended, immortal, governed, connected, and contained all things', and which understands corporeal beings 'only in a secondary and dependent sense'.[275] Aristotle also argues for a similar mode of distinguishing incorporeal spirits and corporeal beings that are dependent on the former, and develops a system of knowledge from Plato's and Pythagoras's distinction of classes of beings. Plato and Pythagoras separate beings into three sorts: (1) the unchangeable, invisible, and imperceptible beings that can only be understood by intellect; (2) the fluent and changing, generating and perishing beings that can be comprehended by sense and opinion; and (3) matters that are neither the object of understanding nor sense. This distinction is accordingly classified by Aristotle under the study of theology, mathematics, and physics.[276]

As Berkeley sees it, one significant result of these ancient understandings of the system of the natural world is their notions that the system of nature is like an animal, with a governing spirit that generates and governs its perceptible phenomena.[277] This is

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[273] Ibid., pp. 18–22.
[274] *Siris*, in *Works V*, pp. 154–5; Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, in Idem., *Timaeus and Critias*, ed. Desmond Lee (London: Penguin Classics, 1977), pp. 20–34.
[275] *Siris*, in *Works V*, p. 125.
[276] Ibid., pp. 141–2.
[277] Ibid., pp. 129–32.

Berkeley's reinterpretation of the ancient theories of *anima mundi* as the necessary conclusion derived from one's reflections on the great chains of beings as informed by the general laws of nature. Reflections on perceived phenomena necessarily lead to one's understanding of their motion, which in turn directs one to having a notion of a spiritual being that is the cause of such motion. 'In this scale, each lower faculty is a step that leads to one above it. And the uppermost naturally leads to the Deity'. 'There runs a chain throughout the whole system of things. In this chain one link drags another. The meanest things are connected with the highest.'[278] Ultimately, reasoning on the chain of beings makes the general laws of nature sensible without the corpuscular hypothesis of Berkeley's contemporary natural philosophy.

Berkeley does not close *Siris* with this proof of the necessary conclusion of the being of the supreme, spiritual One from reflections on perceived phenoemena.[279] He reinforces the argument that these ancient arguments for the being of God are in fact in accordance with the genuine laws of nature by showing that the ancients appeared to have a notion, although an imperfect one, of the Trinitarian God. This notion is rendered possible by reflections on the necessity of 'Three Divine Hypostases' in order for one to have a good life; that is, 'Authority, Light, and Life'. For Berkeley, an analogical understanding shall make this notion of Trinity reasonable. In matters regarding administration, it is clear that 'there is Authority to establish, Law to direct, and Justice to execute'. The same principle can be abstracted in terms of the beings of (1) 'the source of all perfection', (2) 'the supreme Reason, order', and (3) the Spirit which quickens and inspires'. This shall be further clarified when one reflects on one's

[278] Ibid., p. 140.
[279] Ibid., pp. 155–7.

relationships to the divine being. 'We are sprung from the Father, irradiated or enlightened by the Son, and moved by the Spirit.'[280] In so doing, Berkeley is effectively arguing that the ancient notion of the One can be further characterised by its tripartite offices that renders it reasonable from reflection on natural phenomena.

IV

The analogy of administration and the holy Trinity has one further implication that resonates throughout the general argument of *Siris*. By suggesting that one can make sense of the general laws of nature about the being of a Trinitarian God from perceptible phenomena, Berkeley brings together the Platonic idea of the great chain of beings with Aristotle's argument about teleology in *De Anima*.[281] That the laws of nature are a series of rational discoveries of the being of God indicates that understanding such an order underpinning natural phenomena is of great importance to one's sense of living a good life in accordance with the will of God. *Siris* is thus a medical discourse in two senses. On the one hand, its proposition about ways in which tar-water can become an affordable, effective medicine for the British people presents a treatment of physiological disorder. On the other hand, its exposition of the being of God from corpuscular hypothesis and the laws of nature provides medication for intellectual illness tending to irreligiosity.

In this sense, Berkeley's intention in writing *Siris* is two-fold. Whilst tar-water's efficacy would successfully heal the mental and physical disorder that might endanger the stability of the British state, *Siris*'s arguments for the being of God shall effectively remove problems in modern natural philosophy that have become the ground of

[280] Ibid., pp. 161–2.
[281] Aristotle, *De Anima*, ed. Hugh Lawson-Tangred (London: Penguin Classics, 1986), pp. 217–21.

scepticism and atheism. This might be best summarised in Berkeley's own words:

> Naturalists, whose proper province it is to consider phenomena, experiments, mechanical organs and motions, principally regard the visible frame of things or corporeal world, supposing soul to be contained in body. And this hypothesis may be tolerated in physics, as it is not necessary in the arts of dialling or navigation to mention the true system or earth's motion. But those who, not content with sensible appearances, would penetrate into the real and true causes (the object of theology, metaphysics, or the *philosophia prima*), will rectify this error, and speak of the world as contained by the soul, and not the soul by the world.[282]

What *The Principles*, *Three Dialogues*, and *Siris* share is the idea that the general end of human knowledge is making sense of the being and the order of God. They independently yet inter-relatedly re-present Berkeley's argument for the reasonableness of the divine being. They also reinforce his argument that conceiving the divine being is natural to rational agency, as reason is a faculty installed by God for human beings to make sense of the divine will. This implies that the kind of knowledge which Berkeley criticised, and which we have reconstructed in the first chapter, is unnatural in the sense that its arguments and discoveries are intended to reject the existence of God. For Berkeley, this is not merely a philosophical mistake. It might have dangerous consequences because, by rejecting the being of God, it necessarily rejects the being and the legitimacy of the divine order, leading up to threatening the nature and the stability of a Protestant state. In fact, in Berkeley's view, the threat of this tenet of modern philosophy had been implemented, and the British state had already suffered from it. The proposal of tar-water as the universal panacea has a two-fold significance, being the cure for the illness of the individual and the British state. This kind of modern

[282] *Siris*, in *Works V*, p. 133.

philosophy constitutes an important tenet in Berkeley's conceptualisation of the art of free-thinking, or 'minute philosophy', whose danger is less in philosophical terms than in terms of its socio-political impacts. The remainder of this thesis shall explore the complexity of Berkeley's reformulation of this art of free-thinking, and shall reconstruct how he respond to these challenges of religious heterodoxy.

Part II. Dialectic of the Heterodox Enlightenment

Ch. III Theories of Progress and 'An Enlightened Age'

I

In the first part of this thesis, I have analysed how Berkeley contested the methodological problems of the natural philosophy of religiously heterodox thinkers. I also have argued that Berkeley saw in their philosophies a dangerous consequence that would threaten the stability of the existing, Protestant state. In the second part of this dissertation, I shall further discuss Berkeley's criticisms of the social consequences of what he construed as the heterodox enlightenment. The four chapters in this part examine four topics in the following order. Chapter III (this chapter) explores the context and the content of Berkeley's reconstruction and criticism of a religiously heterodox theory for 'an enlightened age'. After this chapter's analysis of Berkeley's criticism of the heterodox enlightenment's theories of social improvement, Chapter IV turns to recover Berkeley's own reflections on improving the socio-economic status of a Protestant society without challenging its constitutional and institutional, as well as political and ecclesiastical, stability. That Berkeley thought British society needed improvement indicates that, for him, this society had certain problems. Chapter V studies Berkeley's diagnosis of the socio-political problems of the British state and argues that, in Berkeley's view, the so-called 'commercial society' question – the socio-political instability caused by sudden commercialisation – was actually the consequence of a religious crisis occasioned by the spread of the heterodox enlightenment. Finally, Chapter VI delineates Berkeley's construction of a genuine, theological, if not eschatological, Enlightenment contra the heterodox Enlightenment. It also shows the way in which Berkeley's conception of this genuine Enlightenment

resonated with Augustine's accounts of the Genesis narrative, as well as how this vision of Enlightenment was shared by late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century thinkers across the line of confessional identities.

This chapter, being the first chapter of Berkeley's dialectic of the heterodox enlightenment, analyses ways in which Berkeley conceptualised religiously heterodox theories of human progress in terms of a heterodox notion of 'an enlightened age'. It demonstrates how Berkeley, through the reconstruction of free-thinkers' writings about human nature and the prosperity of political society, reorganises and systematises disparate arguments into a discourse of free-thinking, which understands 'an enlightened age' in terms of the state of affairs after the emancipation of rational agency from political and ecclesiastical oppression. In Berkeley's view, the meaning of free-thinking indicates that this emancipation itself takes the form of the struggle of rationality against superstition. This means that, for him, the heterodox enlightenment effectively argues for dismantling the constitutional and institutional establishments that constitute the existing Protestant state. It is implications like this that led to Berkeley's criticism of free-thinkers' theories of progress. And, by reconstructing Berkeley's criticism of such theories, this chapter argues for an alternative way of rethinking questions of commercial society in Enlightenment political thought. That is the theme of the two subsequent chapters.

Before he was known as a philosopher in the British idealism tradition, as that is the case in Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy, Berkeley was more commonly

known to his eighteenth-century contemporaries as the Good Bishop of Cloyne.[283] The character of 'good' is no less telling in its depiction of Berkeley's personality and his philanthropic concern with social reform than its indication of an underlying, yet surprisingly understudied, element of Berkeley's argument for a better human condition. The definition of 'goodness' has a central position in Berkeley's writings against his conception of the heterodox Enlightenment, particularly on themes such as the right to rebel against rulers who have failed their original contract and, more importantly, the relationship between virtue and human progress. For Berkeley, the problem in these heterodox theories of progress is, fundamentally, their misunderstanding of the meaning of 'goodness'.

This chapter uses *Alciphron*, a philosophical dialogue that considers different forms of religiously heterodox accounts of human progress, to elaborate the relation between Berkeley's emphasis on clarifying the meaning of 'goodness' and the ways in which he refutes his opponents and makes his arguments. This must be explored in further detail. Two prominent cases used when defining the meaning of 'goodness' comes in to shape the foundation of Berkeley's refutations of religious heterodoxy.

The first case is his early sermon on passive obedience initiated by John Locke's theory of rebellion in the *Second Treatise of Government*, where a series of enquiries contesting the meaning of 'goodness' demonstrates that following the design of God, and hence the natural course of human history, is the only way through which human beings can arrive at the state of 'goodness' in its true sense. An action of rebellion

[283] For a recent account of eighteenth-century receptions of Berkeley's works and the relationships between his being called a 'good' bishop and the broader intellectual landscape of Enlightenment Europe, see: Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, pp. 1–13.

originated by discontents of the suffering of present 'good' therefore marks an abruption of God's design, and a break with natural law at the expense of future 'good'.[284] Here Berkeley's contention is that the implicit message delivered in rebellion depicts the triumph of human judgements on good and evil that 'are entirely guided by impressions of sense' over the absolute goodness as intended by God. As such, rebellion is a moment of disobedience defying not only the rule of profane rulers but the divine will. More fatal to this Lockean theory of rebellion is that such an act, motivated by the present discontent in pursuit of a sort of future good, can never achieve its end, provided that the 'good' being pursued here is nothing more than the private 'good' of a certain group of people, and that the action of pursuing is in its nature a rejection of the eternal 'goodness' as intended by providence.[285]

The premise of this language against the theory of resistance is an idea of society in which human beings are sanctioned by the law of nature to be part of political societies, and that rebellion against the established political society is an act against natural law. The nuance in the striking similarity of this idea of society to the Hobbesian language of social formation should be carefully distinguished. Berkeley did not share Hobbes's counter-Aristotelian language for human unsociability, nor did he appreciate a conjectural state of nature where an original contract is required to be consented to by each person with another for society to emerge. More notably, Berkeley's definition of natural law is by no means in common with that of the Hobbesian.

The differences between Berkeley's and the Hobbesian understanding of natural law solely lay in their conceptions of the nature of obligation; to put it more specifically,

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[284] This argument will be further explored in Chapter V.
[285] *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*,, pp. 19–24,.

why do people follow the law, or why cannot people break the law? Berkeley's law of nature in *Passive Obedience* is a commonplace Christian understanding of the term. The law of nature is a set of universal principles initiated by the creator of the natural world, hence all created beings are obliged to obey. Berkeley's law of nature is therefore the divine ordinance whence all forms of civic laws derived.[286] The foundation of Berkeley's theory of non-resistance and political obligation is rooted in this religious interpretation of the origin of jurisprudence, natural and civic. Hobbes, on the other hand, understood the efficacy of jurisprudence, both natural and civic, in terms of the power of the authority. For Hobbes, the reason of obligation in natural law is not because of God's being the creator of the world but due to God's being omnipotent. Following this understanding is the Hobbesian theory of obligation and non-resistance based on the principle of self-preservation, the explanation that has generated the criticism that he attributes moral and civic duties to self-interest.[287]

The other case for the importance of the definition of 'goodness' to Berkeley's criticism of religious heterodoxy occurs in the first dialogue of *Alciphron*, when Euphranor – the figure who represents Berkeley's image of a fine reader who is interested in learning and has sufficient resources which allow one to develop sound opinions of the world yet is not familiar with the discoveries of the new science – encounters the theory of progress of the free-thinkers Alciphron and Lysicles; the occasion when Euphranor encounters the concept of an 'enlightened age', whose meaning is informed by a teleological understanding of rationality as a way to 'beat

[286] Ibid., pp. 17–25.

[287] For a summary of the intellectual relationships between Christian and Hobbesian theories of political obligation and their understandings of the law of nature, see: Quentin Skinner, 'The context of Hobbes's theory of political obligation', in Idem., *Visions of Politics, Vol. III: Hobbes and Civil Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 264–286.

down the bulwarks of all tyranny, secular or ecclesiastical, break the fetters and chains of our countrymen, and restore the original inherent rights, liberties, and prerogatives of mankind'.[288] Through the mouth of Alciphron, Berkeley reconstructs this language of 'enlightenment' from his understanding of religiously heterodox thinkers who, as Berkeley saw it, encourage the freedom to use reason in order to challenge authorities, both ecclesiastical and secular.

For Berkeley, as demonstrated in the successive dialogues in *Alciphron*, this meaning of 'enlightenment' is constituted by the early eighteenth-century discourse of human progress in which the relations between the meaning of 'goodness', the nature of moral virtue, and the teachings of Christianity are seriously contested. Amongst his contemporaries, two of the most prominent writers providing antithetical theories of human progress were Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury, and Bernard Mandeville, a physician from the Dutch Republic; although to Berkeley and his clerical contemporaries such as Daniel Waterland and William Warburton, the two seeming antagonists had less dissimilar intentions. Despite the fact that their arguments might have suggested otherwise to a lay readership, their writings are designed to deconstruct the links between Christian morality, human virtue, and social betterment.

Berkeley was not against the idea of progress; he was sceptical about the claim of this heterodox programme, as Euphranor and Crito, Berkeley's spokesman in *Alciphron*, question and counter-argue. Berkeley's scepticism is first expressed in questioning the principles that have been lauded by 'modern' free-thinkers, arguing that those are merely distorted principles of the 'ancients' such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero,

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[288] Berkeley, *Alciphron*, in *Works VIII*, pp. 36–8, 44–6.

and Seneca.[289] Moreover, by calling modern free-thinkers 'minute philosophers', a term deployed by Cicero not without a sense of cynicism to denote the group of thinkers who had reduced human reason and sentiments to animal instincts, Berkeley rhetorically indicates that the intellectual achievements celebrated by the moderns are in fact identifiable with those whose opinions have been ridiculed by the ancients such as Cicero and Seneca.[290]

Fundamental to Berkeley's scepticism is his distrust in the meanings of 'goodness' contained in the heterodox enlightenment, including 'goodness' as expressed by Mandeville that is a synonym of worldly pleasures, and that in Shaftesbury's writings as an aesthetic admiration of natural harmony, order, and rationality. Both articulations for human progress reject Christian teachings of moral virtue as a guide for better lives; in fact, both treat it as the cause of superstition that has been the obstruction of improvement. For Berkeley, by rejecting the link between 'goodness' and Christianity, these languages equally deny the idea that the meaning of 'goodness' derives from God's will; hence both definitions of 'goodness' are made by human judgements whose authors intend to replace the natural, divine, and true 'goodness' with their own understandings of the word, a reiteration of the argument in *Passive Obedience*.

These occasions when defining the meaning of 'goodness' comes to shape Berkeley's criticism of free-thinkers deserve a pause for us to reflect on recent commentators' accounts of Berkeley's philosophy. Modern commentators on Berkeley's intellectual life have tended to divide it into two phases: a philosophical, 'heroic' period when the most philosophically important works of Berkeley's

[289] Ibid., pp. 73–5.
[290] Ibid., pp. 47–8.

philosophy were written and published, and a religious period when Berkeley was preoccupied with subjects that were less related to his philosophical greatness, such as his attempts to establish a college in North America and his writings concerning social improvements. For these commentators, the point of departure between Berkeley the philosopher and Berkeley the good bishop was around 1713, when Berkeley moved from Dublin to London for better publishing opportunities.[291] Such a framework of dividing Berkeley is not particularly illuminating for understanding or interpreting Berkeley's life and writings. Part of the main attempt of the present thesis is to argue against this interpretive structure by suggesting that Berkeley has at least two consistent aims, amongst many others, throughout his intellectual life: the first is his defence of Christianity against the challenges of religiously heterodox writers; the second being his efforts to reconstruct an Augustinian language of Enlightenment for his commercialised contemporaries in order to dismiss the heterodox Enlightenment. What this and the subsequent chapters are doing can be taken as Berkeley's dialectics of the heterodox Enlightenment.

The present chapter, being the first of the chapters on Berkeley's vindication for Christianity against the religiously heterodox Enlightenment, focuses on the ways in which Berkeley's discussions on the meaning of 'goodness' shape a vital aspect of his criticism of free-thinkers, as the cases of *Passive Obedience* and *Alciphron* have briefly shown. The chapter elaborates the relations of the definition of 'goodness' to the

[291] The classical interpretation of Berkeley's life can be seen in Berman, *Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*. A more recent attempt to 'recover' Berkeley from the overwhelming philosophical interpretations is offered by Breuninger, whose monograph is also based on this framework that discusses Berkeley's intellectual activities in the division between philosopher and bishop. See: Breuninger, *Recovering Berkeley*, *passim*. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that one most recent review article also adopts the same structure. See: Livesey, 'Berkeley, Ireland and eighteenth-century intellectual history', *Modern Intellectual History* 12:2 (2015), pp. 453–73.

languages of progress in the case of *Alciphron*. *Alciphron* is, to borrow from J. G. A. Pocock, 'a plurality of narratives' to which Berkeley, his other writings, and his understanding of the religiously heterodox arguments regarding 'goodness', virtue, and progress shape a series of discursive contexts.[292] Such a plurality in *Alciphron* makes it an ideal case for studying the way in which the meaning of 'goodness' informs Berkeley's criticism of religiously heterodox theories.

II

In 1732, Berkeley returned from Rhode Island to London, ending his disappointing staying in North America, along with his plan to establish a Christian utopia there. Berkeley's plan to establish a college in Bermuda was a response to the decay of morality and religious piety in the old world. Like many of his contemporaries in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, such as Joseph Addison, Sir Richard Steele, and Jonathan Swift, Berkeley was concerned about the social disorder that was linked with excessive consumption of luxuries and the unlimited pursuits of material enjoyments; these concerns form the central theme of his essays published in *The Guardian*. The concerns shared by Berkeley and his friends were particularly reinforced after the collapse of what has been called 'the South Sea Bubble' in 1720. Berkeley's 1721 *Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, arguing that the immoral pursuits of pleasures would corrupt not only the individual but, ultimately, the state, was an immediate response to this socio-economic crisis, which was to be the central topic of a series of debates over the relation of virtue to commercial society, and

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[292] Pocock used 'a plurality of narratives' when describing Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. See: J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. VI: Barbarism: Triumph in the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 14–15.

that of political corruption to moral decadence.[293]

It was in this context that Berkeley turned his eyes to the new world. What Berkeley saw in establishing a college in Bermuda was the promotion of arts, science, and Christian knowledge amongst both English youth and 'American Savages' in the colony; these were two groups of people that were separated from the corrupted society of Britain due to geographical distance. In fact, as we are informed by Berkeley's correspondence with Lord Percival, two of the main reasons why Bermuda was the ideal place for him to practice his programme are, on the one hand, that '[t]he inhabitants have the greatest simplicity of manners' that were not yet polluted by the customs of commercial society and, on the other, that '[t]he Islands of Bermuda produce no one enriching commodity'. The latter avoids the development of luxury trade in the colony that is to turn its inhabitants into traders who are permanently in pursuit of their economic benefits.[294] This programme, with the promised support of Sir Robert Walpole, never came close to fruition; Berkeley stayed in Rhode Island throughout his time in North America. It was in this time of disappointment that Berkeley started to work on *Alciphron*, one of his most celebrated work in his lifetime, consisting of a set of seven philosophical dialogues contesting a wide range discourses on subjects including language, nature, progress, truth, virtue, and Christianity.[295]

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[293] Berkeley, *An Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, in *Works IV*, pp. 69-85. For a recent account of the debates over the South Sea Bubble, see: William Deringer, 'Calculated Values: The Politics and Epistemology of Economic Numbers in Britain, 1688-1738', Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, (Princeton, 2012), pp. 224–80.

[294] Berkeley to Lord Percival, Letter 117, in *Correspondence*, pp.185–7.

[295] Scholarship has tended to interpret *Alciphron* as the text that most comprehensively presents Berkeley's religious thoughts. However, this chapter is more sympathetic to Peter Walmsley's suggestion that *Alciphron* is not Berkeley's attempt to build his own system of religious philosophy; it is more a vindication of a series of orthodox Christian discourses. For the commonplace interpretations, see: David Berman, "Cognitive theology and emotive mysteries in Berkeley's Alciphron", in Idem. ed., *George Berkeley Alciphron in Focus* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 200–13; Idem., *Berkeley*, pp. 134-166;

By the time Berkeley started to work on *Alciphron*, it was already clear to him that his Bermuda plan was about to fail. The failure of the plan is itself a telling incident informing the broader climate of hostility against the Church of England in the first decades of the eighteenth century, when the cry of 'The Church in Danger', which appeared in the first decade after the revolution of 1688, still alarmed Berkeley and his contemporary Anglican clergy. To them, the 1720s seemed to be a decade when the Church was in severe crises, as the death of Queen Anne witnessed the rise of Walpole's Whig hegemony, and the election after the death of George I led to the parliament of 1727-1733 that 'recalled the Reformation Parliament of Henry VIII in its zeal to attack the stronghold of clerical privilege and abuse'.[296]

The crises felt by Anglican clergy are political in nature. As Stephen Taylor has well demonstrated, the Church of England suffered from the enmity of the House of Commons, which defeated bills that would have improved ministers' financial status, and petitions for parliamentary assistance in re-establishing local churches, such as the Gosport Chapel Bill in 1729 and the Ecclesiastical Courts Bill in 1733.[297] That the complexity of Church–Party relations in the first half of the eighteenth century should

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Stephen R. L. Clark, 'Berkeley on religion', in Winkler ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, pp. 369–404. For Walmsley's suggestion, see: Peter Walmsley, *The Rhetoric of Berkeley's Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 105–22.

[296] For a general account of the state of the Church of England after the revolution of 1688, see: John Walsh and Stephen Taylor, 'Introduction: The Church and Anglicanism in the "long" eighteenth century', in John Walsh, Colin Haydon, and Stephen Taylor eds., *The Church of England c. 1689-c. 1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1–64. For the Church–Parliament relations in the early decades of the eighteenth century and their relations to "The Church in Danger", see: Clyve Jones, 'Debates in the House of Lords on "The Church in Danger", 1705, and on Dr Sacheverell's impeachment, 1710', *The Historical Journal*, 19:03 (Sep., 1976): pp. 759–71; Geoffrey Holmes, 'Religion and party in late Stuart England', in Idem., *Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679-1742* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), pp. 181–215; Idem., 'The Sacheverell riots: The church and the crowd in early-eighteenth-century London', in Ibid., pp. 217–47. The quotation is from: Clark, *English Society*, p. 303.

[297] Stephen Taylor, "Whigs, Tories and Anticlericalism: Ecclesiastical Courts Legislation in 1733", *Parliamentary History*, 19:3 (2000): pp. 329–55.

not be reduced to a division of Whig anticlericalism and Tory Anglicanism has been well argued by Norman Sykes and Taylor.[298] However, one cannot deny the anti-clerical atmosphere in the Parliament either.

In addition to the failures of bills that would have improved the status of clergy, much of the pressure was felt through a series of attempts to diminish clerical welfare. The Pension Bill, first read in the Commons on the 2 February 1731, for example, passed the Commons 'with very little opposition', and only to be rejected by the Lords after causing concern to clergymen such as the bishop of Bangor, whose speech on the 3rd of March in the Lords opposing the bill was reported to be 'despising popular prejudices'.[299] The Bill was designed to prevent persons who received pensions from being elected as Member of the House of Commons. However, considering the great number of eighteenth-century clergymen whose incomes relied on patronage, the reduction of pensions would have effectively harmed the financial status of clergymen.[300] On the very next day, failing the bishop of Bangor's speech against the Bill, the Commons launched a motion for a bill to prevent the translation of bishops; an action that would only reinforce many clergymen's sense of parliamentary anti-clericalism.[301] The crises of the Church, in terms of parliamentary actions against it, did not end with the Parliament of 1727-1733. As Taylor noted, the Quakers Tithe Bill of 1736, which eventually broke the alliance of Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, with Sir Robert Walpole, was to a certain degree 'the culmination of anti-clerical initiatives of previous

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[298] Norman Sykes, *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Historical Association, 1930); Idem., *Church and State in England in the XVIIIth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), esp. pp. 41–91; Stephen Taylor, "Church and State in England in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: The Newcastle Years 1742-1762", unpublished Ph.D thesis (Cambridge, 1987).
[299] *Parliamentary History of England, Vol. VIII*, pp. 845–56.
[300] For a concise account on the incomes of clergymen, see: W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century 1680-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 113–43.
[301] *Parliamentary History of England, Vol. VIII*, pp. 857–8.

years'.[302]

Berkeley was well acquainted with these decades of crises. Before his sailing to Rhode Island, Lord Percival had warned Berkeley in 1723 of the political difficulty he might have encountered with his proposition for the establishment of a new church.[303] To Berkeley's disappointment, the warning of Percival was realised. In another letter to Berkeley after his settlement in Rhode Island, Percival informed him that the promised grant was unlikely to be paid, because his design 'seem[s] too great and good to be accomplished in an age where men love darkness better than the light, and nothing is considered but with a political view'.[304] However, it is worth noting that in his letter to Thomas Prior earlier in the year, Berkeley insists on staying in North America until the government's promise is met, for he saw himself executing 'a design addressed for by Parliament, and set[ting] on foot by his Majesty's royal charter'.[305]

The situation of the Church and clergymen did not improve after Berkeley's consecration as bishop of Cloyne in 1734. Gibson, in a letter to Berkeley informing him of the parliamentary attempt to repeal the Corporation and Test Acts, congratulates him on his 'good service to religion' that has delivered the Church from the troubles of 'professed infidels', whilst Gibson also complains that the clergymen are now facing problems caused by 'semi-infidels, who, under the title of Christians, are destroying the whole work of our redemption by Christ, and making Christianity little more than a system of morality'.[306] It is the dissenters to whom Gibson refers as

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[302] Stephen Taylor, "Sir Robert Walpole, the Church of England, and the Quakers Tithe Bill of 1736", *The Historical Journal*, 28:1 (Mar., 1985): pp. 51–77.

[303] Percival to Berkeley, Letter 119, in *Correspondence*, pp.189–90.

[304] Percival to Berkeley, Letter 206, in *Correspondence*, pp. 330–3.

[305] Berkeley to Prior, Letter 202, in *Correspondence*, pp. 323–5.

[306] Gibson to Berkeley, Letter 258, in *Correspondence*, pp. 390-391, quotation in p. 390.

'semi-infidels'.

Gibson's hatred towards infidels and dissenters was shared by Berkeley. For Berkeley, dissenters were much more pernicious than atheists, precisely due to their attempt to spread attacks on the Church under the pretence of being Christians. In Berkeley's eyes, the mask of liberal Anglicans has been a commonplace tool of disguise for many heterodox writers in order to avoid the accusation of atheism; both Shaftesbury and Mandeville have adopted this technique in their narratives. That the technique was successful is reflected in well-circulated books such as Arthur Bury's *The Naked Gospel*, published in 1691, and Mandeville's *Fable*. The circulation of heterodox texts troubled Berkeley, leading him to question the nature of people's interests in reading such anti-clerical accounts.[307] Berkeley's 1738 complaints to officials about the lack of actions in prohibiting these narratives from polluting people's minds is not unrelated to his concerns about the circulation of heterodox writings.[308]

For Berkeley, what is more devastating than passing themselves off as liberal Anglicans is these semi-infidels' uses of the knowledge discovered in the new science to diminish the principle of Christian ontology.[309] The teleological comments on the early eighteenth-century intellectual landscape that interpreted the development of materialist natural philosophy in terms of the programme of secularisation is a reduction with reasons. Early eighteenth-century free-thinkers did rely heavily on the materialist discourse when they came to challenge Christian principles of the natural world,

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[307] For an account on the competition in book markets between orthodox and heterodox writers, see: Brian Young, "Theological books from the Naked Gospel to Nemesis of Faith", in Isabel Rivers ed., *Books and Their Readers in 18th Century England, Volume 2: New Essays* (London: Continuum, 2003), pp. 79-104.

[308] Berkeley, *Discourse addressed to Magistrates*, in *Works VI*, pp. 201–22.

[309] This is the theme of the last two chapters of this thesis. Meanwhile, for a recent account on the complex relationship between natural philosophy and Christianity, see: Thomson, *Bodies of Thought*.

particularly through distinguishing religion from reason. Berkeley was irritated by such use of natural philosophy as a weapon diminishing the truth of Christianity. In one of his correspondences with the American Samuel Johnson during his stay in Rhode Island, he clarifies the nature of studying natural philosophy, arguing that the 'true use and end of natural philosophy is to explain the phenomena of nature, which is done by discovering the laws of nature, and reducing particular appearances to them', and that the discoveries of natural philosophy by no means 'hinder the admitting other causes [of natural phenomena] besides God'.[310]

It is unsurprising that shortly after *Alcriphron* was published in 1732, Berkeley launched his *Theory of Vision*, a treatise against the natural philosophical interpretation of the material world that dismisses the invisible occult forces, and *The Analyst*, a discourse disputing the proponent of rationality against Christianity, in 1733 and 1734 respectively. As we have seen in the first part of this thesis, this concern about the threats of using natural philosophy against Christianity had preoccupied Berkeley's mind since his early life in Dublin.

Such employment of the demonstration of argumentation is a significant form of narrative for persuasion in Berkeley's writings. In fact, an important way in which Berkeley attempts to persuade his readers is to show them how he reconstructs and ridicules his opponents' argumentations. *Alciphron* is one of the most prominent instances in which Berkeley employs such a strategy for persuasion. Its form of philosophical dialogue allows Berkeley to reconstruct a variety of themes of arguments of free-thinkers such as Anthony Collins, John Toland, Shaftesbury, and Mandeville,

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[310] Berkeley to Johnson, Letter 194, in *Correspondence*, pp. 301–5, quotation in p. 302.

and to refute their ways of arguing by interrogating the problems and the hidden messages in their arguments.

Amongst the topics being contested in *Alciphron*, the underlying subjects of debates are the theories of progress excluding the role of Christian moral principles, the uses of natural philosophy against the validity of Christian truth, and the vindication of Christian religion in general. These subjects must be explored in a further question: what is the meaning of 'goodness', for this is the question one has to ask oneself before venturing any theory for human betterment. The following sections, then, demonstrate the ways in which the meanings of 'goodness' in the heterodox theories of progress are contested in *Alciphron*.

III

Alciphron is a series of conversations between the free-thinkers (Alciphron and Lysicle), Berkeley's spokesman (Crito), and his ideal reader (Euphranor), with the figure of Dion as narrator who witnesses and records the dialogues. The series of debates in *Alciphron* begins with a language of Enlightenment that is based on the dichotomy of reason and religion.[311] The rhetoric is based on a division between priests, who are the 'greatest enemies' of humankind that keep 'mankind for ever in chains and darkness', and free-thinkers, who are the 'selected spirits' that intend to 'beat down the bulwarks of all tyranny, secular or ecclesiastical' in order to 'restore the original inherent rights, liberties, and prerogatives of mankind'.[312] The language therefore provides a portrait of the human condition in which the clergymen cage human beings in a state of servitude

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[311] This is a moment that most commentators have overlooked. However, Richard Bourke's intellectual biography of Edmund Burke is an exception. See: Bourke, *Empire and Revolution*, pp. 71–118.
[312] Berkeley, *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 35–7, 44–6.

through their moral teachings, cultural devices such as praying and attending services, and institutional authority, whereas free-thinkers are a group of patriots who are determined to renounce such a tyranny of superstition by encouraging rationality. This understanding of human society and the path to progress, as expressed by the figure of Alciphron, shocks other figures in the dialogue, notably Euphranor. The debates in *Alciphron* therefore embark upon contesting the dichotomy of reason and religion that shaped the heterodox language of progress.

Alciphron's speech is characterised by his insistence on the importance of clarifying common prejudices that have been instilled in human minds by customs and religious teachings. The ends of free-thinking can accordingly be summarised as the disenchantment with prejudices against rational thinking that will in turn remove slavery and superstition from human societies. Alciphron's own life experience is to be the case-study for showing how free-thinking can deliver one from religiously instilled prejudices, and turn one into an 'enlightened' person. He grew up in an Anglican family, and was taught to follow Anglican doctrines. Only when he became mature did he start to reflect upon the teachings of the Anglican Church. It was then, after reflecting upon his own life, that he discovered that his countrymen are 'instructed in religious matters before they can reason about them; and, consequently, that all such instruction is nothing else but filling the tender mind of a child with prejudices'. As he considered other Christian worlds, including the Catholic states, as well as Jewish communities, and the dissenter circles, he soon realised that such a use of religious doctrines as a way of governance is shared by all religious societies. Alciphron concludes that Christianity is nothing more than a political device, that Christian

doctrines are arts of governing, and that clergymen are political actors performing these political acts.[313]

Alciphron's understanding of religion reveals the ways in which Berkeley conceived the nature of the disputations between Christians and free-thinkers; it is a war over the definition of the relation of religion to human society and the history of human progress. Whilst heterodox discourse of progress sees all religions in human societies as a form of political invention intended for governance, Christian authors, such as Berkeley himself, argued that such an understanding is rooted in the rejection of Christianity as the true religion by putting Christianity alongside other religious cults that are invented by human minds, such as Islam, in their analyses of the relationship between religion and human progress. This heterodox contention goes on to suggest that religions are remote from human welfare. It is therefore unsurprising for us to find that Berkeley's primary task in combatting this discourse is to rebuild the relationship between the true religion and the history, as well as the future, of human betterment. It is important to note that the way in which Berkeley came to rebuild this relationship is not through contesting the validity of the heterodox arguments, as the figure of Crito explains: 'Their *truth* is not what I am now considering. The point at present is the *usefulness* of your principles'.[314] That Berkeley insisted on examining these heterodox philosophies through attaching them to empirical analyses of human societies reveals a significant aspect of Berkeley's attitude towards free-thinkers' philosophies. The arguments of these philosophers can be easily dismissed once a careful, pragmatic exploration of the real situation of human society is provided.

[313] Ibid., pp. 38–43., quotation in p. 6.
[314] Ibid., p. 107.

It was the usefulness of Mandeville's and Shaftesbury's theories of progress, amongst others, that Berkeley turned to examine. The relationship between Mandeville and Shaftesbury has commonly been depicted as that of enemies; Shaftesbury the protagonist of Stoic virtue and Mandeville the antagonist of it. This reception of their relationship by commentators is partly due to Mandeville's criticism of Shaftesbury's philosophy of politeness based on one's natural admiration for the beauty of virtue, which first appeared in his essay, 'A Search into the Nature of Society', in which he satirically praised Shaftesbury's confidence in the discovery of '*pulchrum* and *honestum* both in morality and the works of art and nature' as noble yet naïve imagination whose 'solidity… is inconsistent with our daily experience'.[315] Shaftesbury's position was to be vindicated by Francis Hutcheson, who was himself a critic of Mandeville's history of human progress that excludes moral philosophy and the theory of natural sociability.[316]

This way of contextualising Mandeville and Shaftesbury in the early eighteenth-century debates over moral philosophy in commercial society is a standard interpretation of their writings. However, the picture portrayed in this story lacks an important episode in contemporary debates, the role of Christianity in these philosophies of human society. This is perhaps understandable, given that the languages in which these philosophies were written are themselves an effective tool to diminish Christianity. In fact, this was the way in which Berkeley came to understand the nature of Mandeville's and Shaftesbury's writings. Regardless of their philosophical

[315] Bernard Mandeville, 'A Search into the Nature of Society', in Idem., *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits, Vol. I*, ed. F. B. Kaye (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), p. 324.

[316] A concise summary of the relationships between history of human prosperity, moral philosophy, and theories of sociability can be seen in: Istvan Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Adam Smith*, eds. Bela Kapossy and Michael Sonenscher (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2015), pp. 1–24.

differences, both authors attempted to create a language for human progress that casts off Christianity from the scene. For Berkeley, Shaftesbury did so by cutting off the link between virtue and Christian moral teachings, whereas Mandeville more blatantly denied the positive impacts of virtue on improving the human condition.

Berkeley's criticism of Mandeville begins with restating Mandeville's argument that what has been commonly called 'virtue' is simply 'a trick of statesmen' which is invented for the sake of governance instead of human well-being, and that the happiness and progress of humankind can be acquired and fully sustained once everyone's desires have been satisfied. In the opening paragraphs to the second dialogue in *Alciphron*, the figure of Lysicles – the figure to which Berkeley ascribes his understanding of Mandeville's arguments – reiterates some of Mandeville's cases in the first volume of the *Fable* in order fully to reconstruct Mandeville's theory of social progress and human well-being, to which Lysicles concludes:

> Look into common life; examine the pursuits of men: have a due respect for the consent of the world; and you will soon be convinced that riches alone are sufficient to make a nation flourishing and happy. Give them riches and they will make themselves happy, without that political invention, that trick of statesmen and philosophers, called virtue.[317]

Here Lysicles is summarising the arguments of Mandeville from Remark F to Remark N in the *Fable*, where the examples of drunkenness and card games are taken as cases for the idea that what has been called 'vices' can be helpful for improving economic status, and that, more importantly, it is the satisfactions brought by these 'vices' that generate one's sense of happiness.[318]

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[317] Berkeley, *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 80.
[318] Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees, Vol. I*, pp. 85–147.

Behind Mandeville's famous quote – 'The worst of all the multitude/ Did something for the common good' – is his definition of 'goodness' based on his physiological analysis of human physical and psychological necessity; that is to say, the meaning of 'goodness' should be conceived in terms of the benefit to human needs. Mandeville's physiology emphasised the interdependence between the mind and the body in the sense that the body's actions are generated by the mind's desires, whilst the latter's status is inevitably affected by the conditions of the former.[319] In fact, in one of his earliest English publications, a set of medical dialogues concerning mental illness that was published in 1711, Mandeville demonstrated how mental disorder is caused by ill treatments of physical needs.[320]

Derived from such a physiology is Mandeville's idea that physical pleasures content the mind's desires. It is this physiological foundation that leads Mandeville to conclude his essay on the nature of moral virtue, which was published in the 1714 edition of *Fable*, with the observation that 'it is impossible to judge of a man's performance, unless we are thoroughly acquainted with the principle and motive from which he acts'. What Mandeville was suggesting in this passage was that one's actions are generated by passions of the mind, and that only when the mental context to one's behaviour is fully conceived can we understand the nature of one's actions.[321] Such a physiology is the underlying element of Mandeville's definition of 'goodness', as well as his rejection of virtue's relations to social progress; although, somewhat surprisingly, the importance of this medical foundation of Mandeville's science of society is

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[319] Bernard Mandeville, *A Treatise of the Hypochondriack and Hysterick Passions, Vulgraly call'd the Hypo in Men and Vapours in Women; ... in Three Dialogues* (London, 1711), pp. 124–9.
[320] Ibid., pp. 147–9.
[321] Mandeville*, An Enquiry into the Origin of Moral Virtue*, in Idem., *Fable of the Bees, Vol. I*, p. 56.

undeservingly understudied.[322]

Mandeville's physiological conception of human mental and physical activity is of significant importance to his visions of politics, jurisprudence, and moral philosophy in human society. All human actions are performed in pursuit of fulfilling what the mind desires, hence, to take but one example, what has commonly been praised as virtuous acts are in fact one's performance for accumulating reputation in one's community. This interpretation of human behaviours in terms of the 'self-love' principle, or *amour-propre*, is by no means an innovative insight of Mandeville. As historians have pointed out, he has learned and adapted this form of interpreting human actions from French Jansenists and Huguenots, notably Pierre Bayle.[323]

Six years after publishing the first volume of the *Fable*, Mandeville would advance this argument, in the second volume of the *Fable*, by providing a history of human society in terms of the history of the institutionalisation of 'self-love' activities.[324] However, this goes beyond the concerns of the present chapter. An important part of what Mandeville was doing in this way of interpreting human behaviour and its relation to 'virtue' is to argue that what has been seen as 'virtue' and morality is, physiologically speaking, of no difference to those actions that have been called 'vicious'. This argument allows Mandeville to venture that the distinction between 'virtue' and 'vices'

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[322] Harold J. Cook's 'Bernard Mandeville and the therapy of "the clever politician"', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60:1 (Jan., 1999): pp. 101–24 remains a rare exception. However, it is worth noting that Cook tracked Mandeville's intellectual origins back to his career as a medical student at Leiden, whilst John Robertson's work has forcefully argued for Mandeville's intellectual debts to Bayle, and that Mandeville's enterprise was initiated in his English context. See: Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, pp. 261–80.

[323] Thomas A. Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville: Virtue and Commerce in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 19–31; E. J. Hundert, *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 16–61.

[324] Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, pp. 270-280; Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or Private Vices, Publick Benefits, Vol. II*, ed. F. B. Kaye (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1988), pp. 194–357.

does not naturally exist; it is invented by a certain group of people, the 'skilful politicians', in order to maintain the form of social stability that best suits their interest. In other words, moral principles and, consequently, jurisprudence are nothing more than the institutionalised 'self-love' of the 'skilful politicians' who have implemented the prejudice against other 'self-love' behaviours by successfully establishing a regime of self-denial rigorism.[325]

This archaeology of the nature of 'virtue' cannot be achieved without Mandeville's re-definition of 'goodness'. The 'skilful politicians' have distorted the natural meaning of 'goodness' from what one considers to be good for oneself in terms of satisfying one's desires to what is in accordance with the 'virtue' that is helpful for maintaining social stability. 'Virtue' is therefore a definition of 'goodness' that marks the conquest of natural happiness by the heroism of self-denial. In this way, Mandeville was able to re-evaluate one of the most pre-dominant moral discourses in the eighteenth century, namely Stoicism.[326] The established notion of 'virtue' and moral principles, then, are nothing more than a set of behavioural codes generated by this new definition of 'goodness'. It is in this sense that Mandeville cast 'virtue' and morality as political devices, and that, as Lysicles summarised, human happiness can be achieved 'without that political invention, that trick of statesmen and philosophers, called virtue'.

What Berkeley saw Mandeville was suggesting, and, therefore, what he was criticising, is the implication that human beings can arrive at the state of true happiness without the present form of moral principles, political constitution, and religious

[325] Mandeville, 'Inquiry into moral virtue', in Idem., *Fable of the Bees, Vol. I*, pp. 45–7.
[326] Christopher Brook has demonstrated Mandeville's anti-Stoic position in the first edition of the *Fable*, noting the importance of such an attitude towards Stoicism to Mandeville's later criticism of Shaftesbury. See: Brook, *Philosophic Pride*, pp. 155–58.

institutions. In other words, what was dangerous to Berkeley in Mandeville's theory of human progress is the implication that human beings have to overthrow the present form of society in order to achieve real happiness, provided that the current form of social stability is sustained by sets of values that are invented by people who have misconceived the real meaning of 'goodness' and, hence, have misunderstood what is 'good'in human life. It is perhaps not surprising to find that Berkeley conceived of Mandeville's theory of progress as an attempt to renounce the ideological foundations of human society, particularly when Mandeville, as presented in Berkeley's reception, has noted that the prejudice against the true meaning of 'goodness' instilled by the 'skilful politicians' is so overwhelmingly predominant throughout human history that 'even some of the wisest among the ancients, who agreed with our sect [the free-thinkers] in denying a Providence and the Immortality of the Soul, had nevertheless the weakness to lie under the common prejudice, that vice was hurtful to societies of men'.[327]

It appeared to Berkeley that Mandeville was arguing for a theory of progress based on dismissing not only the established moral values in human society but the present society itself. As Crito and Euphranor observed at the end of the Second Dialogue, the intention of Mandeville is equal to, if not merely following, that of the Jesuits, whom Berkeley conceived to be Catholics sent by the Papacy to destroy Protestant societies and to bring them 'towards popery and slavery'.[328] The link between free-thinkers and the Jesuits is more rhetorical than actual, although Berkeley did think of some heterodox writers as 'dupes of the Jesuits'. Berkeley was fully aware of the fact that

[327] Berkeley, *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 65.
[328] Ibid., pp. 108–11.

Mandeville was not a Catholic; however, what he was implying was that both Mandeville and his fellow free-thinkers shared the Catholics' intention of dismantling present, Protestant social stability.

In his essay 'Of the refinement in the arts', David Hume identifies Mandeville's theory of progress and the debate that surrounded the relationship between virtue–vice and human refinement as a debate centring on 'a *philosophical* question, not a political one'. Hume's reason is that politics is an empirical science of governance based on the generalisation of human history. In this case, whatever the relationship between virtue and human progress is, it has gone beyond the capability of politics; a political question on this matter would be 'what is the best way of governing people's behaviours in order to improve human condition', whilst the question Mandeville was asking is 'what is the correct understanding of the relationship between virtue, vice, and progress'.[329] Hume's view that the nature of Mandeville's enquiry is philosophical was shared by his eighteenth-century contemporaries. Notwithstanding the differences in their ideas of human nature, both Adam Smith and Edmund Burke saw Mandeville's thoughts as a branch of moral philosophy informed by the anatomy of human nature. Their responses to and criticisms of Mandeville are accordingly developed through the similar anatomy of the origin of passions in the human mind.[330] Smith's and Burke's discussions on moral sentiments were in turn inspired by Francis Hutcheson, whose *Inquiry* argues against Mandeville's thesis by adopting the Shaftesburian language of

[329] David Hume, *Of Refinement in the Arts*, in Idem., *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1987), pp. 268–80, quotation in p. 280. Idem., 'That politics may be reduced to a science', in Ibid., pp. 14–31.

[330] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, eds. D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982), pp. 306–14; Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, in Idem., *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Vol. 1: The Early Writings*, eds. T. O. McLoughlin, James T. Boulton, and William B. Todd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), esp. pp. 210-229. Bourke, *Empire and Revolution*, pp. 119–43.

sociability that explains human sociability in the light of people's 'Sense of Beauty and Harmony'.[331]

Berkeley's position is somewhat distant from Hutcheson, Hume, Smith, and Burke. Berkeley might have taken Mandeville's theory for 'private vices, public benefits' as the result of his flawed logic. By the end of the Second Dialogue, Lysicles, Mandeville's spokesman, accepts nearly all of the empirical conclusions for the link between virtue and happiness presented by Euphranor and Crito that are in accordance with common human sense, except the conclusion that the Mandevillian theory built on the misunderstanding of these pre-conditions is wrong.[332] Berkeley's strategy was to demonstrate that Mandeville's theory is only true in its system, which is remote from daily human experiences, and hence is useless for improvement in reality. Notwithstanding Berkeley's attitude towards Mandeville's theory of progress, he was certainly concerned about the implication as well as the impact of Mandeville's thought, as noted by Crito:

> The force of their reasoning is not what alarms: their contempt of laws and government is alarming: their application to the young and ignorant is dangerous.[333]

What struck Berkeley was Mandeville's implication that what is 'good' for human beings means the destruction of the existing moral system that has constructed and supported the present society; preventing this idea from being spread in Ireland was Berkeley's intention in delivering his *Discourse Addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority*.

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331 Hutcheson, *Inquiry into Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, pp. 19–27, quotation in p 26.
332 Berkeley, *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 100–11.
333 Ibid., p. 96.

Berkeley's concern, then, was political. The most alarming problem in Mandeville's theory is not his proposition that vices are beneficial to human progress, but his misinterpretation of the relationship between virtue and human society. In this case, Berkeley's criticism of Mandeville is strikingly similar to William Warburton's. Like Berkeley, Warburton turned to ridicule Mandeville's implication that 'Vice is absolutely necessary for a rich and powerful society'.[334] For Warburton, Mandeville failed to grasp the meaning of 'necessary', hence his arguments also failed to provide the solid ground for the maxim 'private vices, public benefits'. This is best demonstrated by the fact that Mandeville denied the idea that virtue can be beneficial to human betterment. Mandeville's rejection of virtue in turn suggested his lack of consideration of the complex mechanism of human society in which both virtue and vices are vital components. Such lack of consideration, as Warburton saw it, was less a result of Mandeville's insufficient capability in reasoning than his intended design. Mandeville has dismissed the foundation of the present moral system in order to introduce his theory in the *Fable*. This seemed to Warburton an indication of Mandeville's intention behind his disturbing words: he was aiming at spreading the words for the destruction of Christian moral principles as well as Christian society.[335]

Berkeley shared Warburton's notion that Mandeville had underestimated the complexity of human society. Yet Berkeley went beyond Warburton in discerning the danger of Mandeville's discourse:

> You must know that vice and virtue, being opposite and contradictory principles, both working at once in a state, will produce contrary effects, which

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[334] William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated, on the Principles of a Religious Deist... etc.* (London, 1738), p. 80.
[335] Ibid., pp. 81–6.

> intestine discord must needs tend to the dissolution and ruin of the whole. But it is the design of our minute philosophers, by making men wicked upon principle, a thing unknown to the ancients, so to weaken and destroy the force of virtue that its effects shall not be felt in the public.[336]

In other words, Mandeville's system dismisses the balance between virtue and vices, which will in turn dismantle society. Berkeley was reminding his readers that not only was Mandeville's intention aiming at destructing social stability; even if his design was to be fulfilled, it would lead to the ruin of any prosperous community.[337]

A theory of progress informed by the definition of 'goodness' based on 'self-love' happiness is intentionally fatal to human preservation, not to mention human welfare. Having demonstrated this, Berkeley turned to explore a more subtle and implicit heterodox theory of progress; a theory which suggests that virtue is the keystone for human betterment; however, the true meaning of virtue does not reside in religious principles. Quite the contrary, moral virtue as defined by institutionalised religions only encourages superstition, decays the virtue implanted in human nature, and turns society into regression.

IV

The Third Dialogue of *Alciphron* begins with Alciphron's contesting the true meaning of virtue that excludes the Christian understanding of the concept. Alciphron does so by explaining Christian virtue construed in the Lucretian language that religion is a product of fear and that, therefore, the virtue taught by any sect of religions is a by-product of the same sentiment. The explanation allows him to argue that Christian virtue, being based on 'the notion of a Providence, and future state of rewards and

[336] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 76.
[337] Ibid., pp. 76-78.

punishments', can 'never produce a true and genuine virtue', since its teaching intends for one 'to be virtuous through fear or hope'. To understand the true meaning of virtue, Alciphron suggests, one has to 'go to the bottom of things, to analyse virtue into its first principles, and fix a scheme of duty on its true basis'; a scheme showing that 'there is an Idea of Beauty natural to the mind of man'.[338]

This separation of Christian moral principle and virtue is Berkeley's reconstruction of Shaftesbury's argument on virtue and human betterment. Shaftesbury's idea of virtue is informed by his criticism of the established Christian discourse of moral virtue. In his letter to John Locke in 1694 and the preface to his edition of Benjamin Whichcote's sermons in 1698, Shaftesbury explains the established moral principles in terms of the pedagogical project of the priestcraft.[339] The problem with this Christian idea of virtue lies in its distinction of virtue and vices in terms of future reward and punishment. His task in *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, a treatise written at roughly the same time as he published Whichcote's sermons, is to clarify the relations of virtue to religion, as well as to elaborate the true nature of virtue.[340]

Notwithstanding Shaftesbury's intention to reconstruct the 'true' understanding of virtue by contesting its relations to religion, for Berkeley, the underlying component of Shaftesbury's project is to replace the Christian idea of virtue with his rediscovery of the Stoic moral discourse. What concerned Berkeley was less the Stoic discourse itself than

[338] Ibid., pp. 116-117.
[339] Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politeness in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 31-34.
[340] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue or Merit*, in Idem., *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, ed. Lawrence E. Klein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 163.

the way in which Shaftesbury had adapted it in order to dismiss Christian morality. It appeared to Berkeley that 'modern' Stoicism, of which Shaftesbury is a significant exponent, had in many aspects distorted the writings of not only 'ancient' Stoicism, but, more generally, 'ancient philosophers'.[341] What Berkeley was doing in suggesting that Shaftesbury had misconceived the philosophies of the ancients is to destroy the fundamental structure of Shaftesbury's works, which are largely based on his readings of the ancient philosophies.

The philosophers Berkeley took as cases for his criticism include Aristotle and the Stoics. Aristotle's ethics, Berkeley thought, imply that the moral evaluation of one being good or evil is determined by the judgement of gods that is known in the form of future rewards.[342] Here Berkeley was relying on the Book X of *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle argues that the gods 'find enjoyment in what is best and most closely related to them – namely, intellect – and to reward those who like and honour this most'.[343] As for the Stoics, Berkeley turned to Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, arguing that Shaftesbury's Stoicism is a distorted interpretation of ancient Stoic philosophy. If Shaftesbury had 'adopt[ed] the whole principles of that sect, admitting their notions of good and evil, their celebrated apathy, and, in one word, setting up for complete Stoics', he would have found that the ancient Stoics by no means 'resolved every motive to a virtuous life into the sole beauty of virtue as to endeavour to destroy the belief of the immortality of the soul and a distributive Providence'.[344]

Berkeley's intention here is more than dismissing Shaftesbury's idea that human

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[341] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 60–4.
[342] Ibid., pp. 132-135.
[343] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 196-199, quotation in p. 199.
[344] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 135–6.

beings can be virtuous simply because of our natural admiration for the beauty of virtue; he was demonstrating that what Shaftesbury favoured is a theory of virtue that aims at destroying the belief of afterlife, and a divine being of ultimate good whose distribution of reward and punishment, as well as judgement of good and evil, is the foundation of secular morality. In other words, Berkeley was accusing Shaftesbury of destroying not only the Christian principles of moral virtue but, more damagingly, the system of justice that even the pagan philosophers, whose words Shaftesbury took to be sources for his heterodox theory of virtue, believed to be true.

Berkeley's distinction of Shaftesbury's idea of 'goodness' and theory of virtue from that of Greco-Roman Stoic philosophers is significant in two senses: first of all, this indicates Berkeley's attitude towards the relationship between the ancients and the moderns, as well as ancient and modern philosophies, that is of vital importance to our understanding of Berkeley's intellectual life; second, it brings to light what Berkeley conceived to be the danger of modern philosophy. For the Greco-Roman philosophers with whom Berkeley and his contemporaries were familiar, notably Seneca, virtue signifies behaviours towards the good end based on the employment of rationality in distinguishing good from evil.[345] According to this principle, human actions having good results without one's use of reason in making judgements prior to acting cannot be defined virtuous; they are merely the contingent results of self-interest.[346] Being good is by no means an equivalent to being virtuous; the former is part of the natural inclinations towards self-enjoyment that resides in the nature of all animals, whilst the

[345] Seneca, *Selected Philosophical Letters*, trans. Brad Inwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 33–9.
[346] Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 21–5

latter requires rational judgments, which only rational animals are capable of making.[347]

Shaftesbury endorsed this principle. As noted in his *Enquiry Concerning Virtue*, virtue 'depend[s] on a knowledge of right and wrong on a use of reason sufficient to secure a right application of the [natural] affections'.[348] Shaftesbury's adoption of the Stoic idea of virtue is reinforced by his *Miscellaneous Reflections*, a series of essays written as a supplementary to the publication of his earlier writings in 1711.[349] Having Epictetus's *Discourses* and Marcus Aurelius's *Meditations* in mind, Shaftesbury reiterates his idea that 'the highest good or happiness must depend on right opinion and the highest misery be derived from wrong'.[350]

This, however, is not what gave rise to Berkeley's criticism. In fact, Berkeley admired plenty of Stoic principles, particularly the ways in which the Stoics had come to conceptualise the relationship between human beings, the natural world, and the divine.[351] Berkeley's criticism was generated by Shaftesbury's 'imagination' of embracing 'a stoical enthusiasm about the beauty of virtue', and, more importantly, his attempts to replace Christianity with this crooked reception of the Stoic idea of virtue.[352]

What differentiates Shaftesbury from the ancient Stoic philosophy, and what concerned Berkeley, is his understanding of the relations of natural affections to virtue presented in his re-definition of 'goodness'. For the ancient Stoics, being virtuous requires constant checks and reflections on one's actions, as proposed by Epictetus,

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[347] E.g. Epictetus, *Epictetus His Morals with Simplicius His Comment*, trans. George Stanhope (London, 1700, 2nd edition), pp. 90–4; Seneca, *Selected Philosophical Letters*, pp. 25–32.
[348] Shaftesbury, *Enquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Idem., *Characteristics*, p. 175.
[349] Idem., *Miscellaneous Reflections on the Preceding Treatises and Other Critical Subjects*, in Ibid., pp.339–483.
[350] Ibid., pp. 419-433, quotation in p. 422.
[351] See the previous chapter.
[352] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 132–133.

whose *Treatises* on moral principles were translated into English in 1694.[353] Underlying this idea of virtue is the conception of human reason being part of the divine order; the human capacity for rational thinking is an indirect evidence of the existence of a universal, omnipotent divine spirit. Rationality therefore resembles an inward divinity over natural affections; acting virtuously, then, is the triumph of the divine over the human.[354] Although this view of rationality was criticised by Augustine of Hippo, whose criticism in turn became an important source for early modern reflections on Stoic narratives, Berkeley was not against Greco-Roman Stoics.[355] For him, their conception of human intelligence in the system of divine order can be fully explained in Christian terms.

In Berkeley's view, Shaftesbury had altered the ancient Stoic conception of 'goodness' in order to introduce the foundation of his theory of progress. Shaftesbury re-defined the meaning of 'goodness' in terms of one's relations to one's belonging community. Being good means that one's activities are beneficial to maintaining or improving the order of the public.[356] The nuance of differences between Greco-Roman's and Shaftesbury's ideas of 'goodness' and virtue should be carefully distinguished. For ancient Stoics, the subject of living virtuously is the agent's well-being; the common good is not the end of virtuous life.[357] Whereas for Shaftesbury, virtue is one's 'love of a common city, community or country' that is the extension of human beings' natural admiration for the 'goodness' of communal harmony and order that

[353] Epictetus, *Epictetus his morals*, pp. 360–4.
[354] Seneca, *Selected Philosophical Letters*, pp. 10–14.
[355] Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*, pp. 1–11, 101–26.
[356] Shaftesbury, *Enquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Idem., *Characteristics*, pp. 167–72.
[357] Seneca, *Selected Philosophical Letters*, pp. 59–64.

'lead to the good of the public'.[358] Virtue, in this sense, is not the triumph of reason over natural affections. It denotes the agent's use of reason for understanding the natural meaning of 'goodness', and, afterwards, directing one's natural affections towards the betterment of the public good.[359]

So far Berkeley would not have been alerted by Shaftesbury's discourse. Shaftesbury's link of one's natural admiration for the beauty of social order with virtue provides the ground for him to ridicule Thomas Hobbes's account on the state of nature. Contending that human beings are naturally social and benevolent, Shaftesbury argued that a pre-society state of nature is merely a conjectural invention that can never exist.[360] In Berkeley's view, the way in which Shaftesbury came to dismiss Hobbes's natural unsociability by proclaiming human beings' natural admiration for communal order was fine, albeit inadequate, for Shaftesbury had left out the role of the deity in explaining human sociability.

What concerned Berkeley was Shaftesbury's answer to Pierre Bayle's question in *Pensées sur la Comète*, whose English translation Shaftesbury owned, about whether 'it is impossible for an atheist to be virtuous or share any real degree of honesty or merit'; the question that originated Shaftesbury's *Enquiry*.[361] Like Bayle, Shaftesbury vindicated the idea that atheists can live virtuously and prosperously.[362] For Shaftesbury, virtue is achievable for all rational animals, whether they are religious or not. Religion is a design for helping one make moral judgement. It can, for the time being, polish virtue;

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[358] Shaftesbury, *The Moralist, a Philosophical Rhapsody...etc.*, in *Characteristics*, esp. pp. 279–83; Idem., *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Ibid., pp, 193–200, quotation in p. 196.
[359] Ibid., pp. 191–2.
[360] Idem., *The Moralist*, in Ibid., pp. 284–8.
[361] Idem., *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Ibid., *Characteristics*, pp. 163–4.
[362] Bayle, *Thoughts on a Comet*, pp. 200-228; Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Idem., *Characteristics*, pp. 189–91.

however, religion itself cannot generate virtue, nor one's sense of morality.

This implies that irreligion does not decay virtue, and, moreover, irreligious minds are capable of being virtuous; for Berkeley, this indicates Shaftesbury's atheist moral philosophy.[363] Such clarification of the relationship between religion and virtue preoccupies Shaftesbury's moral writings, as the theme recurs in the *Inquiry*, the *Moralists,* and the *Miscellaneous Reflections*. Embarking from this notion of the universality of virtue, Shaftesbury ventured two arguments regarding Christianity that are the main subject of Berkeley's refutation in the Third Dialogue. The first argument states that the true nature of virtue is distinct from Christian morality based on the concept of future rewards, whilst the other suggests that Christianity does not improve human society as much as many of Shaftesbury's contemporaries had imagined.

The Third Dialogue is the shortest part of *Alciphron*. It might have been prompted by Berkeley's thinking that Shaftesbury's discourse can be challenged once his idea of virtue and 'goodness' is dismissed. Accordingly, much of Berkeley's criticism in it emphasised Shaftesbury's concept of virtue, particularly the ways in which he had distanced Christianity from it. What Berkeley thought to be problematic is Shaftesbury's implication that the Christian principle of future rewards and punishments has destroyed the true meaning of 'virtue'[364]. For Shaftesbury, the Christian conception of a future state in which one's behaviours in this life will be rewarded or punished had turned reasoning about actions from rational judgement of the moral nature of behaviours to calculating the consequences of them. In other words,

[363] Ibid., pp. 177–200.

[364] Berkeley's concern was to resonate in the Scottish debates of moral philosophy, through the works and lectures of Francis Hutcheson and the interests of the members of the Rankenian Club in Edinburgh. See: Thomas Ahnert, *The Moral Culture of the Scottish Enlightenment, 1690-1805* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 34–5.

the relation of virtue and rationality to 'good' behaviours is replaced by utilitarian speculation. Christian moral principles, therefore, are 'building a future state on the ruins of virtue'.[365]

In Berkeley's view, what Shaftesbury was implying is that Christian moral teachings must be dismissed in order to recover the true meaning and principles of virtue. This implication is reinforced by Shaftesbury's idea that Christian morality had subjugated human beings through the introduction of the concept of a deity 'enforcing obedience to his absolute will by particular rewards and punishments' that had in turn allowed the priestcraft to govern human beings by their 'hope merely of reward or fear of punishment'.[366] For Shaftesbury, the history of human Christianisation is a history of decline towards servitude.

It appeared to Shaftesbury that there is no history of progress to be written insofar as Christianity still reigns over human conception of moral virtue. He conceived of human history as a series of histories about the ways in which the rise of the priestcraft and religions eclipse the achievements of human progress; Ancient Egypt, Rome, and Christendom are prominent cases.[367] The antidote to this course of corruption is to improve our moral judgement, and to reflect on the problems of Christianity. This is to be done by the improvement of our capacity for rational thinking, which, Shaftesbury argued, can be advanced by polishing our taste and knowledge in literacy. This historical reflection on Christianity, virtue, and human progress first appeared in Shaftesbury's early introduction to Whichcote's sermons, whilst the summary account

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[365] Shaftesbury, *The Moralist*, in Ibid., pp. 269–72, quotation in p. 271.
[366] Idem., *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Ibid., p. 183.
[367] Idem., *Miscellany II*, in Idem., *Characteristics*, pp. 355–65.

is provided in the *Miscellaneous Reflections*.[368]

Berkeley's criticism of this discourse is twofold, comprising an examination of the relationship between Christianity and virtue, and that of the role of Christianity in human history of progress. As it has been shown, he turned to examine the pre-Christian philosophies in the Third Dialogue, in order to combat Shaftesbury's idea that Christian morality had eclipsed the true meaning of virtue discovered by Greco-Roman philosophers. Moreover, Berkeley reversed Bayle's thesis by arguing that the admiration for beauty innately exists in the religious and irreligious minds. But this natural admiration for beauty can by no means evoke the sense of virtue, for being virtuous means one's obedience to the law of nature – the divine law of God's will; that is to say, only those with right religion can live virtuously.[369] The message is a reiteration of the argument in *Passive Obedience*.[370] Yet it also reveals Berkeley's conception of the '*oeconomy*' of the natural world in which beings exist in accordance with the principles of the divine.[371] Twelve years later, Berkeley would return to this subject in *Siris*, where he would reveal the similarities between his conception of the system of natural world and that of ancient philosophers.

Berkeley's refutation is not only a philosophical exposition of the problematic of Shaftesbury's writings. Like his criticism of Mandeville, he posed a pragmatic question regarding Shaftesbury's narrative: Is Shaftesbury's idea of virtue good for human progress? Here, as in almost all of Berkeley's written works, Berkeley's concern was

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[368] Idem., 'The preface' to Benjamin Whichcot, *Selected Sermons of Dr. Whichcot in Two Parts* (London, 1698); Idem., *Miscellany II*, in *Characteristics*, pp. 368–9; Idem., *Miscellany V*, in Ibid., pp. 434–83.
[369] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 128–32.
[370] *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*, esp. pp. 17–26.
[371] Berkeley's distinction between economy and œconomy will be further elaborated in the next chapter.

with the prosperity of British nation. Notwithstanding the problems of Shaftesbury's reasoning, his writings can in no way advance the happiness of British people. This, Berkeley lamented, is due to the characteristics of his countrymen:

> ... there being in the make of an English mind a certain gloom and eagerness, which carries to the sad extreme – religion to fanaticism; free-thinking to atheism; liberty to rebellion: nor should we venture to be governed by taste, even in matters of less consequence.[372]

The passage is significant in its own right, for it is itself an ironic account of the projects of heterodox philosophers including Mandeville and Shaftesbury. But for our purpose here, what Berkeley was saying literally is that the improvement of the British nation cannot be relied on the optimistic confidence in one's natural admiration for virtue; it requires the guidance of Christianity. Meanwhile, the inconsistency between my point about Berkeley's emphasis of the British nation and his emphasis on the English mind leads to a question about Berkeley's understanding of the characters of the British state, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Third Dialogue ends with Crito's confirmation of Shaftesbury's intention to replace Christian morality with his version of Stoic virtue.[373] In this case, Berkeley demonstrated the striking resemblance between Mandeville's and Shaftesbury's theories of progress. They both argued that, for human beings to progress, Christianity has to be destroyed so that human beings can be delivered from the absolute reign of Christian morality. Moreover, this deliverance can only be achieved by replacing Christianity with their moral philosophies that are informed by their ideas of 'goodness'.

V

[372] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 131–2.
[373] Ibid., pp. 139-140.

Berkeley's response to Shaftesbury's historical reflection on Christianity and human progress appears in the Fifth Dialogue, where he portrays a brief history of human suffering in parallel with the history of Christendom. The brief account of these dual histories reveals the evident fact that Christianity had gradually enlightened human beings from a state of 'darkness, ignorance, and rudeness' that was full of factions generated by self-interested passions.[374] Underlying this historical account is Berkeley's conception that:

> one great mark of the truth of Christianity is, in my mind, its tendency to do good, which seems the north-star to conduct our judgment in moral matters, and in all things of a practical nature; moral or practical truths being ever connected with universal benefit.[375]

Here Berkeley clarifies the nature of Christianity and emphasises the idea that Christianity's intention 'to do good' is directly related to 'universal benefit'. In other words, Christians' is the true meaning of 'goodness'.

Berkeley highlights that the Christian meaning of 'goodness' is what God intended to be 'good', and summarises that Christianity's tendency for good end is a direction towards the true 'goodness'. In this way, Berkeley turns the history of Christianisation into the trajectory of human progress, as Crito concludes the Fifth Dialogue with the confirmation that '[u]nder the Christian religion this nation hath been greatly improved. From a sort of savages, we have grown civil, polite, and learned. We have made a decent and noble figure both at home and abroad'.[376] In the Fifth Dialogue, Berkeley re-establishes the link between Christian idea of 'goodness' and the theory of progress. But more importantly, such reconstruction allows Berkeley to further argue that

[374] Ibid., pp. 185–207.
[375] Ibid., p. 178.
[376] Ibid., p. 217.

Christianity is the only form of natural religion, since it is responsible for promoting the principles of God that constitute the laws of the natural world.[377]

What Berkeley intended to do in the Fifth Dialogue was to launch a more general criticism of the broader heterodox literature that embarked on refuting the heterodox revisions of the ecclesiastical histories as a form of challenging the truth of Christianity. This is not an uncommon strategy. Daniel Waterland, when responding to Mathew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*, had noted that Tindal's account of the origin of Christianity was indebted to Shaftsbury's historical reflection on the relation of religion to the rise of the priestcraft; he therefore turned to explore ancient Egyptian religions, as well as the Egyptian origin of Judaism, in order to refute Shaftesbury's and Tindal's attacks on Christianity.[378]

At the centre of Berkeley's criticism is his vindication of the idea that Christianity's notion of 'goodness' is the true meaning of 'goodness', and that Christian intention towards good end is the natural course for human betterment. He did so in order to dismiss two of the most influential heterodox accounts of human progress. In so doing, Berkeley entered into what historians have come to term 'the eighteenth-century debates' over commerce, virtue, and human progress. J. G. A. Pocock has provided an erudite account of the ways in which the rise of commerce challenged the established discourse of political virtue that was based on the Machiavellian language of 'manhood' (*Virtù*).[379] Since Pocock's monumental work, vast amounts of literature have appeared

[377] Ibid., pp. 205–10.
[378] Daniel Waterland, *Scripture Vindicated: In Answer to a Book Entitled, Christianity as Old as the Creation, Part I*, in Idem., *The Works of the Rev. Daniel Waterland, Vol. VI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1823), pp. 52–69.
[379] J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 462–505.

following the line of his argument, explaining the eighteenth-century debates on human progress in terms of the dilemma between the improvement of economic status and the corruption of civic virtue.[380] It was the late Istvan Hont who threw new light on the subject.[381]

Hont has cast the early eighteenth-century debates in terms of two inter-related yet independent themes: the debate over the mode of economic mechanism that is most suitable for human happiness, and the way in which luxurious consumption can be 'tamed' so as to be helpful for improving the human condition without damaging social stability. He has forcefully argued that these commercial society debates had at least two faces: an 'ancient debate' on the social consequences of luxury in the light of 'Christian and republican moral rigorism' — a debate that is 'increasingly outdate[d]' — and a 'modern debate' whose emphasis is searches 'for a political and moral accommodation of luxury that would yield a positive answer to questions of social stability, population growth, and the misery of the working classes'.[382]

A significant part of Hont's many contributions to our understanding of eighteenth-century intellectual history is his interpretation of contemporary debates on commerce and theories of progress in terms of what we come to know as 'political thought'. One prominent instance is his Carlyle Lectures at Oxford, in which he argued that Adam Smith's and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's views on moral sentiments, histories of

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[380] Malcolm Jack's *Corruption & Progress: The Eighteenth-Century Debate* (New York: AMS Press, 1989) is a standard interpretation. For a more sophisticate reconstruction of the ways in which the meaning of 'virtue' was transformed in early eighteenth-century political language, see: Shelley Burtt, *Virtue Transformed: Political Argument in England, 1688-1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ***passim***.
[381] A historiographical account of this is in: Richard Whatmore, *What is Intellectual History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), pp. 75–80.
[382] Istvan Hont, 'The early Enlightenment debate on commerce and luxury', in Mark Goldie and Robert Wokler eds., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 377–418.

civil society and jurisprudence, and theories for human progress together form an interesting case for comparison.[383] Hont's historiographical argument is that we can improve our understanding of these eighteenth-century debates once we can appreciate the fact that many of these debates on commerce are less about the ancient dilemma of Christian morality or Republican communal spirit than the modern 'visions of politics in commercial society'. However, as this chapter has attempted to show, cleric-minded thinkers' response to eighteenth-century theories of progress by examining their moral principles remains an important discourse in contemporary debates.

In criticising the heterodox theory of progress, Berkeley dismissed free-thinkers' idea of 'this enlightened age', and provided his own view of progress by linking it with the Christian meaning of 'goodness'. It seemd to Berkeley that Shaftesbury's and Mandeville's enterprises have the same persona; theirs are philosophers' attempts to replace the divine design of natural course with human speculations. What Berkeley intended to do in combatting their arguments is to vindicate the concept of 'progress' that he considered to be based on the genuine knowledge that is 'good' for human betterment. In order to fully explore Berkeley's conception of 'progress' and its meaning in the course of human history, his criticism of the heterodox language of progress must be read in the light of a further generalised question: are moderns more progressive than ancients?

This is a complex question, and Berkeley's answers to it vary. For Berkeley, without doubt, his contemporaries were enjoying a better social-economic condition than their ancestors; however, such a progress in terms of living standards is more

[383] Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, *passim*.

closely related to the institutionalisation of Christian religion than the encouragement of free-thinking.[384] When it comes to the case of intellectual development, Berkeley has an ambivalent answer. He was sceptical about his contemporary free-thinkers' claims that moderns in 'this enlightened age' had surpassed the 'ancient authors' who wrote in 'dead languages'. Moderns are commonly deceived by their pride and the introduction of new techniques, which turns out to carry their enquiries away from the easily conceivable truth; on the contrary, ancient wisdom is worthy of much more admiration for its simplicity in enquiry that arrives at the truth in purity.[385]

Berkeley's scepticism of the moderns was informed by his concern about the condition of modern society, the problem of which could only be remedied by a timely reconstruction of Christian principles as to dismiss the growing irreligiosity. The next two chapters explore the ways in which Berkeley came to articulate questions about national prosperity and social stability, and their relationship to commercial society. They argue that a careful reconstruction of the theological perspective of the 'visions of politics in commercial society' in the case of Berkeley's reflections can contribute to eighteenth-century intellectual history and the historiographical conception of 'Enlightenment'.

[384] Fragments of Berkeley's thoughts on Christian sociability and social stability appear in his early essays in *The Guardian*. See for example: *The Bond of Society*, in *Works VII*, pp. 225–8.
[385] This attitude would be stressed in *Siris*. Again, an early account appears in one of the essay in *The Guardian*. See: *Minute Philosophers*, in Ibid., pp. 206–10.

Ch. IV *The Querist* and the Improvement of Political Society

I

The Querist was Berkeley's plan for human flourishing. After his criticism of free-thinkers' theories of progress and their vision of 'an enlightened age', *The Querist* can be taken as a text in which he attempts to guide the reader's reflection on matters that were closely linked to the improvement of human society. *The Querist* was therefore a challenge to free-thinkers' minute philosophies, as Berkeley asks: 'Whether the Subject of Free-thinking in Religion be not exhausted? And whether it be not high Time for our Free-thinkers, to turn their Thoughts to the Improvement of their Country?' (Q279, 1735) This query implies a message that free-thinkers' contention of the use of reason as a critique of Christianity is unable to introduce pragmatic improvement. It is the use of reason in reflections on practical matters that plays a significant part in achieving national prosperity. In fact, that is the end of rational speculation. The 'habit of reflexion' as 'obtained by speculative sciences' shall be 'use[d] in practical affairs'. (Q197) The annotated questions that constitute *The Querist* should be taken as the practice of Berkeley's attempt to put his intended readers into a position to reflect on the practical.

This chapter analyses the relationship of this understanding of reason to Berkeley's plan of social improvement in *The Querist*. It argues that the genre which Berkeley adopted to write *The Querist* indicates his contention that political society can only prosper under the condition of its inhabitants' use of reason in diagnosing social problems, and suggests that at the bottom of such a plan lie three inter-related conceptions that Berkeley intended to contest: the nature of wealth, the management of

wealth, and the problem of poverty. The tripartite foundation of the queries gives rise to questions about the value of money, the erection of a national bank, the meaning of trade, the problem of Irish Catholicism, and Anglo–Irish relationship. By crystallising the relationship of this foundation to the themes of *The Querist*, this chapter also challenges recent interpretations of *The Querist*. The chapter has another contention. Taking *The Querist* as a text for social improvement through the self-realisation of rational agency is to reconsider Enlightenment in two senses. Historically, it provides a vision of human progress that is opposite to the free-thinkers' claim of 'an enlightened age' that was ridiculed in *Alciphron*. Meanwhile, it revisits historians' attempt to interpret *The Querist* in the context of Enlightenment political thought that is in turn shaped by the historiography.

II

Historians' recent interest in putting Berkeley's social and economic writings in the context of commercial society exemplifies the way in which historiographical conception shapes one's interpretation of historical text. Commercial society has become a significant theme in the history of Enlightenment political thought. It has been rendered in terms of the eighteenth-century conceptualisations of the way in which political society can be modified in order to accommodate increasing commercial activities, so as to improve the human condition.[386] This question about commercial society was occasioned by the emerging phenomenon of commercial activities that had challenged the classical formulation of principles regarding the

[386] Hont, *Politics in Commercial Society*, pp. 3–8.

stability and prosperity of political society.[387] Discourses surrounding the question were commonly articulated in four ways: the criticism of the danger that was imposed by the material consequence of commercial activities on the mental health of citizens, which would in turn threaten the stability of political society;[388] the concern over financial calamity that was caused by institutional and financial misconduct, which would give rise to constitutional problems;[389] the caution regarding military activity that was accompanied by commercial competition, which would put small states or nations into an anxious position against empires;[390] and the natural history of political society that conjectured the temporal perspective of the relationship of the development of political society to commercial activities, which provided a theoretical framework for reflection on current socio-political questions.[391]

These aspects of Enlightenment political thought correspond to historians' conception of commercial society in terms of eighteenth-century articulations of human flourishing. Such a conception commonly emphasises the rise of political economy as a relatively new form of enquiry into the relationship of the anatomy of human nature to the theorems of social progress. In other words, historians' conception of commercial society is a tripartite conception. It entails the relations between commercial society as a novel social phenomenon, political economy as an enquiry into this phenomenon, and

[387] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Ch. 6.
[388] Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Ch. 6; and István Hont, 'The early Enlightenment debate on commerce and luxury', in Goldie and Wokler ed., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, pp. 377–418.
[389] Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge*, Ch. 2; Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, Ch. 4; and Bourke*, Empire and Revolution*, Ch. 7 and 10.
[390] Richard Whatmore, *Against War and Empire: Geneva, Britain, and France in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); and Ian McDaniel, *Adam Ferguson in the Scottish Enlightenment: The Roman Past and Europe's Future* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).
[391] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*, Ch. 1; and Idem., *Politics in Commercial Society*, Ch. 3 and 4.

visions of human flourishing as informed by such an enquiry. This historiographical reconstruction reveals the fact that political economy occupies a central place in historians' approaches to Enlightenment political thought.

It is in this historiographical context that scholars have come to interpret Berkeley's *The Querist* as his engagement with Enlightenment debates on the prosperity of political society. The text has been taken either as an Irish experience of the broader European Enlightenment, or as a statement of genuine concern about the welfare of the Irish nation; both interpretations have argued that the text was a significant case for the Irish Enlightenment.[392] These interpretations are based on the claim that *The Querist* was a text of political economy, with the historiographical conception that it was part of Enlightenment social discourse. Whilst the historiographical conception is informed by recent works on Enlightenment political thought, the claim has its own history that can be traced back to the eighteenth century.

The Querist was published in the form of queries, comprising a series of questions regarding the improvement of conditions in Ireland. Published in three parts from 1735 to 1737, it contained 895 questions in the first edition. These were reduced to 595 when the last edition appeared in 1750. One year after the publication of the last edition, two publishers in Glasgow, Robert and Andrew Foulis, decided to incorporate *The Querist* in a corpus of texts that was intended to promote 'the knowledge of trade and manufactures' in Scottish universities. These texts included John Law's *Money and Trade Consider'd*, John Gee's *Trade and Navigation of Great Britain* and Sir Josiah

[392] Michael Brown, 'Was there an Irish Enlightenment? The case of the Anglicans', in Richard Butterwick ed., *SVEC: Peripheries of the Enlightenment* (2008, Jan.), pp. 49-63; Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, pp. 127–35; Michael Brown, *The Irish Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 16–18.

Child's *Brief Observations concerning Trade and the Interests of Money.* The publishers claimed that these were 'some of the most remarkable books' of political economy, and that *The Querist* was a text that had 'so just and extensive a view of the true sources of wealth and happiness to a country, so many valuable hints for improving the necessary, the useful, and the ornamental arts'.[393] Works being published in this Foulis' canon of British political economy were mentioned by Adam Smith in his *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, and David Hume held a copy of the Foulis' edition of *The Querist.*[394]

The Querist's reputation as a political economy text could also be seen in the nineteenth century. In 1871, William Stanley Jevons published his *The Theory of Political Economy* that was intended to challenge the assumption of 'the Science of Political Economy as having already acquired a nearly perfect from'.[395] *The Theory* quotes *The Querist*'s questions about the relationship of labour to industry as concluding remark to Jevon's reflection on 'Balance between Need and Labour'.[396] Similarly, the patriotic Isaac Butt openly acknowledged *The Querist* as an inspiration for his attempt to search for 'the true principles of political economy' that 'would dictate to a State to take care of the health and strength of its people as so much valuable property' in his *The Irish Querist*, published in 1867.[397]

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[393] Robert Foulis and Andrew Foulis, 'The printers to the reader', in George Berkeley, *The Querist, or Several Queries Proposed to the Consideration of the Public* (Glasgow, 1751).

[394] 'Index of Authorities' in Adam Smith, *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, eds. R. L. Meek, D. D. Raphael, and P. G. Stein (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982), pp. 591-96; and David F. Norton and Mary J. Norton, *The David Hume Library* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 1996), p. 75. Ian Simpson Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) p. 141; and Hont, 'The "Rich country-Poor country" debate in the Scottish Enlightenment', in his *Jealousy of Trade*, p. 291.

[395] W. Stanley Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy* (London: Macmillan and co., 1871), pp. v–xi.

[396] Ibid., pp. 174–8.

[397] Isaac Butt, *The Irish Querist: A Series of Questions Proposed for the Consideration of All Who Desire to Solve the Problem of Ireland's Social Condition* (Dublin, 1867), pp. 33–5.

But, as this chapter argues, one needs to look beyond this 'Irish' interpretation so as to recover the significance of what Berkeley was doing in and with *The Querist*, particularly when one comes to examine the relationship of *The Querist* to Berkeley's idea of human flourishing; the relationship that underlies the recent scholarly attempts to place Berkeley in Enlightenment historiography. That *The Querist* was intended for social improvement is without question. But was political economy, in the sense of the four approaches to commercial society that I have laid out at the beginning of this section, the only approach to achieving this end? Given that Berkeley did not produce any answer to the queries, one has to pose questions on the way in which Berkeley arranged the text in order to reconstruct his plan of improving Ireland. This requires one to interrogate the order – both sequential and thematic – of the queries and the intended interlocutors to whom such order would be meaningful.

The Querist was occasioned by Ireland's economic condition in the first half of the eighteenth century. Eighteenth-century Ireland was a large agricultural economy, whose trade with other nations heavily depended on the exports of its agricultural products, as well as that of its animal husbandry, most prominently the export of woollen cloth. The trade was seriously damaged by the Woollen Act of 1699, which forbade Ireland from exporting its woollen goods.[398] Ireland experienced further damage in the 1720s and 1730s, suffering a series of poor harvests from 1726 to 1728 that led to the famine during 1728–1729.[399] The famine generated attempts by Irish men of letters, including Berkeley, to resolve the country's misery. As one recent study

[398] S. J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland 1630-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 211–12.
[399] Ibid., pp. 344–6.

has shown, *The Querist* was amongst a tide of the so called 'improving literature' published by members of the Dublin Society in the 1720s and 1730s, such as Sir John Browne's *Seasonable Remarks on Trade* (1728), Thomas Prior's *List of the Absentees of Ireland* (1729), and David Bindon's translation of Jean-François Melon's *Essai Politique sur le Commerce* (1738).[400] Still more recently, Daniel Carey has discerned the similarity of intention between *The Querist* and Jonathan Swift's *Drapier's Letters*, and suggested that *The Querist* was in many senses a more 'imaginative solution' to Ireland's economic problems, despite the fact that it had 'failed to gain support' from the officials, as had Berkeley's Bermuda project.[401]

These historiographical accounts situate *The Querist* in the historical background of Ireland's economy and the Irish literati's responses, and argue that Berkeley had the same intention as members of the Dublin Society. This means that *The Querist* was genuinely an 'economic' writing whose primary concern was Ireland's economic difficulty; Carey's parallel between Berkeley and Swift is a useful case. As the following sections argue, Berkeley certainly shared concerns and interests with Swift, and juxtaposing two leading literary figures in the eighteenth-century Church of Ireland might gain critical insights for the interpretion of early eighteenth-century Irish intellectual history. Notwithstanding this, an arbitrary contextualisation of the text without careful assessment of the author's intention might end up with being a kind of historical generalisation that is at the expense of particular text's historicity, strictly in the

[400] Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, pp. 123–35. James Livesey, 'A kingdom of cosmopolitan improvers: the Dublin Society, 1731-1798', in Koen Stapelbroek and Jani Marjanen eds., *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century: Patriotic Reform in Europe and North America* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 52–72, esp. pp. 62–7.

[401] Daniel Carey, 'Intellectual history: William King to Edmund Burke', in Richard Bourke and Ian McBride eds., *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), esp. pp. 207–8.

sense of the meaning of historical text as asserted by its author under the historical circumstance in which it was produced. As we have seen, what underlies much of the present contextualisation is a stratum of historians' knowledge of the historical background of Ireland's economy and the historiographical conception of commercial society that leads to labelling *The Querist* as an 'economic' work.[402]

The Querist is by no means an 'economic' writing in the sense of a treatise with well-constructed arguments for improving economic condition. Its genre hardly leaves any space for Berkeley to construct a full argument on a specific subject. One has to appreciate its genre of queries in order to understand what Berkeley intended to do in the text. What did Berkeley think about the form of queries? Why did he present his reflections in this manner? The query form had appeared in works preceding *The Querist*. Berkeley closes his criticism of free-thinkers in the *Analyst* with a series of queries. The queries in the *Analyst* were designed 'to the end that you [the infidel mathematician] may more clearly comprehend the force and design of the foregoing remarks, and pursue them still farther in your own meditations'.[403] *The Querist* had a similar intention. Berkeley's adoption of the form was a direct engagement with his readers, whose 'own meditations' he aimed to provoke. In this sense, many of the famous arguments in *The Querist*, such as the establishment of a national bank, the promotion of a closed economy, and the publication of paper money, were ideas that Berkeley intended to plant in his readers' minds.

What appeared to Berkeley to be the root of Ireland's misery was the

[402] It is worth noting that Jessop and Luce's edition of Berkeley's oeuvre has The Querist under the title of '*The Querist* and other writings on economics'. See: *Works IV*.
[403] *The Analyst*, in *Works IV*, pp. 95–6.

misconception on the part of the Irish understanding of the nature of improvement. The subjects of his reflections that underlay the queries can be pinned down to the following themes: the nature of wealth, the reflections on which contain a reassessment of the nature of money and trade; the management of wealth, queries on which emphasise the relationship of government to its economy, particularly the role of national bank as a possible solution to the present condition; and the problems of the Irish poor, including their Catholicism and perceived indolence.

These three themes underlie the majority of queries in *The Querist*, but the text is characterised by the conversation between the implicit presence of the querist and the absence of his intended interlocutor. *The Querist* sets an unprecedented stage for philosophical dialogue on which the role of the figure whose arguments are to be refuted and who is to be put into a position to cultivate further reflections is transferred to the mind of the reader. In so doing, Berkeley effectively changed the relationship between the text and its reader. Unlike those of his previous works, the reader of *The Querist* ceases to be a spectator watching Berkeley's arguments unfold and is now the subject of the querist's interrogation. As Peter Walmsley has brilliantly argued, this interrogative approach involves the reader in 'the greatest fault of Senecan prose' that 'nettles the reader out of a complacent reading.'[404]

An examination of the order in which the themes of queries are arranged reveals the fact that at the bottom of these queries lies Berkeley's plan for improving Ireland. The first query of each part states explicitly that the remedy for Ireland's illness is in the hand of the Irish: 'Whether there ever was, is, or will be an industrious Nation

[404] Walmsley, *The Rhetoric of Berkeley*, p. 154.

poor, or an idle, rich?' (Q1, 1735); 'Whether there be any Country in Christendom more capable of Improvement than Ireland?' (Q1, 1736); and 'Whether the Fable of Hercules and the Carter ever suited any Nation, like this Nation or Ireland?' (Q1, 1737) Admittedly, in the queries that follow these opening questions, there are plenty of moments of discontinuity between the thematic order that I have suggested. For example, the reader of the second part will find themselves being exposed to two questions regarding the evil of wretchedness of the gentry in between the queries about the nature of wealth and that about the national bank. (Q20-21, 1736) But such discontinuity often serves as introductory device that leads to deeper contemplation on a specific issue. The queries on the gentry's wretchedness imply the problem of misgoverning wealth by the few that is caused by their misconception of wealth (Q22, 1736). The reader then finds themselves being asked about whether a well-regulated national bank would be a more suitable solution to the problem. (Q23–26, 1736)

Several cases can be taken from *The Querist*, and most of them can be taken as cases for the argument that Berkeley did attempt to maintain thematic order in his text. Notwithstanding this, the reader might encounter one significant difficulty that would lead them to challenge the order of the text: the recurrence of similar themes throughout three parts.[405] This is caused by the relations between three parts of the text, and I suggest that the difficulty can be solved if one takes the first part as laying out the thematic structure for *The Querist*, and the second and the third parts as providing further queries for specific themes.

This suggestion has two bases. A comparison between the queries being omitted

[405] For an argument that Berkeley intended not to provide sequential order for the queries, see: Walmsley, *The Rhetoric of Berkeley*, p. 141–2.

from the last edition of the texts in Berkeley's lifetime shows that the first part has the least omitted queries, whereas the second and the third parts each have more than 120 queries being omitted; this is about one-third of the total queries of the first part, and about four-fifth of the omitted queries.[406] In addition to this quantitative observation, a careful look at the second and the third parts of *The Querist* shows that the two parts overwhelmingly emphasise the subjects regarding metallic and paper money, international trade, and the national bank. All of these subjects can be accommodated in the thematic structure of the first part, whose queries are divided into two groups: the nature of wealth and its management, and the concept of the 'national' that leads to a series of queries on the religious division of Ireland. Exploring *The Querist* with this structural order in mind might shed light on the present understanding of what Berkeley is doing in/with the text, the interpretation of which has been dominated by historiographical assumptions. Meanwhile, this examination reveals *The Querist*'s deep engagement with the reader, and this brings in the question of readership.

Readership is an important question that may determine a commentator's interpretation of the text, particularly those published in the eighteenth century. That was the time which Jürgen Habermas took to be the beginning of the first structural transformation of the 'public sphere' – one of the prominent metropolitan and social phenomena in a gradually commercialised society that allows the exchanges of ideas and words to flourish, and, to a large degree, defines the meaning of the literary world

[406] Berkeley confided in the advertisement of this last edition that 'the face of things is somewhat changed' since 1735, and that he had omitted 'many [queries], particularly of those relating to the sketch or plan of a national bank'. The reason for this omission was frustration, as these omitted queries 'may be time enough to take again in hand when the public shall seem disposed to make use of such an expedient.' It might be ventured that this indicates that, in 1750, Berkeley considered *The Querist* as yet another failure of his social practices, like that in Rhode Island. But more materials are needed for one to reconstruct Berkeley's mindset in bringing the three parts of *The Querist* into one. For quotations, see: *The Querist*, in *Works VI*, p. 103.

itself.[407] What is significant about this is that members of the republic of letters at the time were conscious about the relationships between readership, reputation, and the ways in which public opinion could be shaped by and employed through the power of words.[408] The continuing efforts of Mandeville in expanding on and re-publishing the ideas that he first expressed in the poem *The Grumbling Hive: or, Knaves turn'd Honest* is but one famous case of contemporary men of letters' pursuit of literary success in a metropolis like London.

Berkeley's conception of his engagement with his readers can be seen in one of the query: 'Whether reflexion in the better sort might not soon remedy our evils? And whether our real defect be not a wrong way of thinking' (Q48)? This is the question that underlies what Berkeley is doing in *The Querist*. It leads to the idea that the means for Irish improvement coincide with correct understanding of the nature of improvement. This is confirmed in one of his public letters, published in the *Dublin Newsletter* upon the publication of the third part of *The Querist*. In it, Berkeley explicitly writes: '*The Querist* indeed only puts questions and offers hints, not presuming to direct the wisdom of the legislature'.[409] The letter ends with Berkeley's confirmation that 'the aim of the *Querist*' is to prompt his readers into thinking about the most suitable way to promote public welfare. Unlike what most interpretations have asserted, it is clear that, for Berkeley, the difficulty of improving Ireland was not launching an economic

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[407] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 89–95.
[408] Brian Cowan, 'Mr. Spectator and the coffeehouse public sphere', *American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37:3 (Spring, 2004), pp. 345–66.
[409] Berkeley to A.B., Letter 264, *Correspondence*, pp. 400–3.

reformation plan; rather, it was 'bridging men to a right sense of the public weal'.[410]

Who, then, were the readers Berkeley had in mind? This is actually two questions in one: whose 'right sense of the public weal' did Berkeley intend to inspire, and whose right conception did Berkeley consider to be of vital importance to the remedy for Ireland? The conventional argument highlights that Berkeley 'may be seen as an "Irish economic nationalist" who sought to improve the Irish economy against that of Britain', and that he saw *The Querist* 'as aimed at the general welfare of the nation'.[411] But these arguments are misleading. This emphasis on Berkeley's 'Irishness' is informed by modern commentators' preoccupation with constructing an Irish intellectual tradition.[412] But Berkeley was writing for a specific group of the Irish whom he considered to be the offspring of the English reformation, and his 'patriotism' has to be understood in terms of his sympathy with the British state. This shall become clear once the intended readership of *The Querist* is fully rediscovered.

Many things about *The Querist* are debatable, but at least one can be certain that it was not intended to be read by Irish Catholics. Berkeley saw a structural problem that underlay Ireland's depression. There was a religious division in the society in that the Protestants enjoyed better living condition, whilst the Catholic community constituted the majority of the poor. Berkeley shared the conventional criticism of Irish Catholics, taking their dissolute living style and their Catholicism to be the cause of their

[410] Ibid., p. 403. In this sense, David Berman has a more comprehensive understanding of what Berkeley is doing in the *Querist*, although he also simplifies the subject of reflections as challenging the misuse of 'the language of money or monetary signs'. Berman, *Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*, pp. 167–70.
[411] Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, p. 128.
[412] Berman, 'Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment in Irish philosophy', and 'The culmination and causation of Irish philosophy', in Idem., *Berkeley and Irish Philosophy*, pp. 79–105, 106–37.

poverty and the misery of Ireland.[413] But in the meantime, Berkeley was explicit about the fact that Irish society as a whole could not be remedied whilst having the majority of its inhabitants live in poverty, as he asked his intended readers 'whether it be not a vain attempt, to project the flourishing of our Protestant gentry, exclusive of the bulk of the natives?' (Q255) The problem caused by Irish Catholics and their poverty was severe, yet not irremediable. It appeared to Berkeley that once Irish social-economic conditions were improved, the religious, structural problem occasioned by the division of Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants would be solved: the Catholics could be converted in the new, prosperous society (Q260–261). Here, apparently, the Catholic group is left outside of the querist's interlocution with his audiences.

Given that Irish Catholics 'made up somewhere between three-quarters and four-fifths of the [Irish] population' in 1732, Berkeley's disengagement with them indicates that he was conscious that his intended readers were not the majority of Irish inhabitants.[414] Here we can take account of Berkeley's views on the ethnic origin of 'the Irish' into account. He distinguishes 'Irish natives', whose religion was predominantly Catholicism, from the 'upper part' of Irish inhabitants that were Protestants and were 'truly English, by blood, language, religion, manners, inclination, and interest' (Q91). *The Querist* was intended to engage with this 'upper part' of the Irish population, as Berkeley encouraged his readers to think of the ways in which education could lead to proper reflections, and asks 'Whether it is possible a State should not thrive, whereof the lower part were industrious, and the upper wise?' (Q 192, 196–198) The

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[413] Barnard, *Anatomy of Ireland*, pp. 282-283; Robert Mahony, 'Protestant dependence and consumption in Swift's Irish writings', in Connolly ed., *Political Ideas in Ireland*, pp. 83–104.
[414] Connolly, *Divided Kingdom*, p. 249.

implication in this query is closely related to Berkeley's vision of delivering Ireland from misery. The native Catholic poor should develop a habit of labour, whereas the Protestant 'upper class' should cultivate 'an early habit of reflexion' that avoids 'a wrong way of thinking', which was 'our real defect' (Q48, 197).

In the meantime, it is worth mentioning that, given the wide range of Protestant beliefs in eighteenth-century Ireland, it is striking how Berkeley seems to have taken Protestants as being unified. This might have been because of Berkeley's observation of Ireland's Protestant landscape. The first half of the eighteenth century witnessed a significant decline of Irish dissenters, the cause of which is yet to be known due to the lack of sufficient primary sources. Another possibility was that Berkeley had sensed the need to unify Irish Protestants in the face of the common enemy. This was a shared sentiment amongst the Protestant groups outside Ulster, where the Presbyterians made up the majority of population. For these Protestants, the common enemy was Catholics, whereas for Berkeley, the enemy was clearly free-thinkers. Yet another possibility was Berkeley's adoption of the principle of toleration.

Like many liberal Anglicans, Berkeley's attitude towards religious divisions was tolerant to the degree that religious divisions did not endanger social stability.[415] However, once this is taken into account, it is striking that, in *The Querist*, he did not emphasise the problem of Protestant dissenters, particularly Presbyterians whose campaign for the repeal of the Test Act in 1731 had seriously threatened the Anglican parliament.[416] Again, this might be caused by Berkeley's unwillingness to divide

[415] See the fourth section of this chapter.

[416] Some helpful accounts on the Protestant culture in early eighteenth-century Ireland are: S. J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 144–97; Idem., *Divided Kingdom*, pp. 279–85; Bernard, *New Anatomy of Ireland*, pp. 17–20.

Protestant identity according to their confessional groups. In fact, Berkeley's visions of the prosperity of the state include dismissing religious divisions in civil society, as he asked: 'Whether, therefore, it doth not greatly concern the State, that our Irish natives should be converted, and the whole Nation united in the same Religion, the same allegiance, and the same interest?'(Q289, 1735) This query reveals Berkeley's implicit religious policy, to which I shall return before ending this chapter, regarding Ireland's diverging religious groups: the Catholics should be converted, dissenters tolerated, and free-thinkers banished. In order to make sense of this religious policy, one has to explore *The Querist*'s dealings with the Irish's misconceptions of matters that had a direct relationship with their well-being, as these reassessments were the discursive context of Berkeley's religious politics.

III

The last edition of *The Querist* begins with questioning the definition of wealth and poverty. Berkeley implies that 'the true source of wealth' is the labour of the people (Q1–Q4). Here he intends to overthrow the common impression that wealth is defined by the possession of money, and that money has an intrinsic value (Q23–Q28). The argument underlying these questions is that the value of money is not determined by its materials, but by the labour and its products, which are denominated and measured in monetary form. Money therefore is only the materialisation of the true value of wealth; the sort of materialisation that relies on the shared recognition of its credit (Q424–426, Q441). This brings to mind David Hume's famous essay *Of Money*, which argues that 'money is nothing but the representation of labour and commodities, and serves only as

a method of rating or estimating them'.[417]

This part of discussion in the last edition follows strictly the order of the first part of *The Querist*. The first part's queries contest the mysteries surrounding the nature of money, including the idea that money indicates wealth, the conception that the value of money is derived from the precious metal being used in forging coinage, and the subsequent misconception that one nation's mines represent its natural richness. As Berkeley notices, these misconceptions then lead to other misconducts that become the central themes of the second and the third parts, such as the search for a convenient method for accumulating money that is often at the expense of sacrificing hard labour, the pursuit of luxurious commodities that threatens the balance of trade, and the eclipse of public-spiritedness as demonstrated by the ways in which matters related to the wealth of nation is misgoverned.

It is not difficult to grasp Berkeley's implication in the themes of these queries. The misconception of the nature of wealth results in economic activities that desert the real interest of the nation. Like many of his contemporaries,[418] Berkeley turns to the success of the Dutch Republic and the fall of Spain for inspiration:

> Whether even Gold or Silver, if they should lessen the Industry of its Inhabitants, would not be ruinous to a Country? And whether Spain be not an Instance of this? (Q45, 1735)

[417] David Hume, *Of Money*, in Idem., *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, pp. 281–94. Quotation in p. 285. One can also usefully compare this to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's plan of an agrarian constitution for Corsicans. See: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Plans for a Constitution for Corsica, in Idem., The Plan for Perpetual Peace, On the Government of Poland, and Other Writings on History and Politics*, ed. Christopher Kelly (Lebanon, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 2005).

[418] Some of the widely circulated texts on the economy of the Dutch Republic which Berkeley might have known were: Sir Josiah Child, *Brief Observations Concerning Trade and Interest of Money* (London, 1668); Sir William Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (London, 1673); Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Memoirs of the Dutch Trade in All the States, Empires, and Kingdoms in the World* (London, 1719). The Dutch Republic had been a subject for English reflection on England's economy. For an example that was published before *The Querist*, see: Daniel Defoe, *A Plan of the English Commerce* (London, 1728), pp. 131–2, 331–2.

> Whether the Opinion of Men, and their Industry consequent thereupon, be not the true Wealth of Holland, and not the Silver supposed to be deposited in the Bank at Amsterdam? (Q46, 1735)

The verb 'suppose' indicates that the impression that the wealth of the Dutch Republic reside in its possession of precious metal has to be dismissed, and reinforces the argument of the previous clause that a sound conception of wealth and industry are the 'true wealth' of the Dutch Republic. This empirical case of comparison is shortly followed by an imagined scene of 'a Ship's Crew cast upon a desert Island' who develop a form of commercial society in which trade is taken as a means that allows 'mutual Participation of each others Industry'. (Q48–Q49, 1735) The scene is significant in that Berkeley takes it as a case for understanding 'the true Nature of Wealth and Commerce'. (Q48, 1735) It is also worth noting that this commercial society on the desert island is a self-sufficient, closed economy that defines trade in terms of the exchange between credit and industry, as international trade would be practically impossible.

Here we arrive at another historiographical theme that has underpinned historians' interpretations of *The Querist*. Historians who aim at recovering Berkeley's 'social aspect' from his reputation as an idealist philosopher have argued that what Berkeley had proposed in *The Querist* was an economic plan for Ireland to be a closed economy that would be immune from international trade and the corruption of luxury.[419] Some historians proceed to suggest that *The Querist*'s proposal for Irish self-sufficiency was Berkeley's attempt to deliver Ireland from economic dependence

[419] Patrick Kelly, 'The politics of political economy in mid-eighteenth-century Ireland', in S. J. Connolly ed., *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland* (Dunlin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 105–29; Idem., 'Berkeley's economic writings', in Winkler ed., *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, pp. 339–68.

on England.[420] In this sense, *The Querist* is linked to Swift's Irish writings.[421]

This historiographical account is based on a series of queries where Berkeley introduced an imagined, self-sufficient society:

> Whether one may not be allowed to conceive and suppose a Society, or Nation of Human Creatures, clad in Woollen Cloaths and Stuffs, eating good Bread, Beef, and Fish, in great Plenty, drinking Ale and Cyder, depending on no foreign Imports either for Food or Raiment; and whether such People ought much to be pitied? (Q129, 1735)

That the nature of this self-sufficient society is fictional is clearly stated in the first clause of the query. What has perplexed commentators' understanding of the function of this imagined society in the text is the next query, whereupon Berkeley asks 'Whether Ireland be not as well qualified for such a State, as any Nation under the Sun?' (Q130, 1735) These two queries introduce a theme on the possibility for Ireland to be an agrarian state where 'a domestic Trade' would 'suffice in such a Country as Ireland, to nourish and cloath its Inhabitants, and provide them with the reasonable Conveniencies and even Comforts of Life'. (Q133, 1735) Berkeley further stresses the self-sufficiency of an agrarian economy by evoking an image of 'a Wall of Brass a thousand Cubits high, round this Kingdom', and by asking whether 'our Natives might not nevertheless live cleanly and comfortably, till the Land, and reap the Fruits of it?' (Q140, 1735)

The image of a closed, agrarian economy, and the question that seems to modify Ireland in this image, allow historians of enlightenment political thought to place

[420] For an argument that *The Querist* was against Britain, see: Breuninger, *Recovering Berkeley*, pp. 129–30.

[421] Carey, 'Intellectual history', in Bourke and McBride eds., *Princeton History of Ireland*, esp. pp. 207–8; Robert Mahony, 'Protestant dependence and consumption in Swift's Irish writings', in Connolly ed., *Political Ideas in Ireland*, pp. 83–104.

Berkeley in the context of the eighteenth-century debate on commercial society. In this historiographical context, *The Querist* has been taken as an Irish *Salentum*, and Berkeley's intention has been understood in the language of François Fénelon's *Telemachus*.[422] But Berkeley's question about Ireland's qualification as this ideal society must be taken hypothetically. Berkeley was not suggesting that Ireland should modify its economy so as to bring the invoked image of self-sufficiency into practice. The query, 'Whether Ireland be not as well qualified for such a State, as any Nation under the Sun?', should be taken as enquiring as to the possibility of taking such an imagined society as an incentive for reflections on human society, and, more particularly, whether such an incentive might be helpful to stimulate reflections on the Irish condition.

This becomes evident once one reconstructs Berkeley's attitude towards imagined societies. In a letter to Viscount John Percival, son of Lord Percival, in March 1742, Berkeley provides his observation on the most suitable 'scheme' for improving the present age. He parallels the political 'scheme' for the state with children's education, suggesting that, just as education can shape children's adult lives, a proper political programme in the present age is capable of constructing a state of easiness and happiness in the future.[423] Berkeley emphasises the significance of Utopian schemes that portray an imagined society as a reference for improving present conditions, and notes that 'Utopian schemes (I grant) are not suited to the present times, but a scheme the most perfect *in futuro* may take place in idea at present.' What Berkeley means by

[422] J. Johnston ed. *Bishop Berkeley's Querist in Historical Perspective* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1970); Hont, 'The early Enlightenment debate on commerce and luxury', in Goldie and Wokler eds., *Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, pp. 401–4.

[423] Berkeley to Percival (Son), Letter 296, in *Correspondence*, pp. 447–9.

this is that utopian literature is not suitable as a prescriptive programme to be practised in the present age. The use of these 'Utopian schemes' is to provide an ideal for the public to contemplate the potential future of the state, as he explains in the case of Plato's *Republic*: 'Plato's republic may be kept in view … for an incentive.'

The use of Berkeley's image of a self-sufficient island has to be carefully distinguished from that of Fénelon's fable of Salentum. Fénelon's fable was intended to be reflexive. The agrarian virtue of the inhabitants of Bétique was a mirror that exposed the vices of the corrupted Salentum and French society under the rule of Louis XIV and the politics of Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Fénelon charges his readers in Telemachus's complaint at the end of Book VII: 'To such a degree are we spoiled and corrupted, that we can hardly believe that a simplicity so agreeable to nature is anywhere to be found. We regard the morals of such a people as entertaining fables; and they, on their part, must regard ours as a monstrous dream.'[424] The fable was a critique of luxurious trade and private property, and favoured an agricultural, communal society as the proper form in which the well-being of the people can be fulfilled.[425] Whilst reflexive criticism of the reader remains a theme that Berkeley constantly revisits in *The Querist*, its use of imagined society is nevertheless distant from Fénelon's fable. At the very least, the image of a closed economy was not a criticism of the reader. It appeared to Berkeley that the meaning of the fictional resides in the way in which it excites the reader's reflection on the practical. In fact, an imagined society as an incentive simply provides a fictional condition in which the reader is placed in order to better stimulate their

[424] François de Fénelon, *Telemachus, son of Ulysses*, ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 114.
[425] Ibid., e.g. pp. 15, 111–13, 259, 296–7.

thoughts on specific subjects.

Fénelon's criticism of the reader is arguably more similar to that in Swift's Irish writings, which are often grouped with *The Querist* in historians' reconstruction of Berkeley's social and economic thought. Swift's vexation underpins his reflections on Ireland; his writings that appear to be for reformation entail cynical criticism of the Irish people. *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* begins with celebrating the Irish's 'peculiar Felicity and Prudence' that endeavoured to cultivate 'whatever Commodities or Productions lye under the greatest Discouragements from England'.[426] His sermon on the condition of Ireland accuses 'the folly, the vanity, and ingratitude' of the idling majority of the Irish as one of the causes of Ireland's poverty. The frustration is revealed in his scepticism in finding remedy for Ireland's wretched condition 'until God shall put it in the hearts of those who are the stronger'.[427] This view also appears in *A Short View of the State of Ireland*, where Swift declares that Ireland's misery is incurable as its remedy is 'yet concealed from the whole Race of Mankind'.[428] Such vexation culminated to *A Modest Proposal*, in which Swift delivers his ultimate solution to Ireland's condition, a proposal that suggests fattening up the children of the Catholic poor as the Protestant rich's supper.[429] The adjective of the title betrays Swift's anger. The outrageous solution being proposed in the pamphlet appeared to be a 'modest' solution in comparison with the extravagant ways in which the Irish had caused their

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[426] Jonathan Swift, *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture, in Cloaths and Furniture of House... etc.* (Dublin, 1720), p. 3.
[427] Idem., *A Sermon on the Causes of the Wretched Condition of Ireland*, in Idem., *The Works of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Vol. XIII* (London, 1765), p. 33.
[428] Idem., *A Short View of the State of Ireland* (Dublin, 1727-8), p. 15.
[429] Idem., *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from being a Burthen to Their Parents, or the Country... etc.* (Dublin, 1729).

own misery.[430]

The Querist's last query reminds one of Swift's vexation: 'Whose Fault is it if poor Ireland still continues poor?' (Q324, 1737) But Berkeley was not Swift. He might acknowledge the two main causes of Ireland's misery that Swift identifies in his sermon: the commercial dependence on England and the indolence of the Irish. But he did not share Swift's attitudes towards these problems. He certainly did not share Swift's pessimism in finding the remedy for Ireland's misery. 'Whether our circumstances do not call aloud for some present remedy? And whether that remedy be not in our power?' (Q104, 1737) These queries, and the use of an imagined, closed economy as an incentive, indicate that, for Berkeley, like Swift, the Irish people were responsible for Ireland's condition, but that, unlike Swift, Berkeley thought the remedy for this condition was in the hand of the Irish, as Ireland could only be improved when the Irish developed better understanding of the nature of wealth and its management.

For Berkeley, such understanding requires reassessment of certain concepts that constitute the way in which one conceives the relationship of economic activities to national prosperity, particularly money, industry, and trade. As I have argued, Berkeley's examination of money establishes the fact that money has no intrinsic value, and that its value resides in the products of labour which it denotes, as well as its utility in stimulating circulation. (Q5–6, 1735; Q8, 1737) This understanding of the nature of money underpins *The Querist*'s proposition that paper is a better material for currency than precious metal such as gold and silver, because paper is a more convenient form

[430] Here I adopt David Womersley's lucid interpretation that Modest Proposal was 'a terrible imaginative projection of what Swift could be driven to become by the unrelieved repetition of disappointment' raised by the failures of his other proposals. See his 'Introduction' to *Gulliver's Travels*, in Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*, ed. David Womersley, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift, Vol. XVI*, eds. Claude Rawson et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. xcix–c.

in which to put money into circulation. (Q207–12, 1735; Q13–16, 1736; Q8–12, 1737) This reassessment of money is accompanied by reinforcing the idea that industry is the true wealth of nations, and is closely related to queries on the establishment of a national bank in the second and the third parts. This connection might be occasioned by Berkeley's reading of John Law's *Money and Trade Considered*, whose idea that 'National Power and Wealth' 'depend on Trade, and Trade depends on Money', and whose prescriptive proposal for financial reformation are cited and criticised in the first part of *The Querist*.[431]

Money and Trade Considered provides a reformation project for Scotland's economy that was eventually practised in Paris, after modification of its original plan. Law sought to fix the financial difficulty caused by the wars in Louis XIV's final years. The idea was to solve the problem of government debts through introducing a new credit note that would be supported by the state's currency, and forming a state-backed private bank whose shares could only be purchased by the credit note. Law's design was that the bank would buy off the interest-bearing debts by this note, which then could be used in cashing in state currency or buying the share of the newly established private bank. In Berkeley's view, this could not really solve the problem of debts generated by the government's lack of precious metal for coinage. Law's plan, for Berkeley, is a game of credit that only delays and piles up government debts. *The Querist* poses questions on the corruption of these state-supported private banks, and implies that the crisis of the Mississippi Company, alongside that of the South Sea Company, is the result of this

[431] John Law, *Money and Trade Considered, with a Proposal for Supplying the Nation with* Money (Edinburgh, 1705), p. 59. For a helpful examination of Law's plan for reformation and its criticism in France, see: Michael Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge: Public Debt, Inequality, and the Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 108–20.

way of abusing paper credit (Q220–24, Q271–5, 1735).

The Querist's reassessment of money and its proposal for a national bank are prevention of 'the ill Effects of such a bank, as Mr. Law proposed for Scotland'. (Q215, 1735) More significantly, they reveal to the reader the present misconception of monetary form and the problem of the way in which it had been governed in current financial institution. Here Berkeley's nuanced distinction of the management of wealth and the management of money has to be appreciated. The management of wealth corresponds with the care of industry that constitutes the willingness to cultivate industry and the prudence in trade. (Q26-40, 1735) The management of money, on the other hand, requires government awareness of the value of restricting the circulation of the medium by which the materialisation of the value of industry is measured so as to avoid the unfortunate circumstance in which the medium is mistaken for the value. (Q111–15, 1736) In Berkeley's view, a well-regulated national bank would be the kind of institution that provides stable conditions for the monetary system and effective regulation of its circulation.

But was *The Querist* a proposal for a national bank? As historians have well argued, Berkeley did believe that the creation of a national bank might provide genuine improvement for Ireland's economy.[432] However, it would be premature to argue that

[432] T. W. Hutchinson provides an early account in this vein of interpretation: T. W. Hutchinson, 'Berkeley's Querist and its place in the economic thought of the eighteenth century', 4:13 *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, George Berkeley Bicentenary* (May, 1953), pp. 52-77. For more recent accounts, see for example: Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, pp. 127-35; Patrick Kelly, 'Ireland and the critique of mercantilism in Berkeley's *Querist*', *Hermathena*, 139 (Winter, 1985), pp. 101–16; Idem., 'Political economy in Ireland', in *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, pp. 105–29; Idem., 'Berkeley's economic writings' in *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, pp. 339–68; James Livesey, 'A kingdom of cosmopolitan improvers: the Dublin Society, 1731-1798', in Koen Stapelbroek and Jani Marjanen eds., *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century: Patriotic Reform in Europe and North America* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 52–72; Idem., 'Berkeley, Ireland and eighteenth-century intellectual history', *Modern Intellectual History*, 12:2 (Aug., 2015), pp. 453–73.

The Querist was written for the creation of a national bank. That intention belongs to another text of Berkeley's that was an extraction of *The Querist*, to which Berkeley added a letter to A.B. Esq. with a pointed plan for his national bank.[433] The two texts are not to be confused, and Berkeley's distinction of their uses in the letter has to be acknowledged.

The argument, based on the letter to A.B. Esq., that *The Querist*'s 'goal was to present "the reasons for a national bank, and the answers to objections"' is misleading, and neglects the way in which Berkeley reinstates his intention in writing *The Querist*.[434] Berkeley's letter does not in any way express the idea that *The Querist*'s 'goal' was erecting a national bank. On the contrary, Berkeley begins the letter with a statement reinforcing *The Querist*'s reluctance to provide a detailed plan for a national bank:

> You tell me gentlemen would not be averse from a national bank, provided they saw a sketch or plan of such bank laid down and proposed in a distinct manner. For my own part, I intended only to put queries, and offer hints, not presuming to direct the wisdom of the public.[435]

The Querist's intention was to encourage a culture of reflection, instead of providing a prescriptive plan for financial and institutional reformation. 'It should seem the difficulty doth not consist so much in the contriving or executing of a national bank as in bringing men to a right sense of the public weal, and of the tendency of such [a] bank to promote the same.' *The Querist*'s primary concern was 'brining men to a right sense of the public weal', and the conception of a national bank was a significant, but by no means the only part of that process.

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433 George Berkeley, *Queries Relating to a National Bank Extracted from the Querist. Also the Letter Containing a Plan or Sketch of such Bank. Republished with Notes* (Dublin, 1737), pp. 34–40.

434 Livesey, 'Berkeley, Ireland, and intellectual history', *Modern Intellectual History*, p. 466.

435 Berkeley to Prior, Letter 263, in *Correspondence*, pp. 397-400; Berkeley to A.B., Letter 264, in *Correspondence*, pp. 400–3.

For Berkeley, the social-economic problems of Ireland were caused by a series of understandings that were wrongheaded and were without profound reflection on the subjects in question. 'To explain these points, and to urge them home, both from reason and example, hath been the aim of the *Querist*'.[436] The creation of a national bank shall improve the management of money, but the management of wealth requires further reflections on the problem of poverty that lead to the contemplation of methods for promoting industry, and on the nature of trade that give rise to contesting the Anglo-Irish relations; both trends of reflections challenge the reader's conception of the 'national'.

IV

Berkeley's idea that industry is the true wealth of a nation means that the proper management of wealth, which he intended to plant in his readers' mind, is correlated with the cultivation and the promotion of industry. That industry is at the centre of Berkeley's project is reinforced by the first few queries of the final edition, where Berkeley suggests the idea that money is only meaningful and useful when it contribute to the circulation and promotion of industry. (Q3–6) This indicates that, for Berkeley, the significance of improving Ireland's management of money has to be understood in the context of stimulating Ireland's industry. Berkeley, like many of his contemporaries, conceived of Ireland's immediate problem in terms of its defects of industry, and, as I have shown, he shared Swift's opinion, expressed in *Sermon on the Wretched Condition of Ireland*, as to the causes of such defects: the indolence of the Irish, and the distorted Anglo–Irish relations.[437] Notwithstanding this, Berkeley did not have

[436] Ibid., p. 403.
[437] Swift, *Sermon on the Wretched Condition in Ireland*, in *The Works of Swift, Vol. XIII*, p. 33.

Swift's vexation. *The Querist* invites the reader to reflect upon these two subjects, and suggests a solution that is not beyond human capacity.

The queries on Anglo–Irish relation are linked to those on the Irish conception of trade; a link that contains an implicit point on the interest of a genuinely united kingdom. The unbalanced trade with England and the restriction which England imposed on Ireland's exports cannot be appropriated as the sole cause of Ireland's defects of industry. Restrictions such as the Woollen Act did cause some economic difficulty, but 'whether it would be more prudent, to strike out and exert ourselves in permitted branches of trade, than to fold our hands, and repine that we are not allowed the woollen?' (Q79, 1735) The genuine crisis that Berkeley identifies in *The Querist* is that Ireland's misconception of trade had made basic life-sustaining increasingly difficult for the Irish people (Q144–169, 1735). England was not the only nation to have benefited from unbalanced trade with Ireland, and its economic policies could not be accountable for the fact that Ireland had suffered in such unbalanced trading relationship with other nations.

The unbalanced trade, Berkeley argues, was the consequence of the Irish's misconception of trade as a means to luxury. Ireland had been 'a very vile Matron' who was 'justly thought either mad or foolish', as she '[gave] away the Necessaries of Life, from her naked and famished Children, in Exchange for Pearls to stick in her Hair, and sweet Meats to please her own Palate'. (Q179, 1735) This is at the opposite pole from the proper conception of trade that sees trade to be 'on a right foot, when foreign commodities are imported in exchange only for domestic superfluities'. (Q176, 1735) *The Querist* proceeds to press the reader for further reflections on this conception.

'Whether the Quantities of Beef, Butter, Wool, and Leather exported from this Island can be reckon'd the Superfluities of a Country, where there are so many Natives naked and famished?' (Q177, 1735) 'Whether it would not be wise so to order our Trade, as to export Manufactures rather than Provisions, and of those such as employ most Hands?' (Q178, 1735)

Implicit to this conception is an Aristotelian understanding of exchange and trade. At the bottom of Berkeley's proper conception of trade lies the type of exchange that is occasioned by 'the natural order of things, because men had more than enough of some things and less than enough of others', and belongs to household management.[438] Whilst Aristotle defines trade in terms of the method to increase property that is contrary to household management, Berkeley attempts to appropriate Aristotle's distinction of the natural and unnatural arts of wealth-getting for his vision of the relationship of trade to the prosperity of the state. Trade would prosper a state in the sense that it would stimulate the state's industry, and the management of wealth in terms of stimulating industry is much closer to the art of household management than that of increasing property. 'Whether a nation might not be considered as a family?' (Q180, 1735) 'Whether other Methods may not be found for supplying the Funds' of this family? (Q181, 1735)

This understanding of the management of wealth in terms of *œconomy* suggests that the well-being of the state is independent from the flourishing of trade in an Aristotelian sense. In *The Querist*, trade is meaningful in two senses. On the one hand, it is a form of exchange that ascribes economic meaning to domestic superfluity. On the

[438] Aristotle, *Politics*, I. III. 1257a, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932), pp. 39–43.

other, the circulation of commodities may stimulate industry. In both senses, trade is to be understood neither as a means to luxury, nor as a method to accumulating wealth. It is in this context that Berkeley quotes Aristotle's aphorism that 'money is nonsense, and entirely a convention but by nature nothing'. (Q279) For Aristotle, the unnatural art of wealth-getting incurs the dependence on money, as money is the necessary medium that provides the standard for evaluating commodities in trade. The consequences of this are that the meaning of money is indispensable to the sort of economic activities that are related to trade, and that money gradually becomes the subject of economic pursuits. On the contrary, the meaning of money has much less significance in relation to household management, as 'the acquisition of money is not the function of household management.'[439]

Berkeley's appropriation of the Aristotelian idea of natural wealth-getting underlies several important themes of *The Querist*. It provides a discursive context for *The Querist*'s efforts to dismiss the misconception that money has intrinsic value. More significantly, the allusion to household management introduces an alternative perspective to the reader's understanding of Anglo–Irish relations. The reader is reminded of the fact that trading with England might encourage Irish manufactures. (Q68–9, 1735) Yet what such allusion imposes on the reader is beyond economic terms. The queries about Anglo–Irish trade end with a question about 'whether our hankering after the Woollen Trade, be not the true and only Reason, which hath created a Jealousy in England, towards Ireland? And whether any Thing can hurt us more than such a Jealousy?' (Q95, 1735) This is immediately followed by a query as to 'Whether

[439] Ibid. 1257b, pp. 43–7.

it be not the true Interest of both Nations, to become one People? And whether either be sufficiently apprised of this?' (Q96, 1735)

The implication is clear, yet Berkeley goes further to enumerate the fact that Irish Protestants – *The Querist*'s intended readers – are genuinely in the English household. That the Protestants of the two kingdoms were in fact the same nation is emphasised in the following queries:

> Whether the upper Part of this People are not truly English, by Blood, Language, Religion, Manners, Inclination, and Interest? (Q97, 1735)
> Whether we are not as much Englishmen, as the Children of old Romans born in Britain, were still Romans? (Q98, 1735)

Berkeley reiterates this point in the second and the third parts of *The Querist*. The second part employs similar language of familial affinity, emphasising that England loves Ireland 'as Bone of her Bone, and Flesh of her Flesh', (Q155, 1736) whereas the third part uses the term 'colony' for the first time in *The Querist* as a way of invoking a sense of homogeneity upon Irish Protestants and the English: 'Whether the Protestant Colony in this Kingdom can ever forget what they owe to England?' (Q78, 1737) The meaning of colony as employed here is less in the sense of the conquered society or new plantation by the expansion of colonial companies than that of vernacular appropriation of the Greek *apoikía* and the Latin *colonia* that, despite their differences, designate a form of immigrant society that 'derived their origin either from irresistible necessity, or from clear and evident utility'.[440]

The third part's use of colonial language reinforces the idea that Protestant

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[440] Adam Smith's account of colony, as well as his criticism of East India Company might be taken as a vivid witness to the transformation of the meaning of 'colony'. See: Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. II, ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1981), pp. 556–641, 731–58, quotation in p. 558. *OED*, s.v. 'colony', I. 1, 2, 3 & II. 4.

Ireland and England are the same nation, and that, therefore, they have the same interests in national prosperity. (Q74–7, 1737) These queries on the Anglo–Irish Protestant nation imply that understanding this concept of the national would be helpful to developing a much healthier Anglo–Irish trade that would mutually stimulate industries of the two kingdoms. Thus, Berkeley introduces a solution to one of the two problems of Ireland's management of wealth as identified by Swift. The sense of Irish dependence on England was generated by the jealousy of trade, which was in turn caused by Ireland's suffering in unbalanced international trade. But this tripartite problem would be dismissed when the reader comes to conceive of trade in terms of the exchange of superfluity, of the meaning of trade in terms of exciting industry, and of Anglo–Irish relations in terms of a Protestant nation. What remains to be considered is the other problem of Ireland's management of wealth: the indolence of the Irish and their poverty.

The complexity of this problem has to be recognised with the fact that Irish Catholics constituted the majority of the Irish poor.[441] The problem of poverty was in fact a religious problem. For many of Berkeley's contemporaries, this was a far more pressing problem, for their Catholicism might threaten the stability of Protestant state. This means that such religious problem was also a political problem. Berkeley's allusion to an Anglo-Irish Protestant nation might, at first sight, exacerbate the problem, as it seems to imply that the Irish nation was actually constituted by two nations divided by different religious conformity. *The Querist* does distinguish Irish Protestants from

[441] For a useful account on the condition of Irish poor, and discussions on poverty, see: Toby Bernard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants, 1649-1770* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 279–327.

native Catholics, and suggests that such a distinction should be harmonised for Ireland's prosperity. 'Whether a scheme for the welfare of this nation should not take in the whole inhabitants? And whether it be not a vain attempt, to project the flourishing of our Protestant gentry, exclusive of the bulk of the natives?' (Q288, 1735) The implications are that Ireland would prosper when its inhabitants have 'the same allegiance, and the same Interest', and that the pre-condition of such a consensus is that 'the whole Nation [be] united in the same Religion'; hence 'our Irish Natives should be converted'. (Q289, 1735) A religious problem has to be answered by religious policy.

Berkeley's principle of conversion was a politics of evangelical toleration.[442] The established methods for conversion through religious persecution, such as penal laws, are condemned in *The Querist.*[443] (Q296, 1735) The reader is reminded of the evil of Catholic conversion by 'compelling Men to a Profession of Faith', and is asked 'whether to copy after the Church of Rome therein, were not to become Papists ourselves in the worst Sense?' (Q293, 1735) The idea being implied here is that conversion 'in a Christian sense' cannot be practised 'otherwise than by preaching to them [i.e. the converted people] and instructing them in their own language'. (Q307,

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[442] Berkeley's idea of toleration does not receive much scholarly attention. One recent attempt to contextualise Berkeley's idea of toleration is provided by Sébastian Charles. I agree in general with Charles's thesis that Berkeley's politics of toleration is religious to the degree that religious toleration would not introduce political disorder. Having said that, I am sceptical about his approach to explicating Berkeley's arguments by separately identifying them partly with Hobbes and Spinoza, and partly with a Locke; so, for example, Berkeley's argument for a religious toleration on the basis of his attitude against a political toleration is, in spirit, following Hobbes's and Spinoza's arguments for separating ecclesiastical authority from the political by restricting the former under the power of the latter. This scepticism increases in the implication of Charles's concluding remark that Berkeley's politics of toleration is not so distant from Enlightenment language of toleration as theorised by Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Voltaire. See: Sébastian Charles, 'De Pascal à Locke: la reprise berkeleyenne des enjeux philophiques concernant la tolerance religieuse et civile', in Idem. ed., *Berkeley Revisited*, pp. 177–89.

[443] At the time Berkeley wrote *The Querist*, plans had been proposed in the parliament that the exclusion of Catholicism was vital to the preservation and the happiness of Ireland, either through enforced conversion, physical extinction, or banishment. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power*, pp. 194–7, 294–306; Idem., *Divided Kingdom: Ireland 1630–1800*, pp. 252–254.

1735) Such conversion through missionaries derives from the Protestant culture of persuasion.[444] Irish Catholics were not to be forced to profess Protestantism, but were only to be asked to participate in Protestant sermons. This 'Act of hearing' has to be distanced from 'a Religious Act', because it 'consist with the toleration of Roman Catholics'. (Q294–5, 1735)

The nature of this toleration of Irish Catholicism is evangelical precisely in the sense that the toleration of the Catholics prepares the stage for them to be converted by Protestant cultural mediums, such as sermons, school teaching, and the system of apprenticeship. (Q304–9, 1735) It by no means indicates that Berkeley had accepted religious diversity. What toleration means is a status of forbearing Catholicism in order to bring them into the Protestant society. This is a strictly religious toleration. Berkeley distinguishes the native Catholics who 'only eats Fish on Fridays, says his Prayers in Latin, or believes Transubstantiation' from the Catholic recusants 'who professeth in Temporals a Subjection to foreign Powers' and is persuaded that it 'may be Meritorious to destroy' their native kingdom (Q298, 1735), and argues that only native Catholics can expect toleration. (Q299, 1735) In other words, Irish Catholicism could be tolerated insofar as it was taken as a form of religious worship without political commitment to the political authority of the Pope. Under this definition, Irish Catholicism was not so different from dissenters such as Anabaptists and Levellers. (Q303, 1735)

Evangelical toleration brings a solution to the religious root of Ireland's poverty, but the problem of Irish indolence persists. But once the religious root of the problem is explicated, the question on the surface will become much less complicated. Like the

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[444] Andrew Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 10–39.

way in which cultural mediums participate in the politics of conversion, the problem of Irish indolence can be dismissed by certain social institutions. Again, the closest contemporary of Berkeley was Swift. Swift's *Sermon on the Wretched Condition of Ireland* argues for founding schools in order to 'abolish that part of barbarity and ignorance' of the Irish poor, and to 'bring them to think and act according to the rules of reason, by which a spirit of industry, and thrift, and honesty would be introduced among them'.[445] *The Querist*'s solution is in similar vein. Its understanding of Ireland's prosperity is intimately related to a prospective condition in which the Catholics are industrious and the Protestants are wise. (Q192, 1735) A system of education has to be founded for the Protestants to cultivate 'an early habit of reflexion'. (Q184–94, 1735; Q194–98) As for the Catholics, the idea is to cultivate the habit of industry amongst the indolent poor; a habit that, 'like other Habits, may by Time and Skill be introduced among any People'. (Q211, 1736) This can be done with the introduction of a device of public inspection that will impose the obligation to labour on the poor (Q215–28, 1736).

The device is termed 'temporary servitude', which shall effectively transform the indolent, Catholic poor into labourers. *The Querist*'s argument is that slavery had been an important source of labour in eighteenth-century Europe, and that the concept of temporary slavery had been widely accepted in society. Prisons and jails were institutions of such slavery, provided that the meaning of slavery is the deprivation of one's freedom. Berkeley observes a better employment of criminals' labour amongst European states, and proposes that the same method could be appropriated for rousing

[445] Swift, *Sermon on the Wretched Condition in Ireland*, in *The Works of Swift, Vol. XIII*, pp. 36–7.

the indolent Catholics. (Q220–27, 1736) As the indolent would be penalised to heavy labour, the poor's nature of indolence would make them avoid such penalty, and, consequently, would turn them into voluntary labour. (Q228, 1736) The forced labour as introduced by the invention of 'temporary servitude' eliminates the meaning of indolence, and brings an end to the problem that had vexed Swift in his writings on Irish society.

V

The Querist's project for improving Ireland relies on the Irish's self-realisation of rationality. The thematic order of the queries presents the matters that Berkeley considered to be practically related to Ireland's prosperity. The reader's reflections on these themes should lead them to reassess the underlying conceptions of *The Querist*. The reinstallation of industry as the nature of wealth would dismiss the mythical obsession with money; the understanding of the management of wealth in terms of cultivating industry would introduce a healthier conception of trade in terms of the Aristotelian idea of household management, and would provoke further reflections on the management of money; and the explication of the problem of poverty would effectively crystallise its complexity.

The fact that *The Querist* was an exponent of the use of reason in contesting social problems, and that it conceives of this as the way for genuine human betterment, indicate that it can be taken as an Enlightenment project. But this vision of Enlightenment has to be distinguished from those as theorised by a Mandeville or a Shaftesbury. Meanwhile, taking *The Querist* as an Enlightenment text means that one has to carefully distinguished it from intellectual historians' contentions of

Enlightenment. Berkeley's enlightenment as presented in *The Querist* was national in the sense that the project of progress was strictly prepared for the Anglo-Irish Protestant nation. This means that the nationality of his enlightenment cannot simply be pinned down as Irish, an assumption that has too often been made by an oversimplified preoccupation with the biographical truth that Berkeley was born in Ireland.[446] It also means that Berkeley's project for social betterment was not a universal, prescriptive antidote that would deliver human agency from political and socio-economic predicaments, and it was certainly not a text against intellectual and political oppression that anticipates modern liberal democracy by the elimination of religiosity.[447]

To a certain degree, this part of Berkeley's enlightenment was a continuity of the Reformation.[448] His project for social improvement through accommodating 'economic' matters in the culture of reflection is underpinned by his presumption about rationality's providential character. That Ireland's misery was caused by its Protestants' misconception of the nature and the management of wealth and Catholics' habit of indolence, and that this misery could not be remedied without reflections that effectively transform Protestants' misconception of wealth and their hostility towards native Catholics as well as England, imply that Ireland's 'economic' problems had a deeper root than misconduct on a commercial and financial level. Beneath this 'economic' predicament was a cognitive problem in public reason. *The Querist* takes on Ireland's economic difficulty by problematising the ways in which the Irish had

[446] For an argument that 'it is indisputable, therefore, that Berkeley was "Irish"' in biographical and philosophical terms, see: Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland*, pp. 117–26. Scott Breuninger, 'Berkeley and Ireland: who are the "we" in "We Irish think otherwise"?', in David A. Valone and Jill Marie Bradbury eds., *Anglo-Irish Identities, 1571-1845* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008), pp. 104–24.

[447] Robertson, *Cases for the Enlightenment*, pp. 377-405; and Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, passim.

[448] For a historiographical reflection on the conception of Enlightenment and its relationship to Reformation, see: B. W. Young, 'Enlightenment political thought and the Cambridge school', *The Historical Journal*, 52:01 (March, 2009), pp. 235–51.

come to make sense of 'economic' matters, and argues that to make sense of these matters correctly requires one to use reason in a correct manner.

Implicit in this principle is a characterisation of reason that is radically different from what free-thinkers had rendered. For free-thinkers, reason is normative and humane in that the use of it will deliver human agency from political and religious oppression and will lead them to genuine well-being, whereas for Berkeley, reason only indicates the potentiality of conceiving truth. This potential lies in the character of reason as being endowed by providence to human agency so that humans can understand providential messages. In this sense, whether the use of reason can lead to truth is a question that is dependent on the ways in which reason is employed. Without a sense of providential responsibility that reason should be used for making sense of providential messages, reason can easily be tamed by one's passions and become a tool for bringing one's own desires into practice.[449] In other words, the causation of reason is determined by human agency. Free-thinkers' theories of progress, and the Irish misconception of wealth, were two instances for the mischaracterisation of reason. Having the right kind of reasoning that recognises the providential significance of reason is therefore of importance to *The Querist*'s aim of having 'reflection in the better sort'.

In this sense, *The Querist* is more than a text of political economy. There is a historical point here. At the time when Berkeley wrote *The Querist*, political economy was yet to become a field of enquiry into the relationship of commerce to

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[449] This was the concern that preoccupied Berkeley in his *Discourse to Magistrates and Men in Authority*. I explore this theme in the next chapter.

government.[450] As I have argued in the fourth section, his understanding of commercial activities was much closer to the Greek understanding of *œconomy*, particularly its emphasis on household management. This is quite different from the eighteenth-century understanding of the term. It is tempting to bring in a Rousseauian definition, and suggests that Berkeley was dealing with '*general* or *political* economy' by the idea of '*domestic* or *private* economy'; an argument that is the central theme of Rousseau's history of 'economy'.[451] But he did not explicate the relation between the two, and his intention was not to investigate the relationship of household management to the art of governing the state. What Berkeley was doing in *The Querist* cannot be characterised in a Smithian definition of political economy either. *The Querist* is not providing a 'science of the legislator';[452] nor is it a study of the ways in which the legislator can help the people sustain themselves and can provide sufficient subsistence for public welfare.[453] *The Querist*'s project for the well-being of the people and that of the political society depends on the people's correct understanding of the nature and the management of wealth. This is reinforced by Berkeley's proposals for a national bank and paper money. He appealed to public recognition of the importance of the

[450] In its first appearance in French in the seventeenth century, *économie politique* was more 'an expression' than 'an idea'. See: François Billacois, 'Introduction', in Antoine de Monchrestein, *Traicté de L'Œconomie Politique*, ed. François Billacois (Genève: Librairie Droz S.A., 1999), pp. 7-34. John Robertson's argument that political economy emerges as a new field of enquiry as 'a systematic explanation of economic behaviour and guide to policy, on the basis of more or less explicitly Epicurean assumptions about human nature' in between 1730 and 1760 is plausible. But it is based on a concept of political economy as constructed in posterity. It was not until 1750s that the term 'political economy' began to occupy the titles of discourses on economic behaviour and its relationship to political society. Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, pp. 325–76.
[451] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Political Economy*, in Idem., *The Social Contract and Other Later Political Writings*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 3–38
[452] I borrow the term from Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[453] Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Vol. I, p. 428.

subjects, rather than to the parliament and the government.[454] In fact, in the advertisement of the final edition, for which Berkeley omitted a majority of the queries on the national bank and paper money, he confided that the omission was because the public was not prepared to embrace these proposals.[455]

Even if we are to take political economy in the sense that has been laid down in the second section of this chapter, *The Querist* still cannot be simplified as a text of political economy. Berkeley was not trying to accommodate the emerging phenomena of commercial society in the existing language of political society. He was thinking about improving society by encouraging the public's habit of reflection and by correcting their characterisation and use of reason. 'Economic' matters were an important part of this reconstruction of public reason. Their importance resided in the immediate consequences which they might incur. Yet Berkeley had a more profound view of those potential consequences. Misconception of 'economic' matters was itself the consequence of the absence of the correct way of reasoning, and was a problematic consequence whose damage went beyond Ireland.

Berkeley had treated economic difficulty as the result of public misconception well before *The Querist*. One of his earliest engagement with this theme was occasioned by the South Sea Bubble. The text was *An Essay Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, and Berkeley argues in it that what had happened with the South Sea Company was a natural consequence of public misconception, which was itself the result of the loss of reason's providential character. A closer examination of what

[454] Berkeley did appeal to the Irish House of Lords for suppressing the publication of free-thinkers' writings. See the next chapter.

[455] See above, footnote 21.

Berkeley was doing in that text brings to light the fact that, for Berkeley, the problem of commercial society has a profound religious origin; this will be done in the next chapter. This emphasis of the religious perspective in the politics of commercial society can also be seen in *The Querist*, particularly when Berkeley comes to tackle the problem of the poor. For Berkeley, the problem of the poor was also a problem of Irish Catholicism. He did introduce a device for forcing the indolent Catholics into work. But, as we have seen, this problem cannot be resolved without facing the Irish poor's Catholicism, and Berkeley's solution to this was an evangelical toleration.

This part of Berkeley's emphasis on the significance of evangelical toleration has further significance. It exposes the fact that recent historiographical interests in the experience of early Enlightenment have overwhelmingly emphasised the discourse of religiously unorthodox thinkers. This reveals the historiography of Enlightenment's implicit undertaking of Enlightenment as a movement of rationality that understands human progress in terms different from political, socio-economic, and religious predicaments in certain constitutional and institutional structure. Even the recent interest in religion and enlightenment seems to conceive of Enlightenment as a part of the intellectual consequences of religious heterodoxy, particularly the part as demonstrated by the criticism of priestcraft by religiously unorthodox thinkers. There is an irony in this reworking of the religious aspect of Enlightenment as theological development that challenges ecclesiastical authority; the irony is in that the Christian contribution to Enlightenment has been reconstructed in terms of writings that had

more often than not been taken by their contemporaries as critics of Christianity.[456] In this historiographical context, appropriations of Berkeley's enlightenment for a historiographically constructed Enlightenment face difficulty in avoiding oversimplification of his nuanced assessment of the relations between providence, rationality, and human betterment.

The politics of evangelical toleration in *The Querist* is a case for this nuance. Berkeley's politics for toleration is different from Lockean toleration. Locke excluded Catholics and atheists from toleration, because their doctrinal conformity was hostile to the foundation of a Protestant, civic society.[457] Berkeley shared Locke's argument that those who genuinely intended to dismantle Protestant society could not be the subject of toleration, but Berkeley had a different definition of the distinction between religious practices and political aspirations. This is best presented by their attitudes towards Catholicism. For Locke, Catholicism was a political power with a distinctive ideology that had threatened the security of Protestant states. But for Berkeley, Irish Catholicism was more a religious practice that had constituted the socio-cultural backwardness of the native Irish.[458] In other words, Irish Catholicism was a religious practice without significant political implication. This was why Irish Catholics could be tolerated insofar as they testify 'Allegiance to the King' and disclaim 'the Pope's Authority in Temporals'.

[456] Mortimer and Robertson eds., *Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy*, pp. 1–46; Sarah Mortimer, 'Religion and Enlightenment', in Richard Whatmore and Brian Young eds., *A Companion to Intellectual History* (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2016), pp. 345–57.

[457] John Locke*, A Letter Concerning Toleration*, in Idem., *A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings*, ed. Mark Goldie (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010), pp. 52–3; Locke, *An Essay Concerning Toleration*, in Ibid., pp. 117–22.

[458] It might be said that Berkeley's view of Irish Catholicism was somewhat similar to Montesquieu's account of Buddhism; both religions emerged from and then reinforced the natives' indolence. But one has to be very careful here, as, for Montesquieu, Buddhism was a religion with political significance that was introduced by despotic ruler, whereas for Berkeley, Irish Catholicism was merely a social practice of religious worship that might not have specific political implication. Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, ed. Ann M. Cohler, Basia C. Miller, and Harold S. Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 236–7.

(Q290, 1735)

In Berkeley's view, the religious conformity of Catholicism did not necessarily incorporate political aspiration for a Catholic kingdom. But the philosophy of free-thinkers was different. Berkeley knew that free-thinkers were not atheists, but the intellectual consequences of their projects was not that far away from the end of atheism, as their theories of human betterment contain strong indications that see the destruction of civic and ecclesiastical authority – the pillars of social stability – as indispensable for genuine social improvement. Berkeley therefore urged, from the early stage of his intellectual life, for the banishment of free-thinkers and the prohibition of their writings.[459]

The substratum of this argument for banishment is an idea of providential order. Reason is providential, and a careful use of reason is a teleological course of finding the order of human society and the natural world, a course that shapes *Siris*'s chain of reasoning. The idea that the providential order unites the stability of human society and the rules of the natural world constitutes Berkeley's conception of natural law, and imposes theological responsibility on human agency's use of reason. Free-thinkers' theories of progress were merely intended to dismantle social stability. They rebelled against the providential order by dismissing the law of nature that shapes human sociability, and by renouncing the theological responsibility of rationality. This argument for providential sociability and for the responsibility of reason underlay Berkeley's visions of the problems of commercial society, and this is the subject of the next chapter.

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[459] *Theory of Vision Vindicated*, in *Works I*, pp. 251–6.

Ch. V Providential Order and the Pathology of Society

I

In 1738, Martin Benson wrote a letter informing George Berkeley that the Master of the Rolls and the Lord Chancellor were furious about his recent publication urging the government to prohibit the circulation of free-thinkers' writings. '[T]hey are so angry that the liberty of the press or of private judgement should be invaded that they are upon the whole more inclined to condemn than commend it, as the Reformation and Protestant religion they say are only to be defended upon the principles which are by you exploded.'[460]

The work that had provoked Joseph Jekyll and Philip Yorke, the first Earl of Hardwicke, was *A Discourse Addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority*, in which Berkeley declares that 'Deliberate, atheistical blasphemy is of all crimes most dangerous to the public, inasmuch as it opens the door to all other crimes, and virtually contains them all'. This declaration is based on Berkeley's idea of providential sociability that takes 'a religious awe and fear of God [as] being the centre that unites and the cement that connects all human society.' Accordingly, 'He who makes it his business to lessen or root out from the minds of men this principle doth in effect endeavour to fill his country with highwaymen, house-breakers, murderers, fraudulent dealers, perjured witnesses, and every other pest of society.'[461]

Berkeley's appeal for the repression of free-thinkers' writings requires an explanation. It was a commonplace view in eighteenth-century Anglican political theology that that the English constitution was a constitution in church and state. The

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[460] Benson to Berkeley, Letter 270, in *Correspondence*, p. 410.
[461] *A Discourse Addressed to Magistrates and Men in Authority*, in *Works VI*, p. 219.

two-fold authority of the Anglican Church is, on the one hand, legitimately founded in civil law and, on the other, divinely sanctioned as the Apostolic Constitution in Christian antiquity.[462] This leads to the argument, made by many Anglican clerics, that the preservation of the established religion is directly connected to the preservation of the state, as Gibson's letter to William Nicolson imparts: 'there is noe way to preserve the Church, but by preserving the present Establishment in the State; and that there is far greater probability that the Tories will be able to destroy our present Establishment in the State, than that the Dissenters will be able to destroy our Establishment in the Church.'[463] Gibson's concern was about the Tories' potential destruction of the state, and it indicates that the stability of the state is in a more vulnerable position than the status of the Church.[464]

What endangers the Church also threatens the state. Admittedly, Gibson's letter was written in the decade when the cry of 'Church in danger' could still be clearly heard. Yet as historians have argued, the state of affairs in the 1730s was not less dangerous than the decade after the trial of Dr. Sacheverell. The alliance between Gibson and Walpole was increasingly tested by the Whig ministry's attempt to reform the state of religious affairs, leading to Gibson's complaints about 'the Lay Whigs' who spoke 'of Churchmen and Church matters in the unfriendly and disrespectful manner' that would damage 'the Union between the Lay Whigs and the Whig-Bishops and Clergy'.[465] The union did fall out over the Quakers Tithe Bill of 1736. Benson's letter to Berkeley in

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[462] This generated a series of difficulties through the Restoration and the revolution of 1688. See: J. G. A. Pocock, 'Within the margins: the definitions of orthodoxy', in Lund ed., *The Margins of Orthodoxy*, pp. 33–53.

[463] Gibson to Nicolson, Dec. 3 1717, Bod. MS. Add. A. 269, ff. 72–3.

[464] Clark, *English Society*, pp. 121–41.

[465] Bod. Add. Ms. Eng. D. 2405, ff.31–2.

May, 1736 reports a series of parliamentary attempts to diminish the status of the Church, including attempts to repeal the Test Act and the sponsorship for the Quakers Tithe Bill. Benson wrote about the high resentment that broke 'the friendship' between Gibson and Walpole, and about how 'people have been contriving here to put a stop to charity' by unchristian legislation.[466] But the hostility towards the Church of England did not come from political controversy alone.

It was the more general social indifference to the Church's authority and its teachings that disturbed Berkeley. An anonymous report of a weekly paper containing reflections on 'the Questions in Divinity' by authors who framed their 'answer upon the Principles and Reasonings of the Deists or those who call themselves free-thinkers' was but one sign that alarmed cleric-minded contemporaries such as Berkeley and Gibson.[467] That the two bishops shared the same concern can be seen in a letter from Gibson to Berkeley in 1734, warning him of the danger of 'semi-infidels, who, under the title of Christians, are destroying the whole work of our redemption by Christ, and making Christianity little more than a system of morality'.[468] The fact that 'semi-infidels' hid their schemes behind their confessional masks means that the situation was more dangerous than one might perceive, as they were often protected by the ideology of toleration, which Jekyll and Yorke accused Berkeley of offending. The complaint of John Hough, the Bishop of Worcester, about dissenters being excused from the penal laws and the Test Act can be expanded to the religiously heterodox thinkers that worried Berkeley.[469] It was this unfriendly atmosphere towards the Church in political

[466] Benson to Berkeley, Letter 260, in *Correspondence*, pp. 392–4.
[467] An anonymous witness to Gibson, April 1735, Bod. Add. MS. Eng. C. 3190, ff. 132–3.
[468] Gibson to Berkeley, Letter 258, in *Correspondence*, pp. 390–1.
[469] Hough to Gibson, Oct. 25th 1735. Bod. Add. MS. Eng. D. 2405, f.54.

and social realms that shaped Hough's complaint that 'our Ecclesiastical Establishment is begot with enemys on all sides.'[470]

This was the climate in which Berkeley urged for free-thinkers' writings to be banned. In Berkeley's view, the co-dependent alliance between the Church and the state that uphold the fundamental stability of political society was exposed to the danger imposed by free-thinkers' vision of human flourishing, embodied by the phrase of 'this enlightened age'. His *Discourse* was as much an argument against free-thinkers as that for reinstating the importance of religion to political stability; a position shared again by Gibson. Gibson's draft on 'the Rights of the Civil Power in matters of Religion' argues for the idea that an instituted religion is instrumental to political stability; hence public assaults on religion are effectively dismantling the stability of the state. His draft begins with the principle that 'No government is wisely contriv'd in which Religion is not consider'd as one branch of the Insitution', and continues to suggest that 'The Supreme Legislative Powers in every Country, have a Right, as they are entrusted with the publick welfare, to Establish and Encourage that Religion which they believe to be true, and to appoint such Forms of Worship and Services, as are judg'd, upon mature deliberation, to be agreeable to the nature and precepts of it'.[471] A significant moment in this draft is when Gibson turns to Machiavelli's argument that 'there can be no surer indication of the decline of a country than to see divine worship neglected' for reinforcing the utilitarian dimension of religion to political stability.[472] This is a turn that also occurs in

[470] Hough to Gibson, Aug. 27th 1735. Bod. Add. MS. Eng. D. 2405, f.56.

[471] Positions touching the Rights of the Civil Power in matter of Religion. Bod. Add. MS. Eng. D. 2405, ff. 42–52.

[472] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, ed. Bernard Crick (London: Penguin Classics, 1983), pp. 142–6. Gibson's transcription of the quote is: 'Those Princes (says he) or those Republicks, that would keep themselves from Ruin, are above all other things, to preserve the Rites of their Religion from being

Berkeley's *Discourse*.

Berkeley's argument for prohibition was occasioned by free-thinkers' threats to dismantle the religious foundation of political stability, which gives rise to society's increasing indifference to religion. For him, as well as Gibson, the inevitable consequence of this is a series of crises in the citizens' political, social, and economic life. That British society was constantly exposed to crises in the first half of the eighteenth century could not be explained without paying attention to its growing irreligiosity. Impiety is the root of social instability, and the problems facing British society have to be remedied by a pathology that identifies the genuine cause of national illness.

In this chapter, I offer a reconstruction of this pathology. I hope to show that Berkeley's pathology was an attempt to provide a competing language of social improvement informed by ideas that are opposed to free-thinkers' diagnosis of social predicament and theorisation of human progress. This project was consciously adopted by Berkeley. The immediate publication of *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*, a set of six philosophical dialogues, upon his return from America in 1732 intended to provide a timely 'Apology for the Christian Religion against those who are called Free-thinkers'.[473] The form of philosophical dialogue allows Berkeley to present his arguments in direct conflicts with his reconstruction of free-thinkers' conception of 'this enlightened age'.[474] This means that *Alciphron* is a field for two combating languages of

violated, and to maintain them always Venerable. For there is no greater sign of a Countrey's going to destruction, than to see in it the contempt of Divine Worship.'

[473] This is the subtitle of *Alciphron*.

[474] Walmsley, *The Rhetoric of Berkeley's Philosophy* , pp. 105–22; Michael Price, *Philosophical Dialogue in the British Enlightenment: Theology, Aesthetics and the Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 107–35.

human flourishing, each operated on their distinctive vision of social pathology. In what follows, I shall provide a summary of Berkeley's reconstruction of free-thinkers enlightenment as the discursive context of his analysis of the present state of crisis. It leads to what Berkeley conceived to be the genuine cause of Britain's problems, and his argument for banishing free-thinkers' works. This is followed by an examination of Berkeley's argumentation, and is concluded with his emphasis on the significance of theological obligation to the stability of political society.

This leads to a historiographical point. Recent years have witnessed an increasing scholarly interest in Berkeley's 'non-philosophical' writings. This is more often than not achieved by placing him in Enlightenment intellectual history, operating on a historiographical ground that combines István Hont's thesis of commercial society as a modern form of enquiry in political thought and John Robertson's argument of political economy as a shared enlightenment discourse.[475] Hont's presentation of Berkeley as a Fénelonian critic of luxury in the early Enlightenment debates on commerce provides a tenet for recent studies of Berkeley's contributing to the commercial society debate, centring around the tension between material prosperity brought by commercialisation and the corruption of civic virtue.[476] Whilst acknowledging recent studies in placing Berkeley in the context of Enlightenment political thought, this chapter supplies the argument with an alternative, yet equally significant aspect of Berkeley's reflections on the problems of commercial society. His

[475] Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*; Idem., *Politics in Commercial Society*; Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightement*.
[476] Hont, 'The early Enlightenment debate on commerce and luxury', in Goldie and Wokler eds., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, pp. 377–418; Brown, 'Was there an Irish Enlightenment? The Case of the Anglicans', in Butterwick, Davies and Sànchez Espinosa eds., *Peripheries of the Enlightenment*, pp. 49–63; Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*; Livesey, 'Berkeley, Ireland and eighteenth-century intellectual history', *Modern Intellectual History* 12:2 (2015), pp. 453–73. Brown's argument is incorporated in his *The Irish Enlightenment*, pp. 16–8.

writings on commercial society cannot be isolated from his conception of the theological significance of political society. For Berkeley, the problems of commercial society were less the consequence of the emerging phenomenon of commercial activities that had challenged the classical formulation of principles regarding the stability and prosperity of political society than the consequence of a religious crisis caused by the spread of free-thinkers' writings.

II

But who were these free-thinkers? Gibson did not give specific names as to whom he charged as 'semi-infidels', but Berkeley was explicit about his targeted free-thinkers. The label is attached to those 'atheists who pretend to speculation'; who write their philosophy 'against the being of a God'; and who actively work to dismantle political society by 'destroy[ing] the means of making men reasonably virtuous.'[477] Berkeley acknowledges that there are varieties of opinions in this group, but what unites them is their idea that the existing Christian institution and mores are a political device for the self-interests of clergymen, and that the dismantling of this device is instrumental in order to have genuine human flourishing. In short, Berkeley's free-thinkers were those who wrote against priestcraft. Anthony Collins, Mathew Tindal, and John Toland were the household names of the group. Berkeley contributed essays to Sir Richard Steele's Guardian refuting Collins's *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, which was published in 1713, the year earlier than Berkeley's arrival in London. Their shared language of demystifying Christianity was to be questioned in the Seventh Dialogue of *Alciphron*.[478]

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[477] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 23–4.
[478] 'The Pineal Gland' and 'The Pineal Gland (continued)', in *Works VII*, pp. 185–92; *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 286–303.

However, as we have seen it Chapter III, it was Bernard Mandeville and the Third Earl of Shaftesbury who built more dangerous and systematic arguments amongst free-thinkers. In Berkeley's view, Mandeville's assimilation of virtue with the political device of 'skilful politicians', and his idea that genuine happiness is a status of physical pleasures that satisfies mental desires, have an appalling implication. For Berkeley, Mandeville was effectively arguing that human beings can have a state of genuine happiness without the current form of moral principles, political constitution, and religious institutions. Moreover, given that Mandeville thought the present form of social order was based on a misconception of human well-being in terms of self-rejection, his also implied the necessity of overthrowing the present form of society in order to build a genuinely prosperous society.[479] Similar implications were made by Shaftesbury, who, in Berkeley's view, distorted the Stoic principle of natural virtue and diminished Christian moral teachings. Berkeley accuses Shaftesbury of replacing Christian morality with his own theory of virtue in order to establish a society without priestcraft.[480] For him, both Mandeville and Shaftesbury argue that Christianity is only a form of moral argument and is not necessarily required for genuine happiness.[481] In fact they go further, proposing that the present Church-state constitution should be dismantled for improving the human condition.

According to Berkeley, this is free-thinkers' pathology for 'an enlightened age'. They portray a trajectory of human progress that is based on the idea that genuine improvement of human society cannot be accomplished in the existing politico-religious

[479] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 100–11.
[480] Ibid., pp. 130–40.
[481] William Warburton held a similar idea. William Warburton, *The Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated... etc.* (London, 1738), pp. 33–61.

system. The 'succinct view of the principles, discoveries, and tenets of the select spirits of this enlightened age' cannot be achieved without 'beat[ing] down the bulwarks of all tyranny, secular or ecclesiastical, break[ing] the fetters and chains of our countrymen, and restor[ing] the original inherent rights, liberties, and prerogatives of mankind.'[482] Free-thinkers' language of progress, as constructed by Berkeley, is based on the presumption that the present human condition is a status of servitude in which clergymen tamed and caged human beings through their moral teachings, cultural devices (prayer books and services), and institutional authority.[483] The destruction of ecclesiastical mores should be the first step of emancipation.

Berkeley's reconstruction of free-thinkers' pathology summarises many of his contemporary free-thinkers' understanding of the relationship between ecclesiastical history and tyranny. Ecclesiastical history is the institutionalisation of Christianity in terms of the conquest made by priests' desires and the expansion of superstition.[484] It shows that the history of Christian religion is not different from the histories of pagan religions: the histories of institutionalised religions are the histories of priestcraft. This reading of ecclesiastical history entails a criticism of it. It reveals that the existing institutionalisation of Christian belief has distorted the nature of Christianity. Reason, the gift of providence, has been rendered obsolete by the installation of moral teachings that vindicate the interests of priestcraft. Henceforth, enlightenment requires the rediscovery of such providential reason and the delivery of true Christianity from ecclesiastical tyranny.

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[482] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 36–45.
[483] Ibid., pp. 38–43.
[484] Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*; Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. V*, pp. 215–43.

In Berkeley's view, free-thinkers' pathology towards an enlightened age is constituted by two significant projects: the destruction of the existing Christian institution, and the reconstruction of Christianity as a natural and rational religion. This means that the criticism of ecclesiastical history has to be contextualised by exploring the critics' intention to re-establish the naturalness of Christianity through the study of the relationship of providence to the natural world.[485] The free-thinkers' project for socio-economic improvement relies on dismantling the existing politico-religious system, which is informed by rational construction of the truth of Christian religion. It is free-thinkers' disposition to implement this enlightenment project, and it is in this sense that they claim to be against the label of atheism, a claim that has been acknowledged in recent studies on the religious perspective of the Enlightenment.[486]

Alciphron was to refute this theory of progress and to vindicate the divine and pragmatic nature of Christianity.[487] For Berkeley, free-thinkers' enlightenment shows the philosophic pride which believes that human reason alone is sufficient to explicate the divine design, and is capable of providing guidance for human well-being. This kind of philosophic pride, and the criticism of it, are not uncommon in the intellectual history of Christian Europe.[488] What appeared to Berkeley to be particularly dangerous about the pride of free-thinkers was its intended consequences. The free-thinkers' enlightenment project was to dismantle the politico-religious system that formed the

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[485] Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England*; Thomson, *Bodies of Thought*, pp. 97–134. For a more recent study on the relationship of the critical approach to ecclesiastical history to debates in natural philosophy, see: Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science*, pp. 329–446.

[486] Mortimer and Robertson, 'Introduction' to their edited volume of essays, *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy, 1600-1750*, pp. 1–46; Mortimer, 'Religion and Enlightenment', in Whatmore and Young eds., *A Companion to Intellectual History*, pp. 345–57.

[487] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 31–64, 174–218, 219–85.

[488] Brooke, *Philosophic Pride*.

pillars of the stability of political society in order to 'restore the original inherent rights, liberties, and prerogatives of mankind.'[489] The process was to be practised by the public's learning of free-thinkers' teaching about secular and ecclesiastical tyranny, about the nature of well-being contra the existing norms of Christian mores, and about the idea that self-realisation of rational agency could lead to genuine liberation and well-being of humankind, as advocated by the art of free-thinking.[490]

Enlightenment is the spread of free-thinking. But the spread of free-thinking is essentially the spread of a project to destroy political society, and free-thinkers' writings are essential instruments of this persuasion. For Berkeley, free-thinkers' pathology is pathogenic, and the spread of free-thinkers' attacks on priestcraft is the cause of problems that had hindered social improvement and threatened its stability. Where free-thinkers saw a rebirth after the destruction of a corrupted state, Berkeley saw a plot of treason that had put the British state into a troubling position. This conception of the cause of instability underlies Berkeley's writings on the problems of the British state, and one of his earliest contribution to deliver Britain from its predicament was the *Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*.

Published immediately after the South Sea Bubble, the *Essay* has been regarded as Berkeley's contribution to the debate on luxury and moral corruption.[491] That luxury corrupts moral and civic virtue, and threatens political society, was a commonplace in early eighteenth century Europe.[492] Berkeley was thinking and writing in this context.

[489] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 37.
[490] Ibid., pp. 31–64.
[491] Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, pp. 73–93.
[492] This is a well-studied theme. For some of the monumental works, see: J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Idem., *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 462–505.

However, the idea that Berkeley contributes to the early eighteenth-century debates on luxury and stability by proposing restrictions of the circulation of luxurious commodities, such as reinstalling the sumptuary law and the abolition of foreign trade, over-simplifies his articulations of the question.[493]

Berkeley's view of the nuances between luxury and moral corruptions can be brought to light once we bring in Joseph Addison for comparison.[494] In an essay published in the *Spectator*, Addison observes that, although avarice and luxury are two vices of different nature, they 'very often become one complicated principle of action'.[495] The reason for this is that the pleasure of luxury is expensive, and therefore is often accompanied by the accumulation of wealth that invites avarice. Addison sees luxury and avarice as tyrants of universal monarchy whose aim is to conquer and enslave one's mind. This metaphor implies a process of corruption, whereas for Berkeley, avarice and luxury are the consequences of the corrupted mind. Moral corruption was indeed one of the major causes of the potential decline of the British state. Yet this corruption was not caused by luxury. Luxury itself is the consequence of moral corruption. It is dangerous because excessive consumption will inevitably bankrupt the state. But it requires one to lose the sense of moral virtue to be tempted by luxurious commodities. The genuine cause of moral corruption in the British state had a different origin, which required further investigation.

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[493] For Berkeley's attitude to international trade, see: Hont, 'early Enlightenment debate on commerce', in *Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, pp. 377–418; Patrick Kelly, 'The politics of political economy in mid-eighteenth-century Ireland', in Connolly ed., *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, pp. 105–29; Idem., 'Berkeley's economic writings', in Winkler ed., *Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, pp. 339–68.

[494] Berkeley was welcomed to Addison's circle in 1714, and spoke highly of Addison. See: Berkeley to Percival, Letter 42, in *Correspondence*, pp. 85–6.

[495] Joseph Addison, *The Spectator No. 55*, in *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Vol. II* (London, 1721), pp. 510–13, quotation in p. 512.

The South Sea Bubble was not a moral and financial calamity which signified the ruin of the British state.[496] What had happened with the South Sea Company was not at all irredeemable insofar as it gave rise to an awakening for 'recourse to those old-fashioned trite maxims concerning Religion, Industry, Frugality, and Public Spirit'.[497] For Berkeley, these are pillars of both the prosperity and stability of political society, and the *Essay* was his endeavour towards the reconstruction of these shaken pillars. It argues that the South Sea Bubble was the result of the British people's two-fold misconception of wealth. On the one hand, there was an inclination to see money, instead of industry, as the nature of wealth, and a desire to accumulate money through convenient methods. On the other, the extravagant pursuit of luxury as the symbolic representation of wealth eclipsed the manners of frugality, and, in turn, infested the public as luxury spurred citizens' avarice and envy.[498]

Berkeley's first step is to dismiss the misconception of money as the nature of wealth.[499] 'Money is so far useful to the public as it promoteth industry', but money 'circulating through a nation from hand to hand without producing labour and industry in the inhabitants, is direct gaming.'[500] The 'plausible schemes' of 'cunning men' to accumulate money through methods without industry were harmful for the health of political society as 'they operate violently on the passions of men, and encourage them to despise the slow moderate gains that are to be made by an honest industry'. More alarmingly, these 'projects for growing rich by sudden and extraordinary methods' bring

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[496] *Essay Preventing the Ruin of Britain*, in *Works VI*, pp. 83–4.
[497] Ibid., pp. 69–70.
[498] Ibid., pp. 71–2, 74–5.
[499] There is a rich discussion on Berkeley's view on money. For a recent account, see: Livesey, 'Berkeley, Ireland and intellectual history' (2015), pp. 453–73.
[500] *Essay Preventing the Ruin of Britain*, in *Works VI*, p. 71. One can see how Berkeley further developed this argument in *The Querist*'s criticism of Law's proposal for a bank as a game of chances. See: George Berkeley, *The Querist, Part I* (Dublin, 1735), Q215.

damage to citizens' physical and mental health, as they provide chances for people to 'acquire vast estates' 'from nothing', and to 'stripped of plentiful fortunes' 'in an instant', rendering people as 'abandoned [by] luxury and wantonness' and leaving them in 'extreme madness and despair'. In order to recover the health of citizens and political society, it is vital for the people to understand that 'The more methods there are in a State for acquiring riches without industry or merit, the less there will be of either in that State'. In other words, it is vital for the people to understand that the nourishment of industry is at the heart of the prosperity of the state.[501]

This misconception gives rise to the public's pursuit of luxury. The lack of reflection on the use of wealth was demonstrated in the fact that the ways in which wealth could and should be managed in a manner that excites industry had become obsolete and had been replaced by the pursuit of luxury. It is important to see that Berkeley was not entirely against luxury. *The Querist* explicitly shows Berkeley's idea that the desire of luxury might stimulate manufacture and spur the development of industry.[502] What appeared to Berkeley to be wrongheaded was the sort of misconception that betrayed the use of wealth and luxury as ways to excite a nation's industry, and turned them into methods for personal happiness. One might think of Hume's complaint about the confusion of 'innocent luxury' with 'vicious luxury'; the former is the medium for the flourishment of arts and industry, whilst the latter is luxury when it 'ceases to be innocent' and beneficial.[503]

The immediate solution to these problems is political enforcement. The

[501] *Essay Preventing the Ruin of Britain*, in *Works VI*, pp. 71–4.
[502] *The Querist, Part I,* Q68–70.
[503] Hume, *Of Refinement in the Arts*, in Idem., *Essays*, pp. 268–80.

government has to implement policies that could have an impact on citizens' extravagant economic activities in order to repair declined virtues. These include the reinforcement of sumptuary laws, the encouragement of the manner of simplicity in the court as examples for the public, and the politics of aesthetic, as arts such as 'architecture, sculpture, and painting' would effectively inspire public spirit.[504] But even these political solutions might not remedy British society. These consequential problems of misconceptions of wealth are the tip of the huge iceberg. '[N]otwithstanding all the care and vigilance of the legislature, it is to be feared the final period of our State approahces', for 'our symptoms are so bad'. '[O]ther nations have been wicked, but we are the first who have been wicked upon principle.'[505]

In Berkeley's view, these problems signify the fact that the British people had lost their capability to cultivate sound moral judgment. This was part of a religious crisis. That 'Vice and villainy have by degrees grown reputable among us' is because 'our infidels have passed for fine gentlemen, and our venal traitors for men of sense'.[506] He argues that free-thinkers 'hath brought forth new and portentous villainies, no to be paralleled in our own or any other history'. These unprecedented villainies were to be seen in the degeneration of the British people's religiosity. Whilst in the past ages free-thinkers were 'treated as an enemy to his country', the present day sees how free-thinkers 'flatter[ed] the passions of corrupt men', and had 'the clamours of conscience silenced' and 'those great points of the Christian religion made suspected'. This incurred 'many vices of pleasure and interest' that had caused the general decline

[504] Ibid., pp. 77–8, 80–1.
[505] Ibid., pp. 84–5.
[506] Ibid., p. 84.

of industry, frugality, and public spirit.[507]

Free-thinkers' writings gave rise to a public enmity towards Christianity that in turn dismissed the principles of Christian virtue and gave rise to subsequent corruptions. Such was Berkeley's answer to the question of the origin of moral corruption. 'In order therefore to recover a sense of public spirit, it is to be wished that men were first affected with a true sense of religion'.[508] Berkeley's pathology embarks on tracing the genuine cause of problems mounting to the financial calamity in 1721. His analysis of the decline of industry, frugality, and public spiritedness through an examination of the connection between luxury and moral corruption leads to an argument that the potential ruin of the British state is the consequence of a religious crisis.

This opens the door for Berkeley to reconceptualise the free-thinkers' project for 'an enlightened age'. Their theories of progress as shaped by an advocate of free-thinking were identical with 'that laudable design of effacing all sense of religion from among us'.[509] Notwithstanding the possibility that free-thinkers might not 'have formed a direct design to ruin their country', nor 'have the sense to see half the ill consequences which must necessarily flow from the spreading of their opinions', the lack of intention in the writing does not exempt them from being responsible for the consequences of reception.[510] Free-thinkers' writings were the author of the British people's degeneration of religiosity; the decline of their virtue; and their 'hatred of God

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[507] Ibid., p.70.

[508] *Essay Preventing the Ruin of Britain, Essay VI*, p. 79.

[509] Ibid., p. 70.

[510] The same accusation appears in *Alciphron*, where the figure of Lysicles demonstrates a series of ways in which vices thwart the improvement of political society, which, indirectly, demonstrates the ways in which free-thinkers' theories of progress bring about the destruction of Christian religion and political society. See: *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 65-111. An earlier criticism of the destructing effects of free-thinkers' writings can be seen in Berkeley's essays in the *Guardian*, see for example: *Minute Philosophers*, in *Works VII*, pp. 206–9; *Happiness*, in Ibid., pp. 214–17.

and man' that would have 'occasioned their final ruin.'[511] 'The nation feels them, and it is high time the legislature put a stop to them.'[512]

III

This appeal for the prohibition of free-thinkers' writings is explicitly made in Berkeley's *Discourse to Men in Authority*. It was an expansion of Berkeley's speech in the Irish House of Lords criticising the recently founded Blasters, a society of devil-worship that met regularly in Dublin.[513] The connection between the *Discourse* and the speech was first made in Joseph Stock's *Memoirs of George Berkeley*, in which Stock groups the *Querist*, the *Discourse*, and the *Maxims Concerning Patriotism*, published in 1750, as 'monuments of his [Berkeley's] knowledge of mankind, and of his zeal for the service of true religion and his country'.[514]

What Stock had sharply pointed out is that Berkeley was preoccupied with the improvement of 'his country' and the vindication of Christianity. In Berkeley's view, these were two inseparable themes: in order to have substantial improvement in a Christian society, the socio-political outlook of any reform project must be constructed in accordance with correct theological understanding of the nature of 'improvement'. His pathology of British society is closely related to his attempt to remind the readers of the danger that the British state was facing in an age when Christianity was seriously

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[511] Ibid., p. 85.
[512] *Essay Preventing the Ruin of Britain*, *Essay VI*, p. 70.
[513] Two years after the publication of the *Discourse*, an anonymous work entitled *The Irish Blasters: Or, the Votaries of Bacchus* appeared in Dublin. *The Irish Blasters* provides a translation of the thirty-ninth book of Livy's *History of Rome*, and 'hopes that the Christian Magistrate may be spirited up by the Example of a Roman' so as to see 'that the infamous Society of Men, known by the Title of Blasters, may as successfully be punished as the Roman Bacchanalians'. William McGowan has speculated about the possibility that Berkeley was the author of *The Irish Blasters*. His assumption requires further evidence. See: Anon., *The Irish Blasters: Or, the Votaries of Bacchus* (Dublin, 1738); and William H. McGowan, 'Did Berkeley write The Irish Blasters?', *Berkeley Newsletter*, 6 (1892/1893), pp. 1–4.
[514] Joseph Stock, *Memoirs of George Berkeley, D.D.: Late Bishop of Cloyne in Ireland*, second edition (London, 1784) p. 31–2.

undermined by free-thinkers. The emergence of Blasters was a striking consequence of the age's decline of religiosity, and the *Discourse* was an attempt to restore the importance of Christianity to the stability of society.

At the heart of the *Discourse* is Berkeley's idea that 'Order is necessary, not only to the wellbeing, but to the very being of a state.'[515] This underlies his criticism of free-thinkers' theories of progress. The free-thinkers' premise envisages the state of rationality and liberty after the destruction of society. But for Berkeley, this process is either self-deceiving or self-defeating, as order is more than a political structure imposed by political or ecclesiastical authority for consolidating its power; it is part of the design of providence.[516] In Berkeley's view, free-thinkers' enlightenment entails a link between disorder and happiness that reveals how profoundly their thought was misled by inadequate knowledge of human nature, the natural world, and providential design.

The *Discourse* intends to reconstruct the relations between these three subjects by bridging social and providential order. It starts with an analysis of the human mind and human behaviour in order to demonstrate why a consolidated sense of religiosity is necessary for sustaining order in human society. This is a direct assault on the free-thinkers' style of writing, as their theories of progress are largely based on their anatomy of the human mind.[517] Again Berkeley had Shaftesbury and Mandeville in mind. Shaftesbury uses the expression of 'the economy of the passions' to denote the correspondence between human nature and behaviour that has direct connection with

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[515] *Discourse to Authority*, in *Works VI*, p. 203.
[516] Ibid., p. 202.
[517] Shaftesbury, *An Inquiry Concerning Virtue*, in Idem., *Characteristics*, pp. 198–200; Mandeville, T*he Fable of the Bees, Vol. II*, pp. 62–99.

the consequences of human activity, whereas Mandeville emphasises the significance of 'the anatomy of human nature' to understanding the real meaning of human well-being.[518]

Berkeley's account of human nature serves to build a counter argument: 'Men's behaviour is the consequence of their principles…… Hence it follows that, in order to make a state thrive and flourish, care must be taken that good principles be propagated in the minds of those who compose it.' One's understanding of this principle leads to one's knowledge that 'the prevailing notions and opinions of religion, which influence the lives and actions of men', have 'a mighty effect on the public'.[519] The mechanism of human action can be pinned down to the following sequence: passions evoke the desire of the mind, then reason operates to deliver a method for satisfying such desire that is brought into practice by the human body. This resonates with Augustinian human nature: 'Man is an animal' whose 'passions often urg[e] him to great evils, and his reason furnish[es] means to achieve them.' What follows is that certain methods are required in order to 'tame this animal, and make him amenable to order'. This gives rise to the significance of political and ecclesiastical institutions. The end of 'civil and religious institutions' is 'to fashion and model him [i.e. man] for society'.[520]

In this way, Berkeley bridges political and ecclesiastical authorities by emphasising their shared responsibility for sociability and stability. He stresses the political utility of religion by arguing that religious principles redirect the tendency towards corruption in human nature. Religion as an institution that is capable of

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[518] *Discourse to Authority*, in *Works VI*, p. 216.
[519] Ibid., pp. 201–2.
[520] Ibid., pp. 202–3.

imposing senses of order and justice on human judgement renders the pre-condition for social stability. As Berkeley demonstrates, this is an argument shared by ancient and modern authors.[521] He refers to the same passage in Machiavelli's *Discorsi* which Gibson quotes in *Positions*, and argues that Machiavelli 'represents religion as absolutely necessary to maintain civil order and government' because religious oath has more biding effect on regulating citizens than the laws.[522] Berkeley expands on this point. Religion is effective in regulating citizens because the notion of religion is 'the dim twilight of nature', regardless of its forms of worship. The diversity of religious practices only reflects different degrees of society's comprehension of divinity, and it is the responsibility of political authority to consolidate this natural religiosity. For Berkeley, this is why Harrington argues for a national religion that is accountable for the commonwealth's 'duty towards God'.[523]

The *Discourse*'s reconstruction of religion's relationship to the stability of political society by emphasising the socio-political impacts of religion might incur the risk of turning religion into a political device of secular governance, the sort of degeneration that had contributed to Machiavelli's notoriety. But Berkeley's argument for the utilitarian dimension of religion is part of his conception of providential sociability. His allusions to ancient and modern accounts of religion and society have other implication. If all forms of political society require religion for maintaining stability, then a Protestant monarchy, such as the British state, should have more

[521] Amongst the ancients, he emphasises Zaleucus's idea of religion as the foundation of a jurisprudential system, Aristotle's conception of the relationship between the preservation of monarchy and public religiosity, and Plato's emphasis on religion in *Laws*. Ibid., pp. 212–13.

[522] Ibid., p. 214.

[523] James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock, reprinted edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 81–3. Berkeley's argument as presented in this paragraph reminds one of Pocock's thesis on the Augustan receptions of the Florentine republican thought. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 462–505.

responsibility to vindicate the principles of the Christian religion. The government of the British state has a theological responsibility to encourage and protect the true religion of God. The significance of Christian religion is not simply because it provides principles that had historically shaped the stability of the British society. More importantly, these principles are sanctioned by the divine legislator, and are 'firmly rooted in the mind of every individual under his care'.[524]

Christian principles are providential. Yet providence does not imply God's responsibility to improve the human condition for them. It is the responsibility of the people in this life to observe and co-operate with providence. For Berkeley, this is part of the divine design. God created the world, and granted movements in the system; therefore, movements must be made in order to 'co-operate with the designs of Providence'.[525] Here we can see Berkeley's vision of providential sociability and its relation to people's moral responsibility. Christian principles constitute the structural pre-condition for human sociability; the cultivation of these principles is the responsibility of each individual in the society, whilst the institutions of political and ecclesiastical authority are obliged to encourage such responsibility.

Britain's most urgent problem was its people's renouncing of this responsibility. In Berkeley's view, the British people were prejudicial in the sense that they were easily tempted by opinions that were 'taken upon trust' without rational examination.[526] Their prejudice undermined the existing authorities in several aspects, the most dangerous amongst which was presented in the attempt to 'separate morality from religion' that

[524] *Discourse to Authority*, in *Works VI*, p. 204.
[525] Ibid., p. 212.
[526] Ibid., pp. 203, 205.

leads to ridiculing Christian principles. This prejudice also threatens to destroy the ground of existing authorities, given that secular and ecclesiastical authorities were institutionalised for the improvement of Christian principles. Berkeley therefore saw prejudice against Christian principles as implying a plan to overthrow the present structure of political society. His concern was brought forward by free-thinkers' argument that 'imagine they might remedy whatever was amiss, and render a people great and happy, merely by a new plan or form of government'.[527] His reference to Machiavelli is an indirect counter-argument of free-thinkers: religion is the keystone of the stability of all forms of government.[528]

IV

Berkeley's argument for providential sociability in the *Discourse* can be further clarified by his earlier discourse on passive obedience. The *Discourse* portrays a picture of the ways in which attempts to dismiss Christian principles mean the renouncement of obligations to the divine design, and lead to the destruction of people's reverence for the existing structure of political society, which in turn dismantles the established order, moral and political. The *Passive Obedience* argues that the disobedience and the rebellion against the present form of political structure are by nature activities defying the order of the system created by the divine will, as well as rejecting the superiority of God.

This argument for absolute submission is supported by Berkeley's conception of natural law. Berkeley refutes Samuel Pufendorf's demarcation of natural law from

[527] Ibid., p. 210. An erudite account of the reserved attitude towards republicanism in the first decades of eighteenth-century England can be seen in Blair Worden, *Roundhead Reputations: The English Civil Wars and the Passions of Posterity* (London: Penguin, 2002), pp. 147–80.
[528] *Discourse to Authority*, in *Works VI*, p. 213–15.

divine law that placed the latter under the category of moral theology, and accordingly disqualifies it from being universal. In Pufendorf's definition, divine law as part of moral theology is based on 'a certain kind of covenant between God and men' that informs the divine judgement on future rewards. Natural law, on the contrary, is an abstraction of divine law, 'since it derives from a special revelation from God which reason alone cannot find out', and 'is confined within the orbit of this life'; natural law therefore 'forms man on the assumption that he is to lead this life in society with others.'[529] This means that one has to make sense of sociability with the notion that natural law is the law 'teach[ing] one how to conduct oneself to become a useful member of human society'.[530]

For Berkeley, Pufendorf implies that natural law can logically sustain itself without the existence of the divine will.[531] By excluding divine law from natural law, Pufendorf's theory of obedience in this life excludes one's obligation to God. One's duty to God is on 'the basis of natural reason' that belongs to the realm of moral theology, which requires one to have a correct understanding of God. But one's moral responsibility to other human beings and to civic government has to be realised in secular terms.[532] As the result of this, Pufendorf's theorisation of the constitution of political society emerges from a Hobbesian idea of contractual obligation and the conception of the state as a *persona*.[533] However, obligation arising from mutual

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[529] Samuel Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 6–13.
[530] Ibid., p. 35.
[531] It also concerned Leibniz, and constituted his criticism of Pufendorf as having been converted by Hobbes's principles. See: Leibniz, *Opinions on the Principles of Pufendorf*, in Idem., *Political Writings*, ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 64–75.
[532] Pufendorf, *Duty of Man and Citizen*, pp. 27–32, 39–45.
[533] Hobbes, *On the Citizen*, ed. Richard Tuck and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 32-42; Pufendorf, *Duty of Man and Citizen*, pp. 135–8.

agreement is liable to be dissolved on the occasion in which the condition for the legitimacy of agreement is dismissed.[534] For Berkeley, this is an argument for conditional obedience contra the idea of 'absolute submission'. In his view, Pufendorf reiterates Hugo Grotius's argument that the principle of non-resistance might put people into a condition that is worse than the state of tyrannical rule.[535] This vision of civic obedience is liable to lapse into the danger of contract theory, leaving possible ground for the dangerous connection of non-resistance with the right to rebel as proposed in John Locke's *Two Treatises of Goverment*.[536]

Berkeley's conception of providential sociability is accompanied by his rebuke to this theorisation of natural law.[537] His attempt is to reconstruct the relationship between divine law, natural law, and civil law. Divine law, according to Berkeley, is God's general will as he 'willeth the universal well-being of mankind should be promoted by the concurrence of each particular person; therefore, every such practical proposition necessarily tending thereto is to be esteemed a decree of God, and is consequently a law to man'.[538] Berkeley's use of adjectives such as 'universal' and 'particular', and their connection to the 'well-being of mankind' and each 'person', entails a significant theme in early modern theological debates about the relations between universal teleology towards salvation, and the salvation and punishment of an individual.[539] For Berkeley, the relation is clear. Divine law is universal, and God's will

[534] Pufendrof, *Duty of Man and Citizen*, pp. 105–7.
[535] *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*, pp. 43–4.
[536] Ibid., pp. 28-31. John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett, student edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 228–32, 211–43.
[537] *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*, pp. 35–46.
[538] Ibid., p. 22.
[539] For a brilliant work on this subject in French thought, see: Patrick Riley, *The General Will Before Rousseau: The Transformation of the Divine into the Civic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

to universal well-being has to be fulfilled 'by the concurrence of each particular person'. In other words, every action for the well-being of mankind is 'a decree of God, and is consequently a law to man.'

The universal entails the particular. What Berkeley is arguing here is that every secular activity for human well-being, including policies, is part of divine law. This means that the legitimacy of civil law also derives from this will of the divine legislator. Berkeley thus imposes theological responsibility in civil jurisprudence. His definition of divine law also allows him to rework the definition of natural jurisprudence. Divine law is natural law, as the divine will for the well-being of humankind is universal, and that such will to well-being does not 'derive [its] obligation from any civil sanction, but immediately from the Author of nature himself.' Natural law is therefore sanctioned by the divine will for the well-being of humankind. It is also a moral law, as the 'laws of nature' 'are said to be *stamped on the mind*, to be *engraven on the tables of the heart*, because they are well known to mankind, and suggested and inculcated by conscience.'[540]

This recovery of divine, natural law is based on the restoration of the Christian sense of reason. Reason as a Christian category is a gift of divine providence for human agency to understand the rule of God. The 'Eternal Law of Reason' that underpins Berkeley's definition of natural law can be further explicated by his contention that morality can be practised by reflection on the meaning of goodness, and that mimesis of the natural world will bring one to realise 'those general laws' as 'established by the

[540] *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*, p. 23.

Author of Nature'.[541] The use of reason leads to discovering the bridge between the moral duty of an individual and the broader order of God's creation. This, in turn, provides a means of deducing the connection between the universal and the particular.

Notwithstanding the moral and theological duty of every individual to God's will for universal well-being, the tendency to corruption in human nature constantly puts human beings into a status that contradict the jurisprudence of the divine will. This implies that a different, yet intimately related, set of laws has to be implemented in order to regulate the particular's contradiction with the universal. This is why Berkeley emphasises that 'the universal well-being of mankind should be promoted by the concurrence of each particular person' in his definition of divine and natural law. Such regulation is 'the Law of the Society', without which 'there is no politeness, no order, no peace, among men'.[542] Civil law is the institutionalisation of natural law for resolving the tension between the universal and the particular. But this does not indicate that divine and natural law is inadequate for generating order and happiness in civic life. It is helpful to bring back the *Discourse*'s argument that the providential will to the happiness of humankind does not entail God's responsibility to improve the human condition. It is the particular's duty to observe and co-operate with the universal design, and the omnipotence of the universal cannot be mistaken by the particular's errors and incapacity.

Berkeley develops his theory of passive obedience from this reworking of divine, natural, and civil law. The argument is twofold. First of all, resistance against the present

[541] Berkeley's idea of mimesis was alluding to Cicero's aphorism that 'man comes into existence for contemplating and imitating the world'. Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933), p. 158. Berkeley quotes as 'Homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum, and imitandum.' See: *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*, p. 23.
[542] Ibid., p. 25.

authority serves to dismantle civil law and the institutional settlement of natural law. Rebellion against civil government is equally rebelling against the divine system for human well-being. Rebellion therefore means not only self-degeneration but also self-destruction.[543] Secondly, provided that Scripture is explicit in telling 'Whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the ordinance of God', obedience to civil and divine authority is rooted in moral rule sanctioned directly by the divine will.[544] Anyone who is disobedient to this moral rule is effectively an insurgent against God.[545] For this to make sense, one has to appreciate the fact that for Berkeley, like William Warburton, Scripture was revealed and hence was a direct record of divine law.

As the notes of Berkeley's sermons at Newport reveal, the body of texts that constitutes Scripture is a record of God's revelation to particulars, including Noah, Abraham, and Job. Accordingly, the Old Testament's record of Jewish law 'against idolatry and corruption of manners' was a record of the divine will and, hence, natural law. But 'Jewish law [was] not designed to be perfect: nor for the whole world nor to last for ever.' The origin of Jewish law was a moment of revelation when God 'singles out a despised people without law, leader, or country' and 'asserts them by force & miracles'; God 'conducts them; gives them a law; makes them his peculiar people; [and] entrusts them with the truth.'[546] Here Berkeley seems to be suggesting that the Old Testament's law was revealed to a specific nation, an argument that was commonly embraced by free-thinkers whom Berkeley aims to repudiate, particularly Hobbes and Spinoza.[547]

[543] Ibid., pp. 33–5, 41–3.
[544] Romans 13:2.
[545] *Passive Obedience*, in *Works VI*, pp. 35–8.
[546] *Notes for Sermons at Newport*, *Works VII*, pp. 54–5.
[547] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 736–58; Baruch Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, ed. Jonathan Israel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 208–37.

Berkeley continues to refute these thinkers' arguments that, as Hobbes puts it, God's law to humankind as recorded in the Old Testament relies on covenants that had been renewed over the course of Hebrew history, but it has since lost its significance for other nations.

For Berkeley, this reading of Scripture ignores the teleological dimension of revelation. The divine will is revealed first 'to a family', then 'to a nation', and finally 'to the whole world'. The moment of this final stage of revelation was fulfilled by the time of John the Baptist, thus 'The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.'[548] In the meantime, Berkeley is equally criticising Spinoza's demarcation of philosophy from theology on the ground that Scripture is a corpus of divine legislation and cannot lead one to understand the divine nature.[549] Both the Old and the New Testaments contain the twofold significance of 'law of God': nature and revelation. Whilst the authority of secular legislature is derived from revelation, the 'light of nature sheweth the being of a God', whose existence has to be learned 'by meditation' and whose will be known 'from conscience and inward feeling.'[550] Notwithstanding the fact that divine law as being recorded in the Old Testament is a law for the Jewish nation, the revealed word in the New Testament is universal.[551] Berkeley's reworking of the system of divine law thus incorporates reinforcing the authority of Scripture. Natural law is God's will to the universal well-being of humankind. This is imprinted in human nature and constitutes every individual's responsibility to morality. Scripture's teaching is the actualisation of

[548] Luke 16:16.
[549] Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise*, pp. 163–94.
[550] *Notes for Sermons at Newport*, *Works VII*, p. 54.
[551] Interestingly, Locke has a very similar analysis. See: John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. John C. Higgins-Biddle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 17–22.

one's obligation to one's conscience, whilst civil law is the reinforcement of natural law through the power of secular authority.

Berkeley's idea of providential sociability emerges out of this conception of divine jurisprudence. God wills human beings to live well, and such well-being can only be pursued in society. Free-thinkers' conjectural account of the state of nature prior to the formation of society as a state of anarchy only strengthens the point that 'man will scarce conceive it possible that the practice of any one moral virtue should obtain, in the naked, forlorn state of nature.'[552] It entails the argument that political society is a necessary condition that for each particular individual to bring their intrinsic sense towards well-being into practice.

This conception of providential sociability ridicules free-thinkers' enlightenment. A theory for human flourishing that is based on dismantling the pre-condition for human well-being cannot be a project for genuine happiness. Furthermore, it brings forward two reasons for banning free-thinkers' works. One straightforward point is that free-thinkers' enlightenment entails the destruction of society. It is a scheme of treason against both secular authority and divine jurisprudence. The other, somewhat more implicit, point is that free-thinkers' scepticism about Christianity in their criticism of certain passages in Scripture is a direct contradiction of divine and natural law. Their scepticism is a rejection of the recorded will of God., and is shaped by their pride that the art of free-thinking can cultivate future progress independent from the divine will. Consequently, free-thinkers are abandoned by the divine will, 'For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness

[552] *Passive Obedience*, *Works VI*, pp. 25–6.

of preaching to save them that believe.'[553] They are outlawed from divine and natural law, and hence they should be equally excluded from the realm of civil law.

V

This brings me to my conclusion. Berkeley's pathology of the British state can be summarised in the following manner. He expostulates about the fact that Britain's problems were deeply rooted in the public's hostility to Christian principles, and that this religious crisis would have ruined the British state if they were not remedied in time. The most effective remedy is to banish free-thinkers' idea of 'this enlightened age', which has been 'taught to laugh at everything that is serious as well as sacred'.[554] Towards the end of the *Essay*, Berkeley sarcastically acknowledges that free-thinkers' enlightenment did successfully establish something unprecedented: 'this enlightened age' into which free-thinkers had led the British people was a 'corrupt degenerate age' that had no parallels in human history.[555]

In his diagnosis of British society, Berkeley urges the reinstallation of the reverence of Christian principles. This is not only because of religion's importance to the stability of the British state, but also due to the providential character of Christian principles. If Christian principles are taken as divinely sanctioned moral rules, they becomes part of the divine law that God instils at the creation for the well-being of human beings. Human beings therefore have theological obligation to obey this moral rule. In this sense, Berkeley's conception of the nature of Christian principles, and the reason why human beings shall revere these principles, are closely informed by his

[553] Corinthians 1:21.
[554] *Essay Preventing the Ruin of Britain*, in *Works VI*, p. 79.
[555] Ibid., p. 84.

conception of the order of the natural world as governed by the divine will. This pathology preoccupied Berkeley, and his last major publication was intended to provide a universal panacea for social disorders by proving that a ‘pathology’ for improving the human condition can only be conceived with recourse to the providential order.[556] For Berkeley, behaving in accordance with such providential order will lead an individual and, in aggregation, human community to a state of happiness as intended by the divine will. His vision of providential order contains a teleology and a notion of divine justice. Tracing the way in which Berkeley came to construe this teleology as a counterpart of free-thinkers’ criticism of Christianity as informed by their reworking of Biblical history is the subject of the final chapter of this dissertation.

[556] *Siris*, in *Works V*, pp. 26–164.

Ch. VI Divine Justice and Human Flourishing

I

The previous chapter constructed Berkeley's political theology by recovering the theological dimension of his political pathology, and revealed that Berkeley's conception of divine order has informed his argument that banning free-thinkers' writings was politically instrumental in improving the condition of the British state. This chapter continues to recover the theological ground of Berkeley's visions of politics by delineating the divine teleology underpinning his idea of human flourishing. It argues that, for Berkeley, genuine human progress is part of divine teleology and that the full meaning of happiness will only be unfolded in the future state.

This chapter expands on that argument. As the final chapter of this dissertation's reconstruction of Berkeley's dialectics of the 'heterodox' enlightenment, this chapter aims to delineate Berkeley's own conception of enlightenment. This is not to venture a grand historiographical or philosophical argument suggesting that Berkeley's is 'the' Enlightenment from which subsequent studies on the period should spring. Rather, it is a necessary investigation for completing a historical examination of Berkeley's debates with his contemporaries about the condition of British society in which he lived. When this chapter refers to Berkeley's enlightenment, it is to be understood in a strictly literary sense. It denotes what sense Berkeley made of the word when he writes about the process through which human beings are enlightened by divinity. We have seen in previous chapters how Berkeley criticises free-thinking's theory of social improvement and its language of 'this enlightened age'. In this chapter, I shall reconstruct Berkeley's own vision of human flourishing as the operation of

divine justice for the well-being of humankind. It is in this context that one can make sense of Berkeley's enlightenment without being caught by the danger of overstatement.

Berkeley's conception of divine teleology and the 'enlightenment' constitute a vision of human flourishing that is the counterpart of free-thinking's project for an enlightened age. Conflicts between these two languages of 'enlightenment' seem inevitable. And I shall demonstrate that Berkeley's dispute with free-thinking's historical criticism of the antiquity and the historicity of Christianity is instrumental to making better sense of Berkeley's conception of enlightenment. The points under debate are the trajectory of human history and the reasonableness of divine justice. Berkeley's systematisation of free-thinking as a distinctive intellectual project for a religiously heterodox enlightenment renders free-thinking an idea of human history as a road to serfdom paved by tyrannical, Christian priestcraft. This is informed by a reconstruction of ancient history that aims at recovering the state of affairs before the rising of Christian priestcraft so as to dismiss the legitimacy of ecclesiastical authority that is based on the church's claim to its historical authenticity. In Berkeley's conception, this historical destruction of the authenticity of Christianity is accompanied by a dismissal of the idea of the future state. Provided that Christianity is a religion constituted by the notion that the meaning of life will be fulfilled by divine justice in the afterlife when the physical and mental activities of human beings in this life will be duly rewarded or punished, the cancellation of the idea of the future state makes Christianity fundamentally unintelligible. In this way, the project of free-thinking turns Christianity into an unreasonable and untrue form of worship, and thus deprives the legitimacy of ecclesiastical establishments.

An analysis of ways in which Berkeley responds to this argument of free-thinking shall help to illuminate his conception of enlightenment as the operation of divine justice. In contrast to previous chapters' study of Berkeley's criticism of free-thinking, this part of his criticism appears to be less original. His counter-argument of free-thinking's historical criticism in the second volume of *Alciphron* resembles the common vindication of the church by his clerical-minded contemporaries. To give some examples, his emphasis on the historical significance of the coming of Jesus Christ as the beginning of the operation of the divine will for universal well-being, as well as his vindication of the accountability of the Apostles' records, resonate with Edward Stillingfleet's *The Mysteries of the Christian Faith Asserted and Vindicated*, whilst his attacks on the truthfulness of many free-thinkers who advocate their reason and truth against religion, as well as his argument for the necessity of the future state, remind one of Daniel Waterland's *Christianity Vindicated against Infidelity*.[557]

Yet there are differences. One of the most important is that Berkeley's response to the challenges of free-thinking does not take the form of systematic, theological exegesis. As we shall shortly see, for Berkeley, theological debates are, by nature, disputes in a field of professional knowledge. This indicates that the debate is meaningful only when the participants in the debate share certain prior knowledge about the subject in question. In the case of theology, that prior knowledge entails

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[557] Edward Stillingfleet, *The Mysteries of the Christian Faith Asserted and Vindicated* (London, 1691); Daniel Waterland, *Christianity Vindicated against Infidelity: A Second Charge* (London, 1732). Some useful studies on the responses of clerical-minded thinkers to the challenge of free-thinking are: M.A. Stewart, 'Revealed religion: the British debate', in Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy, Vol. II, pp. 683–709; Nigel Aston, 'Rationalism, the Enlightenment, and Sermons', in Keith A. Francis, William Gibson et al. eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon 1689–1901* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 390–403. Aston's article has a summary section on the similarity between Berkeley, Joseph Butler, and Waterland. For an early account of Anglican responses to free-thinking, see: Norman Sykes, *From Sheldon to Secker: Aspects of English Church History 1660–1768* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), Ch. V.

believing the truth of Christianity. This effectively excludes free-thinkers from being appropriate interlocutors on theological subjects. As free-thinkers claimed to be philosophers, debates with them should be conducted in the manner of philosophical debates. And Berkeley's response to free-thinkers' arguments against Christianity takes the form of delineating the logical falsities in the art of free-thinking.

This means that Berkeley's approach is much closer to Joseph Butler's *Analogy of Religion* than Waterland's *Scripture Vindicated*.[558] But Berkeley never produced a systematic, philosophical treatment vindicating Christianity against free-thinking comparable in the scope to *Analogy of Religion*. In fact, one should keep in mind that Berkeley's criticism of free-thinking has never been produced as a self-contained philosophical system. The way in which this chapter's argument unfolds, beginning with Berkeley's dismissal of logical failures in free-thinking and concluding with his conception of enlightenment, cannot be taken as an argument for Berkeley's system of philosophical theology. This chapter's analysis of Berkeley's destruction of free-thinking only serves to provide discursive context for readers to make clearer sense of his conception of enlightenment. That it by no means signifies Berkeley's attempt at a systematic philosophical theology can be easily conceived by looking at the sources by which this chapter shapes its argument. This chapter's analysis of Berkeley's treatment of the logic of free-thinking is a reconstruction from a philosophical dialogue, whereas its investigation of Berkeley's conception of enlightenment is mostly taken from his sermons. Berkeley might well have had very distinct intentions in mind when he

[558] Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature... etc.* (London, 1736); Daniel Waterland, *Scripture Vindicated; In Answer to a Book intituled, Christianity as Old as the Creation*, Three Parts (London, 1730–2).

produced these works. Exposing the mistakes of free-thinking was a public demonstration of free-thinking's characteristic of being misleading, whilst preaching the idea of enlightenment was an attempt to reinforce the significance of divine justice and the true religion.

II

Berkeley's reworking of divine jurisprudence, which we have visited in the previous chapter, shows that human well-being is part of divine order as the general will of God intends his creation to live well. A metaphorical extension of this idea leads to an argument that the trajectory of human progress is part of revealed teleology towards the universal well-being of humankind. For Berkeley, this is a pattern that can be easily observed by one's use of reason. It thus constitutes an account of human flourishing that is in contradiction with many free-thinkers' visions of enlightenment. As we have seen in the previous chapter, in Berkeley's view, these free-thinkers' visions of enlightenment in terms of the self-realisation of rational citizens contra the tyrannical establishment of political and ecclesiastical authority is a product of the exclusion of divinity in their calculation of the progress of political society. From this point, Berkeley proceeds to argue that free-thinkers' enlightenment should be cast out of political society as it violates divine and civil laws and contradicts divine teleology. However, Berkeley's notion of divine teleology gives rise to a question that remained unsolved in the previous chapter. The idea that human progress is part of revealed teleology implies a temporal dimension of the direction towards the future state. By claiming that this notion of human progress brings a different pathology from free-thinkers' 'enlightenment', Berkeley is equally claiming a different understanding of the historicity

of human society. For free-thinkers' enlightenment, human history up to the point of time of the spread of free-thinking is a history of enslavement that requires an abrupt break, whereas, for Berkeley, human history is a gradual process leading to its finality at the advent of the future state. Yet how did Berkeley vindicate this teleological history against free-thinking's history of enslavement?

Berkeley's vindication of teleological history is closely intertwined with his vindication of the Bible. In the sixth dialogue of *Alciphron*, Berkeley presents a sharp encounter between free-thinkers' historical criticism of Scripture and his own vindication of the Bible as record of the truth. In the dialogue, Berkeley explains his conception of history according to Scripture as a 'retrospect [of] what is past [that reveals] a certain progress from darker to lighter, in the series of the Divine economy towards man'.[559] This means that the natural course of secular history corresponds with revealed teleology towards universal well-being, and that Scripture provides an empirical record of this correspondence. But this correspondence is met with the free-thinkers' intervention that challenges the historicity of Scripture with the histories of gentile nations. By tracing chronological contradiction between Scripture and the histories of nations such as Egypt and China, free-thinkers claim to have exposed the problems in the Bible's account of ancient human history and the date of creation. This gives rise to two inter-related revisions of Scripture that shape free-thinkers' scepticism. The fact that some non-Christians have knowledge of time preceding Scripture's account, in *Genesis*, indicates that Scripture's narrative can be wrong, and Scripture's account cannot be the truth. This means that Scripture is not revealed, and that it is a

[559] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 257–8.

history written by and for a specific nation with a certain political purpose, like the histories of the Egyptians and the Chinese. Scripture, in other words, has no genuine distinction from the fables of gentile nations.[560]

This was a commonplace narrative against ecclesiastical historical readings of Scripture. Berkeley's narrative of free-thinkers' scepticism combines his readings of religiously heterodox thinkers such as Spinoza, Hobbes, and Shaftesbury. Berkeley responds to them by interrogating the free-thinkers' misunderstanding of the Bible. Free-thinkers' historical criticism of Scripture appeared to Berkeley as operating on the level simply of challenging the Bible's record via a group of different sets of historical narratives. This *ars critica* is a type of textual criticism that puts the narrative of a given text in a body of related texts and examines the text by cross-references. The texts that become references for criticism also become a standard narrative that imposes its authority and validity on the text under examination. Questioning Scripture's authority and historicity by this manner of criticism therefore not only indicates one's tendency to believe and embrace fables of non-Christian nations. It also shows one's misunderstanding of Scripture.

For Berkeley, the idea that Scripture can be read alongside other ancient histories, and that the latter can constitute meaningful criticism of the former, exposes how much a reader has mistaken Scripture for human history. As we have seen, Berkeley understands Scripture as a record of revealed will of God; hence it is a written form of divine and natural law. Subsequently, its authority cannot be overthrown by histories of humankind. Human history can, at most, demonstrate 'the obscurity of

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[560] Ibid., pp. 258–69.

some parts of Scripture'. But that obscurity lies in the Bible's historicity, not authority: 'The books of Holy Scripture were written in ancient languages, at distant times, on sundry occasions, and very different subjects'; therefore, it is 'reasonable to imagine that some parts or passages might have been' 'obscure to us, who speak another language, and live in other times'.[561] One is reminded of Berkeley's emphasis on the temporal dimension of the 'Divine economy' for universal well-being. Scripture's passages that appear to be obscure to the present reader are not intended to be revealed to the present time; either because they were revealed to a family or a nation in a particular, historical past, or that they are intended for future generations: 'Scriptures not understood, at one time, or by one person, may be understood at another time, or by other persons.' Scripture's obscurity, in short, is caused by the temporal condition that restricts human understanding of the divine will. The obscurity is on the part of the reader rather than in Scripture, and it can by no means be used to reject Scripture's authority as divine and natural law.

Underlying this rejection of *ars critica* in free-thinking is Berkeley's conception that human history is finite and is conditioned in the temporal structure framed by revealed teleology. For Berkeley, free-thinking's preoccupations with treating Scripture as human history and with dismissing its authority emerge from their 'vain humour of extending the antiquity of nations beyond the truth'.[562] The problem with this 'vain humour' is that, by rejecting Scripture, one is equally rejecting the divine teleology for universal well-being. Free-thinkers begin from this point, and pursue their own project for improvement, which is deduced from their construction of an alternative history of

[561] Ibid., pp. 234–6.
[562] Ibid., pp. 262–3.

progress contra revealed teleology. Berkeley was deeply troubled by this, and the second part of *Alciphron* endeavoured to demonstrate the philosophical falsities in this framing of free-thinking's history.[563]

The logical fallacies in free-thinking's criticisms are not restricted to the kind of categorical mistake that questions the record of divine will with narratives of human history. Berkeley explicates the criticism made by free-thinkers so as to expose the questionable parts of their thought. First, free-thinking's criticism operates on the ground of a presumption that takes various gentile historical accounts as a unified source conflicting with the Bible's accounts.[564] This then shapes the argument that, insofar as the Bible is inconsistent with various historical records, the Bible's claim to truth should be called into question. There are further indications. That the Bible's records are not true nor revealed because of its inconsistencies with gentile histories indicates that the validity of the Bible and Christianity can only be justified by gentile nations. So, being asked by Crito whether he 'would have Jews or heathens attest to the truths of Christianity', Alciphron's answer is affirmative: 'That is the very thing I want.'[565]

For Berkeley, each part of this criticism begs questions. From a different perspective, free-thinkers themselves are aware of the categorical difference between the Bible and gentile histories. Gentile histories are records of historians' observations, whilst the Bible is a text 'established by law'. Implicit in this distinction is the Mandevillian thesis that Christianity is a civil religion precisely in the sense that it is a device of political authority for taming humanity. Therefore free-thinkers 'give them

[563] The sixth and the seventh dialogues of *Alciphron* vindicate the truth of Christianity against free-thinking's historical scepticism, and demonstrate a series of problematic assumptions that shape their arguments. Ibid., pp. 219–86, 286–330.
[564] Ibid., pp. 227–33.
[565] Ibid., p. 273.

(gentile histories) a preference before the Bible'.[566] This brings back the aforementioned misunderstanding of the Bible as free-thinkers fundamentally ignore its divine nature. However, as Berkeley shows, the question in hand is not entirely about categorical division. The essential question is whether one would believe the record of the Bible or that of gentile historians. Free-thinkers justify their choice of the latter by the inconsistencies between the Bible and gentile histories. But they do not take into account the inconsistencies between different gentile historical accounts. Here Berkeley refers to the well-known statement that three Egyptian authors, Manetho, Chæremon, and Lysimachus, had given three 'inconsistent accounts' regarding Exodus.[567]

Demonstrating the inconsistencies within gentile histories prepares two criticisms against free-thinkers' *ars critica*. On the one hand, if the logic of free-thinkers' scepticism towards Christianity is based on their discoveries of inconsistencies between the Bible and gentile histories, then, considering the inconsistencies within gentile historical accounts, free-thinkers should provide a legitimate procedure of consolidating a truest historical text amongst these histories, before they can determine that gentile histories constitute a more valid testimony to antiquity than the Bible. On the other hand, this challenges the truthfulness of free-thinkers' speculation. It becomes clear that free-thinkers have different policy towards the Bible in comparison with their use of gentile histories. For them, the Bible's inconsistencies merit their criticisms and justifies their scepticism, whilst the contradictions within gentile historical accounts are understandable for being part of the nature of narratives on national traditions. Insofar

[566] Ibid., p. 265.
[567] This statement is examined in George Pretyman's *An Introduction to the Study of the Bible; being the Fourth Edition of the First Volume of the Elements of Christian Theology* (London, 1801), pp. 26–30.

as truthfulness is considered, Berkeley would have free-thinkers not to 'reconcile Moses with profane historians, till you have first reconciled them one with another.'[568]

The question about free-thinkers' truthfulness is put under further interrogation.[569] As Berkeley shows, in addition to their silence about the inconsistencies between gentile histories, free-thinkers also ignore records of magic and miracle in these documents. In Berkeley's views, this is not insignificant, particularly because the Bible's accounts of miracle are the main subject of free-thinkers' attacks on Christianity. Berkeley demonstrates how free-thinkers admire Porphyry for having 'most learnedly confuted the Scripture' and lament the loss of his writings without acknowledging the fact that he also 'had a great opinion of wizards and necromancers.'[570] This kind of different approach towards the Bible and gentile histories shape Berkeley's idea that free-thinkers are prejudicial to Christianity.

The logical failure of free-thinkers' comparative method becomes more evident when they turn to Hebrew historical writing in order to discredit the Bible. What Berkeley had in mind here was the dispute over the authenticity of the Roman-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus' account of Jesus. The passage in question is famously called Testimonium Flavianum (the testimony of Flavius Josephus), denoting the third passage of the third chapter in the eighteenth book of Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* (*Jewish*

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[568] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 265–6.

[569] The language of this analysis of Berkeley's criticism of free-thinkers' preference for gentile histories being truer than the Bible, which leads to his questioning of the truthfulness of free-thinkers, is alluding to Bernard Williams's genealogical construction of the paradox between truth and truthfulness. Williams begins his study with a case of historical truth, stating that one's criticism of a previously established historical truth necessarily indicates that one truthfully frames one's question in search of an alternative historical truth. It should be noted that I am not suggesting that Berkeley anticipates Williams, nor am I arguing that Williams's genealogy is in the spirit of Berkeley, or vice versa. The allusion to Williams is merely based on the idea that his language is helpful for illustrating how Berkeley problematises free-thinkers' turn to gentile histories. Bernard Williams, *Truth and Truthfulness: An Essay in Genealogy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[570] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 268–9.

Antiquities):

> About the time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.[571]

Berkeley designs the dialogue between Alciphron and Crito on this passage in a manner that vividly captures how free-thinkers have failed in properly explaining the text. Addressing this passage, Alciphron notes that Josephus's record of Jesus mentions 'nothing of the character, miracles, and doctrine of that extraordinary person'. For Alciphron, provided that Josephus' history of the Jewish people was widely acknowledged as a credible historical text, its lack of mentioning of both Jesus's principles and the activities of the Apostles sufficiently reveals that the Bible's records of Jesus and the Apostles might be questionable.[572]

In Berkeley's view, Alciphron's argument is, of course, strikingly naïve and can be easily dismissed by some considerations of the context of Josephus' writing. He forges his counter-argument in Crito's response to Alciphron. The first step is clarifying the logical leap. The absence of an event in one text does not legitimately constitute a valid criticism of the record of that event in another, contemporary text. That *Jewish Antiquities* does not spend a great amount of space describing Jesus' teachings and

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[571] Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities, Vol. VIII, Books 18-19* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 48–51.
[572] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 269.

miracles, as well as Apostles' activities, in detail cannot be taken as a valid evidence for claiming the Bible to be false. Alciphron's argument is derived from a preconditioned question: if the Bible's accounts are true, how can they not appear in different historical records, particularly in one that covers similar temporal-spatial and national theme, such as *Jewish Antiquities*? The question is intended to discredit the Bible, and its direct answer is liable to be prejudicial. A more meaningful question, however, should be: why did Josephus not write about Jesus and the Apostles in more details? That is Crito's question, and Crito manifestly shows that one cannot have a satisfying answer without recourse to the purpose and the context of *Jewish Antiquities*.

As Crito argues, Josephus was not writing a Christian history, nor was he writing for Christians. His was a history for the Jewish people, by presenting a historical account of that nation. His intention was 'to give his country some figure in the eye of the world, which had been greatly prejudiced against the Jews and knew little of their history, to which end the life and death of our Saviour would not in any wise have conduced'. Insofar as the author's intention is concerned, it is quite natural that Josephus did not expand much space on Jesus and the Apostles. Furthermore, Josephus might not have any personal knowledge of the Apostles' activities after the ascension of Jesus, 'if it be considered that the apostles in a few years after our Saviour's death departed from Jerusalem, setting themselves to convert the gentiles, and were dispersed throughout the world'. Crito goes on to remind the reader that one also has to considered that Josephus was a literary man, and belonged to a class of society that was not initially the intended audience of the Gospel. Just as *Jewish Antiquities* was not intended to be an account of Christian antiquity, the Gospel was not intended for a

more privileged class of the Jewish people. It would, then, be unsurprising that the Gospel, 'which in its first propagation seemed to overlook the great or considerable men of this world', be 'overlooked by them, as a thing not suited to their apprehensions and way of thinking'.[573] Subsequently, Crito summarises: 'I cannot comprehend why any man should conclude against the truth of the Gospel from Josephus' omitting to speak of it, any more than from his omitting to embrace it.'[574]

One question remains in Josephus' account of Jesus. Regardless of Alciphron's scepticism, Josephus did talk about resurrection, and that brings in the essential question centring on the disputes between Berkeley and free-thinkers: that is, whether early records of miracles can be trusted? This is a Hobbesian question: 'whether what wee see done, be a Miracle; whether the Miracle we hear, or read of, were a reall work, and not the Act of a tongue, or pen; but in plain terms, whether the report be true, or a lye.'[575] For Hobbes, the question is politically meaningful only in a Christian commonwealth, for that requires one appeals to the 'Publique Reason' when facing the question, otherwise one can freely choose to believe or unbelieve, according to one's private reason, whether an account of miracle is genuine or not. That public reason is only legitimate to judge the question when it is a lawfully established church, an *ecclesia legitima* defined as 'A company of men professing Christian Religion, united in the person of one Sovereign; at whose command they ought to assemble, and without whose authority they ought not to assemble.'[576] But in *Leviathan* this is a pseudo-argument. Having a church lawfully established in this sense necessarily

[573] Ibid., pp. 269–71.
[574] Ibid., p. 272.
[575] *Leviathan*, p. 696.
[576] Ibid., p. 732.

generates two sovereigns in a commonwealth, inserts dual citizenships in every citizen's political self, and gives rise to civil war between 'the Church and State' in the commonwealth and between 'the Christian, and the Man' in individuals.[577] If one takes into the account the formation of commonwealth from the state of nature as the necessary precondition for human well-being, one naturally arrives at the conclusion that there cannot be *ecclesia legitima* in any commonwealth, as it would logically dissolve the stability of political society. The significance of this political argument is strengthened by Hobbes's historical affirmation that Jesus' kingdom is not of this world. Consequently, the ecclesiastical power claimed to be transformed from his sovereignty is neither effective nor legitimate in this life.

Berkeley returns to examine the primary question. The way in which free-thinkers frame their question about the credibility of Christian accounts of miracles follows their undertaking regarding the contradictions within Christian records.[578] If miracles are performed as a divine intervention in the natural world, how does one make sense of the contradictions between accounts of the direct performance of this divine and arbitrary power? Why would such power allow inconsistencies, and cease to perform so as to reconcile these contradictions? In Berkeley's view, this is how free-thinkers develop their impiety from questions about biblical inconsistencies to those about the legitimacy of Christian principles and the existence of an omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient God. But, again, this development is the consequence of logical failure. There is yet another categorical mistake in free-thinking. Biblical inconsistencies are a matter for theological disputes between professional theologians.

[577] Ibid., p. 734.
[578] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 274–5.

This means that they are disputes within a specific branch of human knowledge regarding the relationship of humankind to God. The question about whether 'the book of Job be a history or a parable' is no more than a question about the validity of the theory of the circulation of blood.[579] The question about the existence of God and the legitimacy of Christian principles, however, is a broader question. It is a matter of one's faith, and, as we have seen in the previous chapter, directly touches on the issue of one's status in the divine jurisprudence.

For Berkeley, being a Christian, after all, is a matter of faith. 'Who ever supposed that scientific proofs are necessary to make a Christian? Faith alone is required'.[580] An exhausting search into scientific evidence for every passage in the Bible does not necessarily make one a more pious Christian. On the contrary, it more often than not leads one to be deluded by one's increasing confidence in one's rationality. The truth of Christianity does not require any exhaustive research. It can be plainly observed by looking at the order of the natural world. That, of course, does not mean that research is unnecessary. But research might be conducted according to questionable methods and lead to wrong conclusions. A research into the resurrection ignoring evidence provided by first-hand testimonies of the apostles and suggesting that the resurrection has to be allegorical, as Spinoza did, is of this sort, and it can do more harm than justice to human well-being.[581]

In Berkeley's view, this series of logical mistakes somewhat deludes free-thinkers from recognising the general course of Christian history. Here one can see the

[579] Ibid., pp. 275–7.
[580] Ibid., p. 280.
[581] Ibid., pp. 280–4.

substantial difference between Berkeley's and free-thinkers' understanding of human history and the trajectory of human progress. We have seen that free-thinkers envision the state of genuine happiness in terms of an enlightened age in which human beings will have been delivered from the enslavement of Christianity, and that Berkeley understands that state as a future state after the second coming of Jesus Christ. One might think these are two different, if not conflicting, conjectures, and whether one is truer than the other is a matter that can only be reconciled by time. But Berkeley suggests that, with recourse to empirical evidences, the validity of these conjectures can be ostensibly judged. Free-thinkers' conjectural progress essentially argues that human beings will live in a better age without Christianity, whereas Berkeley's divine teleology explicitly shows that genuine happiness is only possible in Christian temporality. The question of which one of these two conjectures about the future of human well-being is more credible can be easily resolved by a comparative, historical question: was the state of affairs in ancient, pre-Christian Greece or Rome better than the present, Christian Britain?

Berkeley's answer is clear. The present, British society is much more improved than ancient Greece and Rome. The idea that modern British society is better than ancient city republics is not to be conceived in Mandevilllian or Humean language of commercial prosperity.[582] British society is a better society because its religion contains more truth than pagan religions.[583] Of course, British society is not without vices, as Greco-Roman society was not without virtue. Yet this is plainly because British society has impious, unchristian people, as Greco-Roman society had their pious citizens. That

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[582] Hume, 'Of commerce', in Idem., *Essays*, pp. 253–67.
[583] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 183.

British society might appear not be better off than Greco-Roman society 'is not owing to the Christian religion, but to the want of it.'[584] An extension of this point is that the virtue of Greco-Roman society emerges from contingent moments when citizens come to grasp the truth shared by Christianity, whereas the vices of British society are the inescapable consequence when the British people defy Christian principles.[585]

Berkeley's recourse to historical comparison has several implications. The empirical case of a Christian society being more improved than an unchristian one indicates that free-thinkers' conjecture is without empirical foundation and remains mere speculation. It also shows that the thesis that human betterment is part of divine teleology and that human progress is closely intertwined with Christianisation is genuinely accountable. It further strengthens Berkeley's warning against free-thinking's enlightenment. The spread of a theory of betterment in terms of the de-Christianisation of political society not only theoretically but also empirically carries one away from the trajectory of improvement and introduces crises that will threaten the stability of the British state, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Crito conveniently summarises Berkeley's position: 'Under the Christian religion this nation hath been greatly improved. From a sort of savages, we have grown civil, polite, and learned. We have made a decent and noble figure both at home and abroad. And, as our religion decreaseth, I am afraid we shall be found to have declined.'[586]

For Berkeley, free-thinking's use of gentile histories does not constitute effective criticism of Christianity, and its alternative theory of progress contra Christian teleology

[584] Ibid., p. 184.
[585] Ibid., pp. 184–97.
[586] Ibid., p. 217.

lacks philosophical scrutiny and empirical validity. It is more a language of crises, if anything, than a project for happiness. This is understandable, as free-thinkers intention is not exactly about improving the human condition; they care more about destroying Christianity.[587] A more meaningful enquiry about human well-being would not be about the credibility of biblical accounts. It would be about possible ways in which one can sense the divine will so as to cooperate with the divine design.

III

The conflict between Berkeley and free-thinking, as presented in the contradiction between the Bible and gentile histories, is essentially a contradiction raised by different philosophical positions. As shown in the seventh dialogue of *Alciphron* and many other writings that have been examined in this dissertation, Berkeley thinks free-thinking is a vain attempt at a misguided project for human flourishing, based on fundamentally erroneous understanding of knowledge. We have seen in the first part of this dissertation that what Berkeley considered to be the errors of free-thinking can be pinned down to two categories: their methodological inadequacy and epistemological misassumption.

These two inter-related mistakes directly influence one's apprehension of one's relationship to the natural world. According to free-thinking, truth is to be understood as 'absolute certainty' that can be scientifically established and demonstrated. In this vein of thought, Christianity can never become truth because its contentions cannot be examined in mathematical language, despite the fact that, 'upon the whole', one 'could not deny several probable reasons were produced for embracing the Christian faith'.[588]

[587] Ibid., pp. 281–5.
[588] Ibid., pp. 286–7.

Philosophical truth is quintessentially mathematical truth. This method is intertwined with an assumption about the nature of language: words are signs and symbols, and they are only meaningful when they stand for corresponding ideas. According to this assumption, the nature of human knowledge and thinking is ordering and re-ordering a chain of ideas that can be expressed in the form of words, which can naturally be translated into a different system of denotation, such as mathematics. The statement that one knows something essentially indicates that one has a clear idea of the subject in question that can be expressed in words. Applying this method to examine Christianity exposes the fact that Christianity is founded on the public's 'blind reverence for religious faith and mystery', due to the lack of this philosophical clarity. Alciphron characteristically singles out the significance of 'Grace' to every branch of Christian faith, and argues that this term is only meaningful in everyday usages when it denotes a sense of beauty or an expression of favour. The term has no clear meaning in theological disputes, as one cannot reckon 'the clear and distinct idea marked by the word'. Consequently, 'it can be neither the subject of a rational dispute, nor the object of real faith.'[589] In other words, it cannot be properly known.

This philosophical method underpins free-thinking's criticism of Christian discourse, including testimonies of Christian miracles and evidence for its historicity. But, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, in Berkeley's view, this substratum is not without questions. The immediate question is about its substantial assumption. Is the relationship between words and ideas as arbitrary as free-thinkers have thought? Is the meaningfulness of a word necessarily conditioned by its status of standing for a clear

[589] Ibid., pp. 289–90.

and specific idea? With an illuminating case, Berkeley shows that the answer to these two questions are negative. The case Berkeley takes is the word 'Number'. 'Number' signifies a series of 'numeral names and characters, and all particular numeral things.' But they do not constitute a single, clear idea for which 'Number' stands. At best, they are sources or references that assist or ascertain one's explanation or understanding of 'Number'. Nevertheless, lacking a clear idea does not render 'Number' meaningless, nor does it make 'Number' redundant. 'Number' remains instrumental to our conception of numeral things and to our use of numeral names. It substantially contributes to the management of our everyday life, and is 'of such necessary use that we should not know now to do without' it. In this sense, the mystery of 'Number' is not less mysterious than 'any mystery in religion.'[590]

With the case of 'Number', Berkeley basically argues that the meaning of 'Number' and, with certain extension, 'Grace' is not to be evaluated by whether one can form a clear, distinctive idea of the term. The idea that something is meaningless because one cannot conceive an abstract, general idea of the word signifying the subject in question commits yet another categorical mistake. Words are symbols. Having a clear idea of a symbol only means that one can successfully make sense of the symbol as a signifier without further references to other symbols. This, however, does not mean that the failure of assigning one distinctive, corresponding idea to a symbol indicates that one cannot make sense of the word. Moreover, it does not mean that one can dismiss the meaning of the symbol to human life. For Berkeley, the free-thinkers' mistake is that they confuse two sets of meanings. There is a meaning in a pure

[590] Ibid., pp. 291–3.

linguistic sense as the definition and explanation of a word. Yet there is also a meaning in a broader dimension that denotes the relationship of the signified subject to human activities. Free-thinkers first wrongly think that one cannot define or explain a word without having an abstract, distinctive idea of the word, and continue to err as they mistake the verbal meaning of the word for its effects in various human relations.[591]

For Berkeley, a more valuable enquiry would be examining the second sense of meaning. If one can accept this point, one shall easily come to understand that signs 'have other uses besides barely standing for and exhibiting ideas'. They 'may imply or suggest the relations of things' that one cannot comprehend without 'the help of signs'. In this sense, signs 'direct and enable us to act with regard to things'. If one further expands on this point to include intellectual activities operating on the basis of signs, one shall arrive at the conclusion that 'the true end of speech, reason, science, faith, assent, in all its different degrees, is not merely, or principally, or always, the imparting or acquiring of ideas, but rather something of an active operative nature, tending to a conceived good: which may sometimes be obtained, not only although the ideas marked are not offered to the mind, but even although there should be no possibility of offering or exhibiting any such idea to the mind'.[592] The meaning of religion, as that of philosophy and mathematics, is not to be understood in terms of its use in enhancing verbal clarity. The significance of religion and science lies in their effects in directing, governing, and regulating the human mind, avoiding its natural weakness in order for humankind to arrive at a better end.

For Berkeley, correct understanding of the meaning of religion and other

[591] Ibid., pp. 303–7.
[592] Ibid., p. 307.

intellectual activities leads one to appreciate the significance of divine teleology: humankind is created with a rational faculty for intellectual activities that will lead it to a better future. However, this articulation invites one important question: can one put religion in the same category with philosophy, mathematics, and other branches of science? The point at the heart of the question is about the relationship of religion to reason. Berkeley's argument for the meaning of religion is built on a parallel between Christian doctrines and mathematical language, claiming that one's making sense of both shall effectively direct one's life towards a better direction. It implies that Christianity and sciences are reasonable, and that having faith in Christianity is as rational as believing in scientifically established truth. This is a contradiction with free-thinkers' conception of the nature of Christianity, which is summarised in the words of Alciphron. Christianity 'implies the worship of God, which worship supposeth rewards and punishments, which suppose merits and demerits, actions good and evil, and these suppose human liberty, a thing impossible and, consequently, religion, a thing built thereon, must be unreasonable absurd thing.'[593]

Alciphron's argument that Christianity is unreasonable is plainly rooted in the supposed contradiction between Christianity's presupposition of human being as free agents and the materialist physiology that understands human being as corporeal organism. At the heart of this argument is the idea that the human being is unfree, a conclusion which arises from mechanical physiology: 'Corporeal objects strike on the organs of sense, whence ensures a vibration in the nerves, which, being communicated to the soul or animal spirit in the brain or root of the nerves, produceth therein that

[593] Ibid., p. 309.

motion called volition: and this produceth a new determination in the spirits, causing them to flow into such nerves as must necessarily by the laws of mechanism produce such certain actions.' In other words, human actions are determined by mechanical laws and cannot be taken as the performance of free will. This explanation leaves room for counter-arguments that begin with a theory of physiology supposing that the mind is incorporeal. And Alciphron continues to show that, insofar as one theorises human actions by mechanical laws, the same argument shall stand under different presuppositions. A mechanical explanation of how the mind operate with the assumption that the mind is incorporeal can be summarised as follows: when the mind encounters an object, 'First, the understanding considers it: in the next place, the judgment decrees about it, as a thing to be chosen or rejected, to be omitted or done, in this or that manner: and this decree of the judgment doth necessarily determine the will, whose office is merely to execute what is ordained by another faculty: consequently, there is no such thing as freedom of the will.' This mechanism constitutes a chain of necessity. 'The will, being ever concluded and controlled by the judgment, is in all cases alike under necessity.' The understanding 'must necessarily' perceive things as ways in which things present themselves. Even Reason 'cannot infer indifferently any thing from any thing, but is limited by the nature and connexion of things, and the eternal rules of reasoning.'[594]

One might argue that Berkeley's reconstruction of this materialist theory has two purposes. Alciphron's arguments indicate that Christianity is a religion based on the idea of free will, and show that this idea cannot withstand scientific examination by

[594] Ibid., pp. 309–12.

either a corporeal theory of human actions or a Lockean mechanism of the mind.[595] But this only reveals that the new science, conceived in this sense as principally constituted by material and mechanical explanations, is essentially incompatible with Christianity. It is the outcome of circular reasoning. Free-thinking begins with the premise that Christianity is sceptical because it is unlikely to withstand being contested by mechanical principles, and justifies the premise because Christianity has failed to pass the examination of mechanical principles. There is another point. Alciphron's argumentations basically use mechanical explanation in answering the question of whether human beings are created to be free. This is an application of the laws of the physical world for solution to a metaphysical question. It invites questions about methodology and the accuracy of free-thinkers' physiological knowledge. One can also ask how, accepting the conclusion that humans are not free, one should make sense of 'free-thinking' and its vocation to 'free' human beings from ecclesiastical and political authority. And, as Berkeley shows, dismissing these arguments only requires one plain question about freedom.

A debate about whether human beings are free presupposes a question about the definition of freedom. According to Alciphron, free-thinkers' idea of freedom, is 'a power to act or not to act, without prescription or control'. If one accepts free-thinkers' mechanism that human actions are necessarily controlled by judgement, judgement by reason, and reason by perception, which is conditioned by the object being perceived, one naturally concludes that human beings cannot be free, because 'that which is necessary cannot be free.'[596] And one can continue to argue that, insofar as humans are

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[595] Berkeley's criticism of this argument is discussed in the first chapter.
[596] Ibid., pp. 311–12.

unfree, Christianity cannot be properly understood by human reason because it is a religion built on the idea of human beings as free agents being responsible for their moral consequences in the future state. In other words, insofar as human beings are not free, believing in divine justice and future judgement on actions in this life is unreasonable. Berkeley's counter-argument begins with a somewhat similar idea of freedom: 'a man is said to be free so far forth as he can do what he will.' Alciphron agrees with this definition, but there is nuance in the criteria of the status of being free. Free-thinkers require absolute freedom in a chain of necessity, which renders freedom impossible, whereas, for Berkeley, insofar as one is 'acting according to [one's] will', one 'is to be accounted free.'[597]

Arguing in this way, Berkeley easily dismisses free-thinkers' archaeology of human freedom. Human beings are free insofar as their actions are understood as the capability to perform their will; that is to say, one not only has the power to will, but also has the power to put what one wills into practice. Yet understandably, free-thinkers would not find Berkeley's account persuasive, as Alciphron concedes: 'This [idea of freedom] I admit to be true in the vulgar sense. But a philosopher goes higher, and inquires whether man be free to will.' However, this is only begging the question. Free-thinkers have accepted the definition of freedom as one's capability of doing what one wills. As the result of this, the nature of the question 'whether man be free to will', which underlies free-thinkers' mechanical explanation, has been transformed. The question is no longer about the status of being free. It has become a question about capability: 'whether [one] can will as [one] wills?'[598] Pursuing an answer to this question

[597] Ibid., p. 316.
[598] Ibid., p. 316.

is idle speculation, and it is the tendency towards being trapped in such speculation that turns free-thinkers into minute philosophers.

For Berkeley, the problems of free-thinking in this vein can be pinned down to their circular reasoning. Their argumentations and deductions are served to satisfy their premise, which is in fact their conclusion: Christianity is unreasonable.[599] This is in turn based on the categorical opposition 'between reason and religion, faith and knowledge, nature and grace', which gives rise to the idea that 'the way to promote religion was to quench the light of nature and discourage all rational identity.'[600] The consequence of this is that free-thinking's arguments often centre around the notion that one cannot make sense of Christianity, or, to be more precise, that one cannot make sense of an almighty God that created and actively governs the natural world, whose presence is the legitimate foundation of Christianity.

Conceived in this sense, the genuine question concerning the reasonableness of Christianity should be about how one can make sense of God's relationship to his creation. And a useful way of framing one's question is about the *modus operandi* of divine justice. What vexed Berkeley was ways in which free-thinkers avoided this more meaningful question, and conducted their philosophy in circular reasoning with questionable propositions. For one convenient example of this problem, free-thinking's argument for the unreasonableness of Christianity is formulated in terms of the question about the freedom of will. But the question regarding the reasonableness of Christianity is less about the freedom of will than about whether one can have a reasonable understanding of will and its consequences. As Berkeley shows,

[599] Ibid., p. 316.
[600] Ibid., p. 325.

free-thinking's discussion of human beings being unfree is merely a device for ridiculing divine judgement: if one is unfree, one is not accountable to be rewarded or punished. But this is nothing more than vain speculation, as one can certainly make sense of ideas that God can create a free agent, that such an agent can independently think and act, and that such an agent's thought and act are accountable to be rewarded or punished.[601] In other words, one can certainly make sense of the *modus operandi* of divine justice. And this constitutes the direct evidence of the reasonableness of the presence of God and Christianity.

There is another dimension of the reasonableness of divine justice. One can conceive divine justice in a utilitarian sense, as this formulation of reward and punishment is useful in assisting one make sense of moral responsibility and in maintaining social stability, particularly in spheres beyond the regulation of civil jurisprudence. This is what constitutes Berkeley's criticism of Shaftesbury in the third dialogue of *Alciphron*, which we have visited in the third chapter. The idea of beauty and harmony entails the ideal of balance and harmony, which is only possible when the order is maintained by a system of judgements and laws.[602] Shaftesbury's admiration of the beautiful harmony of the natural world, and his argument that an ideal political society should be modelled as mimesis of that natural order, ignore the fact that such beauty is conditioned by the laws of nature, which is essentially divine law, and that human society is part of the natural order in the system of divine jurisprudence. Here we arrive at a significant theme in Berkeley's conception of divine teleology: divine law and the operation of divine justice.

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[601] Ibid., pp. 312–3.
[602] Ibid., pp. 128–30.

IV

On Berkeley's part, there is a group of substantial concepts in his teleological history: the immortality of the soul and the rewards and punishments in the future state. These concepts were so fundamental to Berkeley that he hardly presents any lengthy treatment of them. However, a careful reading of his writings on the subject shows that Berkeley combines two intimately related approaches to the subject that were not uncommon amongst his contemporaries. The first is a juridical construction, as Berkeley argues that the immortality of the soul and the future state are instrumental to a logical, human understanding of the operation of divine justice regulating the behaviours of this life. The second is a historical demonstration, showing that a religious sense of the immortality of the soul is instrumental to the stability and the prosperity of political society.

One important step towards a juridical construction of the operation of divine justice is to examine its reasonableness. There are two intentions. The first is to suggest that, if reason can make sense of the operation of divine justice, then it cannot be superstitious imagination. The other is the extension of the first. Once one can reasonably understand the operation of divine justice without the pretext of Christianity, one cannot return to free-thinking's criticism of the concept of the future state. This what Berkeley was doing in writing his essay on the future state: 'I shall in this paper endeavor to evince that there are grounds to expect a future state, without supposing in the reader any faith at all, not even the belief of a Deity.'[603] The most important evidence in this essay is Plato's story on the last judgement in *Gorgias*.

[603] 'The future state', in *Works VII*, p. 181.

In *Gorgias*, the divine law legislated by Cronos determines the destiny of the human soul in eternity, and remains effective as the jurisprudential foundation of divine justice. The common believe of divine law under Cronos' reign follows the basic principle of justice that the souls of those who have lived virtuously shall live in full happiness after death, whereas the souls of those who have not lived a virtuous life shall be damned and punished. In this divine jurisprudence, the final judgement takes place on the day when one's life is to end, but before one dies. The system soon faces the problem of misjudgement, as the gods come to realise that more often than not the wicked will successfully trick the judge and unfittingly enjoy eternal happiness whilst the good suffer eternal damnation. After careful reassessment of the procedure of judgement, Zeus arrives at the conclusion that the problem is caused by judgement before death, as the corporeal presence of the person being judged might deceive the judge by its beauty and strength, which not infrequently conceal the defects of the mind. The solution is to postpone the judgement to the moment after death, and to change the form of judgement from a judgement of corporeal presence to a spiritual judgement, so that the mind can be properly assessed.[604]

For Berkeley, the story conveys an important message that requires careful interpretation. The fact that the gods can be deceived by the physical presence of the person being judged indicates that the principle of justice cannot be fully performed in the realm of this life. Insofar as the mind is concealed by physical presence, and the sense of judgement can be deceived by physical sensations, the distribution of rewards

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[604] Berkeley had Cronos translated as Saturn, and Zeus as Jove. And he turned Zeus' decision into a conclusion consented by the gods. See Ibid., p. 182. Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, in Idem., *Gorgias, Menexenus, Protagoras*, ed. Malcolm Schofield, trans. Tom Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 109–10.

and punishments is liable to become unjust. The gods' solution in the *Gorgias* directly argues for the incomplete nature of justice in this life and the necessity of future judgement and the future state as essential condition for justice to be fully established.[605] This leads to a crucial point. In Berkeley's interpretation, *Gorgias*' story that justice is liable to become unjust in this life becomes an argument that one can only make full sense of justice in an image of future judgement and the future state. In other words, making sense of judgement necessarily entails making sense of the state of affairs in the future and life after death. This is a logical proof of the reasonableness of the future state and future judgement, whilst Plato's capacity to conceive the future state without being a Christian can be taken as a demonstrative evidence.

The story of *Gorgias* also demonstrates the reasonableness of the immortality of the soul. Accepting the argument that one can make sense of the immortality of the soul appears to be a natural outcome once one can appreciate the necessity of the future state. In fact, this is what Berkeley argues in another essay, 'Immortality'. Once one embraces the conclusion that the idea of a future state is rational, one shall not have difficulty in conceiving a soul being immortal as the indispensable subject of future reward and punishment.[606] The meaning of this closely intertwined connection between the future state and the immortality of the soul not only has philosophical or theological significance. It has a pragmatic, social meaning as it stabilises one's mind by affirming one's confidence in the certainty and necessity of justice. Whatever one suffers unjustly in this life will be compensated in the future.[607] It constitutes one's confidence in the

[605] 'The future state', in *Works VII*, pp. 181–2.
[606] 'Immortality', in *Works VII*, pp. 223.
[607] Ibid., p. 222.

operation of divine justice.

Such formulation of the reasonableness of divine justice shapes Berkeley's conception of justice. A meaningful understanding of justice is to be conceived on the basis of an idea of divine justice. Divine justice explains the imperfection of judgement that miscarries reward and punishment in this life, rendering it meaningful as partial justice whose full significance will be completed in the future state. Otherwise one will inevitably arrive at the conclusion that the imperfect reward and punishment in this life is unjust, a conclusion that might lead to questioning the meaning and the existence of justice. This argument is very similar to Leibniz's explication of the concept of justice. Leibniz rejects the Hobbesian idea of justice as force, and argues that justice is a combination of good and wisdom.[608] It means that justice in itself cannot be tending to evil, as a tendency to evil means either that the subject's property is not good, hence it is attracted by evil, or that the subject is unwise, hence it mistakes evil as good. This principle indicates that justice cannot unduly reward the wicked and punish the good, and that, therefore, the imperfect distribution of reward and punishment in this life cannot be just, unless it is part of divine justice that will fully reward and punish the deserved party in the future state.[609]

The necessity of divine justice entails the necessity of divine, natural law, as the governance of a just god necessarily introduces the divine, just law. Like Berkeley, Leibniz criticices Pufendorf's natural law theory for ignoring reason's property as instilled by the divine will and as the 'efficient cause' of natural law.[610] His reworking of

[608] Leibniz, *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice*, in Idem., *Political Writings*, ed. Patrick Riley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 47–8.
[609] Ibid., pp. 50–3.
[610] Idem., *The Principles of Pufendorf*, in Ibid., pp. 74–5.

the divine origin of natural law also brings him to argue for providential sociability. Leibniz's is a formal logical demonstration. He distinguishes six forms of natural societies, from husband and wife, parents and children, master and slave to household, civil society, and the Church of God. In this structure, justice is conformed with natural law as the duty and the mean to preserve and promote each of these natural societies.[611] An implication of this theory of natural sociability is that justice and natural law are installed for the existence and the improvement of natural societies by the author of the nature; that is to say, there is an implicit teleology towards the 'general and supreme happiness' in the progress of natural societies. Hence Leibniz argues that, if the system operates perfectly, these various forms of natural societies shall be united under the sixth society, the Church of God, which signifies the rule of God.[612]

One can easily discern the principle in Leibniz's argumentation. Insofar as human society is natural, it is the subject of natural law. And insofar as society is the subject of natural law, it is part of divine order. This is also the principle of Berkeley's argument for divine order and providential sociability. We have explored this theme in *Passive Obedience* in the previous chapter. Berkeley himself provided a brief summary of this view in an essay, 'The bond of society'. In this essay, Berkeley argues that, as confirmed by recent discoveries in astronomy other branches of the new science, natural phenomena are regulated by certain supreme law, and that, in the same vein of argument, one can equally observe the there is a higher law regulating the spiritual, moral dimension of human community. Combining both accounts leads to the conclusion that:

[611] Idem., *On Natural Law*, in Ibid., pp. 77–9.
[612] Ibid., p. 80.

> If we consider the whole scope of the creation that lies within our view, the moral and intellectual, as well as the natural and corporeal, we shall perceive throughout a certain correspondence of the parts, a similitude of operation and unity of design, which plainly demonstrate the universe to be the work of one infinitely good and wise Being; and that the system of thinking beings is actuated by laws derived from the same divine power which ordained those by which the corporeal system is upheld.[613]

This affirms Berkeley's thesis. The natural world, including human society, is ordained by divine law and is part of the divine economy of God's governance. So far Berkeley was able to demonstrate the reasonableness of divine justice without explicit reference to Christianity. But, as he soon reveals, what he has demonstrated is exactly what a Christian would call 'the Christian idea of god'. It was Berkeley's contention that human beings by rational observation can understand divine messages to different degrees. But it is only through Christianity, as the true religion directly taught by God, that one can fully comprehend the divine order and the secrets of the natural world. This can be plainly seen by the fact that Christianity provides the most acute accounts of the attributes of God and his creation.[614] For Berkeley, the magnificence of divine governance can be easily summarised by St. Paul's message that 'The Lord is an invisible spirit, in whom we live, and move, and have our being', from which one can conceive how divine justice operate to maintain the harmony of the natural world and how divine law legitimises civil rules.[615]

Bringing Christianity back to this rational construction of the reasonableness of divine justice signifies that, for Berkeley, an adequate proof of divine teleology as the operation of divine justice for human betterment requires empirical evidences as well.

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[613] 'The bond of society', in *Works VII*, p. 225.
[614] 'The Christian idea of God', in *Works VII*, pp. 218–19.
[615] Acts 17:28; 'The Christian idea of God', in *Works VII*, p. 219.

And there are other purposes. The historical demonstration of the operation of divine justice directly refutes the historical criticism of free-thinking that challenges the existing narrative of ecclesiastical history. It also consolidates that history of Christianity by dissolving the emerging heterodoxy that reconstructs the history of early Christianity so as to liquidate the legitimacy of the established Church. An immediate threat was posed by William Whiston's four volumes of *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd*, which appeared in 1711. Whiston claimed to have discovered two Arabic manuscripts of the lost *The Doctrine of the Apostles* in the Bodleian Library which initiated his archaeology of the true history of the early Church and his reconstruction of the genuine Apostolic constitution.[616]

Whiston's argument is that the genuine doctrines of Christianity have been corrupted by the Catholic church, whose authority was established on the doctrine of Trinity that was consolidated by the Council of Nicaea. But the doctrine of Trinity was only invented by Athanasius, and was not to be seen in the Apostolic Constitution that was erected by the Apostles at the Council of Jerusalem in 64 and was confirmed in subsequent council in 67.[617] What the Apostolic Constitution does explicitly record about the relationship between God, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Son is Arian or Apollinarian in character, and this is affirmed by Justin Martyr, who asserted that the entire person of Jesus includes a body, a soul, and a divine nature, a theory that is

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[616] An account on Whiston's discovery and his debates with leading scholars in the Church of England, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Tenison, the Archbishop of York, John Sharp, and the Bishop of Worcester, William Lloyd, about his findings, particularly that the doctrine of Holy Trinity is invented by Athanasius and consolidated by the Council of Nicaea, can be seen in the first volume of *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd*. See: William Whiston, *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd, Vol. I: The Epistles of Ignatius and An Historical Preface* (London: 1711).

[617] I am aware of the chronological mistake, but here I preserve Whiston's calculation so as to represent his argument. See: Idem., *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd, Vol. III: An Essay on the Apostolical Constitution* (London: 1711), pp. 29–30, 50, 70–80.

conformed with Greek physiology.[618] This can be briefly summarised as followed: the Holy Son is the first creation of God as the Word of God, and, as the creation of God, is 'far Inferior to his Father in Nature, Attributes, and Perfections.'[619] The Holy Son is constantly sent by God to the world as 'his Deputy and Vicegerent in the World'.[620] This means that there have been several comings of Jesus Christ, and the coming of Jesus under the reign of the Roman empire is to be understood as a specific coming when the Holy Son was incarnated in human body and 'became man; being by the Power of the Holy Ghost conceived in and born of the Blessed Virgin Mary'.[621] Meanwhile, the Holy Spirit is created 'under the Supreme God, by our Saviour' as a different office of God and the Holy Son, and is 'Inferior and Subordinate to the Father and the Son in the Creation and Government of them'.[622]

The fact that this conception of the relations between God, the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit is corrupted by the mysterious doctrine of 'the Trinity in Unity' constitutes an ambitious attempt at genuine reformation. For Whiston, the orthodoxy confirmed by the Council of Nicaea actually established a heretical church built on a false doctrine, and the history of the Church since then becomes a history of corruption and slavery under the heretical see of Rome. But insofar as the Protestant churches still endorse the heretic doctrine of Trinity, Christianity remains enslaved by the 'orthodox' Catholic principles. A genuine reformation therefore is required, and this can only be achieved by dismantling the established Church and the restoration of the Apostolic

[618] Whiston, *Historical Preface*, pp. v–vi.
[619] Idem., *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd, Vol. IV: An Account on the Faith of the Two First Centuries... etc.* (London: 1711), pp. 112–59, 172–207.
[620] Ibid., pp. 208–11, 228–46.
[621] Ibid., pp. 247–61.
[622] Ibid., pp. 334–60.

Constitution.[623] One can understand why the Bishop of Worcester was concerned about Whiston's intention. Whiston essentially argues that Christianity has been corrupted by the doctrine of Trinity, that different forms of existing churches are established on this principle, and, therefore, that they have to be dismissed in order to recover genuine Christianity. This was not unfamiliar to Berkeley and other clerical minded thinkers at the time, as the idea that the authority of the existing church is based on the corruption of the true form of Christian religion was a commonplace argument of religiously heterodox writers. One is reminded of Berkeley's criticism of Shaftesbury centring on Shaftesbury's proposal for recovering a Christian religion that he conceptualised after his own version of Stoicism.

Like William Lloyd, Berkeley was concerned with the danger of the implication in this kind of arguments. But Berkeley did not get involved in the theological debates. This is because, for Berkeley, theological debates are as debates in mathematics or natural philosophy. They are debates about specific points of a particular branch of knowledge, meaning that the persons that are qualified to engage in the debates required some knowledge beforehand. In the case of theological debates, that knowledge includes one's recognition and faith in the commonly acknowledged Christian truth. This means that free-thinkers or religiously heterodox thinkers, whose intention of participating the debates is to ridicule the Christian truth, are not qualified to join the debates, and that debating them would be meaningless as they are too prejudicial to conduct their reasoning in objective manner.[624]

[623] This can be plainly seen in the Advertisement in the first volume of *Primitive Christianity Reviv'd*, pp. v–vi.
[624] Alciphron, in *Works III*, pp. 275–6, 324–5.

In lieu of debating with these religiously heterodox writers on theological subjects, Berkeley thought it more important and urgent to dismiss their arguments in the public sphere in order to avoid the spread of irreligiosity. For Berkeley, it suffices to reiterate the historical fact about ways in which Christianity has cultivated the human mind and has improved the human condition. This can be evidently seen in the necessity of the coming of Jesus as the operation of divine justice for human betterment. In his sermon on the mission of Jesus, Berkeley explores this necessity in human history. He begins with the state of affairs before the coming of Jesus. Humankind, at that time, can be divided into two groups: Jews and gentiles. It is true that some of the wisest amongst gentiles might be able to conceive a vague idea of some attributes of God; these are 'those who were called philosophers'. But the general state of gentiles remained miserable and ignorant, and they formed their sense of religion either from desire of sensual pleasures or from fear of mortality and unknown; the Lucretian account of religion as the product of fear is accountable for the origins of gentile religions. St Paul left an account of gentiles being occupied by a wide range of sins, which leads to Berkeley's summary that 'When the general state of mankind was so deplorable, how necessary was it that Christ Jesus should come into the world to save sinners!'[625] One might think of a Leibnizian argument for divine justice in the future state. Just as the sufferings of this life is inserted for the full performance of divine justice in the future state, the miserable condition of the gentile nations prepares the condition for the necessary coming of Jesus.

[625] 'On the Mission of Christ', in *Works VII*, pp. 41–2. Berkeley made some alteration from the draft of the sermon, which, at times, is more direct on his criticism of free-thinkers' preference of ancient, natural religion. Add. Ms. 39306, ff. 123–39.

But the necessity of Jesus's coming is not restricted to improving the condition of gentile nations. The Jews, despite being the chosen people of God, need the coming of Jesus for receiving divine justice as well. That is because of the imperfection of the Jewish conception of divine justice. The Jews have their laws imparted from Heaven, but the practice of that divine law was transformed into a form of ceremonial laws signifying their reverence of God and desire for the coming of the Messiah. But this simulacrum of reverence in the form of ceremonial sacrifice can be problematic or redundant, as God would prefer seeing them 'cease to do evil, learn to do well' than asking them to perform ceremony. And God has more than once asked them 'To what purpose is the multitude of y[ou]r sacrifices unto me?' The problem of laws becomes clearer when one turns to the imperfection of the Jewish moral laws. That God only introduces pointed articles that regulate behaviours without a general thesis indicates that the Mosaic laws are not intended as a complete system of jurisprudence. They are more likely to be a preliminary regulation whose aim is 'to prepare their [the Jews'] minds for the more perfect and spiritual doctrine of the Gospel'. In other words, the imperfections of Mosaic laws are preparation for the divine, natural law introduced by Jesus Christ; that is to say, 'the [Mosaic] Law was a Schoolmaster to bring the Jews unto Christ.'[626] A further imperfection of the Jewish understanding of the operation of divine justice is their lack of adequate knowledge of the future state, which, as we have seen, is instrumental to the full knowledge of divine justice and divine order. This means that the Jews are unable to conceive the meaning of death as the just reward for the inevitability to sin of human beings. In this sense, the Jews are not distant from gentile

[626] 'On the mission of Christ', in *Works VII*, pp. 43–4.

nations in terms of their incapacity to recognise the significance of the limit of this life and the necessity of the life to come. This is a new interpretation of the meaning of the chosen nation. What the Mosaic laws signifies is that the Jews are 'chosen' to be better prepared for the coming of Jesus, not to be the only nation to be saved by the divine will.[627]

There is a strong argument for the general will in Berkeley's reconstruction of human history before Jesus Christ. The coming of Jesus signifies the acts of divine justice for the universal well-being of humankind. And this is completed in three ways. The first is Jesus' preaching, including the succeeding missionary works of the apostles, whose intended recipients were not restricted to any specific nation. The teaching and the words of the Holy Son constitute the moral law that binds human beings in general, and regulate human beings by inserting in their minds the sense of 'the highest and most inestimable rewards' and 'the sorest and the most terrifying punishments'. This installation of the positive, moral law is not the only way in which Jesus performs the divine justice. The second way is presented by the incarnation and the life of Jesus, which established a model for the way of living that corresponds to the moral law. In a similar way, that Jesus had 'broke asunder the bands of death, and triumphed over the grave' provides the most direct evidence for the just reward of a good life, and implants the strongest image of the future state in which the sufferings in this life will be fully and justly rewarded. This is the third way in which the coming of Jesus signifies the operation of divine justice for human betterment.[628]

Berkeley's reconstruction of the necessity of the coming of Jesus in human

[627] Ibid., p. 44.
[628] Ibid., pp. 45–7.

history presents the empirical evidence for his legal construction of the reasonableness of divine justice. However, one question remains open: what is the eligibility for being rewarded in the future state? The idea that Jesus's life provides a model for future rewards seems to suggest that one has to live in the like manner in order to be rewarded. But this is to ignore the fact that Jesus came to save the sinners, and that this signifies the operation of divine justice entails grace. In other words, the question should be framed as – what is the eligibility for being saved? Here Berkeley's answer provides an account of soteriology that bears striking resemblance to Locke's argument in *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Locke's argument can be summarised as that, in order to be saved, one only needs to believe in the coming of Jesus and the Christian God. This is plainly established by St John: 'He that believeth in the Son, hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life.'[629] The first step to believe in God is to admit and to recognise the necessity of good life, which requires the obedience to the law of Jesus. For Locke, this means one's turn to a new form of life, and is the original sense of repentance; hence the apostles taught to 'Repent, then, and turn to God.'[630]

Notwithstanding that Berkeley would consider Locke's conception of death as a severe punishment, as well as his conception of the afterlife as the resurrection of body and soul, as a misconception of divine justice, Berkeley's argument is not so distant from this, as he explicitly argues that 'we shall be saved on condition that we repent and

[629] John 3:36; John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, ed. John C. Higgins-Biddle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 22–5.
[630] Ibid., 110-3; *Acts* 3:19.

believe.'[631] We have seen in the previous chapter that, on Berkeley's part, this indicates the significance of the co-operation of the particular with the general will. The miserable condition before the coming of Jesus is the just punishment of human beings for the sin of Adam and Eve, but the divine will for the universal well-being of his creation intervenes in that judgement. That is the nature of grace. Yet grace cannot be taken for granted, and one's endeavour is required. So, '[by] nature we are vessels of wrath polluted with the original corruption of our first parents and our manifold transgressions, whereas by the grace of God, shewed forth in Christ Jesus, our sins are purged away and our sincere tho imperfect endeavours are accepted.'[632]

Here Berkeley's argument for one's responsibility to work with the divine will recurs. That responsibility is imbedded in human nature as God inserted 'the light of reason' in the human mind, meaning that knowing God and obeying the divine order is natural. Berkeley follows the commonplace that the natural light of reason and revelation constitute two modes of human understanding of divinity.[633] Therefore, 'by the light of reason, by natural conscience and by revelation, the will of God is made manifest unto us.'[634] This means that the divine will to universal well-being is reasonable. So is the divine teleology. Human beings were settled in the condition of darkness, in which only the wisest amongst them might have the opportunity to conceive the general

[631] 'On the mission of Christ', in *Works VII*, pp. 47-8. Locke denies the idea of the distinction of body and soul, and argues that death necessarily means the extinction of corporeal body and spirit. Therefore, death is the most severe punishment for unbelievers, whereas for believers, they will not go through a state of death as the extinction of their body in this life is accompanied by the disappearance of consciousness. They will only be recovered when a new body is formed in the resurrection. This means that the resurrected cannot be said to have experienced death, as they do not 'cease to be', which is Locke's definition of death. But this account effectively reject the immortality of the soul, which for Berkeley is one of the essential attributes of divine justice. Locke, *Reasonableness of Christianity*, pp. 5–16.

[632] 'On the mission of Christ', in *Works VII,* pp. 47–8.

[633] 'On the will of God', in Ibid., pp. 129–30.

[634] Ibid., p. 131.

will of God, until 'a ray to enlighten' occurs as 'the dawning of [the] Sun of righteousness who brought life and immorality to light by [the] Gospel.'[635] The divine teleology for human betterment is marked by the coming of Jesus Christ.

This is the genuine 'enlightenment', an enlightenment that almost constitutes a typological moment as it resonates with Augustine's interpretation of the 'enlightenment' in the Genesis.[636] The light of reason in human nature is dimmed in the condition of darkness before the coming of Jesus, whose teachings, life, and resurrection enlightened the darkness and restored the light of reason in the human mind. Since then, every individual's use of their natural light of reason is required to observe the divine teleology and to work with the divine, general will. In this sense, the coming of Jesus and the spread of Jesus' teachings, can be properly interpreted as the enlightenment, whilst the Christian time, understood as the time of the Christianised nations, can be designated as an 'enlightened' age. Emerging from this is one of the most important argument of Berkeley's philosophy. Free-thinkers' enlightenment is essentially a counter-enlightenment. Their greatest crime was that they pretended to provide a programme of human betterment whilst actually plotting to lead human beings into the age of darkness. They 'pretend to an ocean of light, and then lead us to an abyss of darkness.'[637] And they proposed a way of reasoning that dims the natural light of reason and constitute a kingdom of 'dark and confused' writings.[638] Hobbes's characterisation of priestcraft as a kingdom of darkness is skilfully overturned. It is the kingdom of free-thinkers that is dark and unenlightened.

[635] 'On immorality', in Ibid, p. 9.
[636] Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans*, ed. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 461–4.
[637] *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, p. 322.
[638] Ibid., pp. 323–5

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Berkeley's allusion to God's creation of light that enlightens the darkness and separates days from nights constitutes his idea of the enlightenment of God by revelation or by the natural light of reason. It entails a message that human beings by the natural light of reason alone might be able to discern a certain degree of divine justice, an idea that is not uncommon amongst his contemporary, clerical-minded thinkers. One of the most widespread accounts was provided by William Warburton, whose criticism of free-thinking's *ars critica* led to his reconstruction of ancient religions. Warburton's history of ancient religions shows ways in which the ideas of the immortality of the soul and the future state were reasonable to the ancients, justifying his thesis that 'all antiquity was unanimous in thinking that the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments was necessary to the well being of society'. His evaluations of the political history and the philosophy of antiquity in the second and the third of book of the *Divine Legation of Moses* constitute a criticism of ways in which free-thinkers had misrepresented the history of antiquity against Christianity on the basis of their prejudice: the literary and historical criticism of Bayle was 'full of his own *favourite question*' as he refused to accept historical materials for religious sociability, and favoured sources that could be used to form an 'apology for atheism', whilst Shaftesbury's reconstruction of religious toleration in antiquity as a critique of ecclesiastical tyranny was overwhelmingly informed by his questionable judgement and misunderstanding of historical sources.[639] Free-thinkers are wicked historians, as they go 'into Antiquity under the Impressions of modern Ideas' and tend to distort history for

[639] Warburton, *Divine Legation of Moses*, Vol. I, pp. 24–31; 269–74.

their purpose to arrange 'the UNSOCIABLE HUMOUR (as they call it) of CHRISTIANITY for the contrary Practice; which, therefore, they would insinuate to be built on contrary Principles.'[640]

Warburton's reconstruction of the reasonableness of divine justice amongst the ancients refutes free-thinking's criticism of Christianity, and incorporates human history into divine teleology. Genuine improvement of the human condition can only be achieved when the idea about human well-being is extended beyond the finite temporality of this life and into a system of future reward and punishment, and when this idea is installed and practiced in the custom of civic society. This chapter has shown how the emphasis on the significance of this teleological account of the prosperity of political society was also shared by Berkeley.[641] For Warburton as well as for Berkeley, human history has to be religious in character because religion is the cornerstone of human sociability as well as human well-being.[642]

There is one further point in Berkeley's idea of the enlightenment that is of historical and historiographical significance. Berkeley's enlightenment as the operation of divine justice for human betterment suggests a conception of time that deserves some more discussions. Berkeley's distinction between the state of affairs in darkness before the coming of Jesus and that being enlightened by the coming of Jesus suggests an existing nuance in different experiences of temporality between human societies. The

[640] Ibid., p. 269.

[641] For one more case for Berkeley's conception of divine teleology as criticism of Shaftesbury's theory of progress, *Alciphron*, in *Works III*, pp. 112–41.

[642] The possibility of having a human history before the formation of society was a different subject, and was pursued by contemplation of human activities in the state of nature. Yet it was overwhelmingly conceived that this history of the state of nature was only meaningful as an explanatory instrument for latter reconstruction of the history of society. Rousseau's *Second Discourse* can be taken as one of the most explicit and famous examples. See: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*, in Idem., *The Discourses and Other Early Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 113–222.

nations that have received the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles are living in a more progressive time and are in a more advanced position in the trajectory of divine teleology, whereas the unenlightened nations remained in the corner of darkness awaiting their moment of enlightenment. The greatest crime of free-thinking has to be understood in this context, as their endeavours are nothing more than attempts to bring an enlightened nation backward and to corrupt this nation by pushing them back into darkness. If the British people adopted free-thinkers' enlightenment, 'we should of course sink into' the state of affairs shared 'by other unenlightened nations.'[643]

This means that the state of crisis which we have visited in the previous chapter was in fact a critical moment when human history was in danger of departing from divine teleology. 'This enlightened age', in Berkeley's sense, was being corrupted by free-thinkers' theory for their 'enlightened age'. The course of human history in the British state was liable to become a history of corruption. This view was perhaps most famously put forward by Alexander Pope, whose praise of Berkeley became the epitaph to the Good Bishop, and whose works were edited by Warburton. In his *Essay on Criticism*, Pope portrays a history of corruption from the golden age that contains his criticism of the extravagant writings of the present age which turned history into a process of degeneration. As an antidote, he suggests, like Berkeley, in the spirit of Cicero, that mimesis of nature is the closest way to correspond the divine, general will to universal well-being.[644] What Pope shared with Berkeley and Warburton was that the 'ancients' were much closer to the divine and natural truth than the 'moderns'. In

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[643] 'The Christian idea of God', in *Works VII*, p. 221.

[644] Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*, in Idem., *Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism*, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (London: Methuen, 1961), pp. 237–326.

Pope's view, this is because the ancients understood the principle that 'First follow nature, and your judgment frame/ By her just Standard, which is still the same:/ *Unerring Nature*, still divinely bright,/ One *clear*, *unchang'd*, and *universal light*'.[645]

This is a view that is quite distant from the common, historiographical conception of enlightenment history. Enlightenment history as such entails an account of temporality as process of secularisation and progression, the presumption of which is an account that the 'moderns' are more progressive and less superstitious than the 'ancients'. Thus Koselleck emphasises ways in which the Enlightenment provides a new conception of time (*Newzeit*), and gives a 'modern' conception of 'progress' that should be carefully distinguished from the concept's Medieval and theological contention.[646] But this chapter has argued that, at least for Berkeley, there was a different conception of enlightenment, based on a theological understanding of the nature of human betterment. In fact, once this is established, it shows how the predominant historiographical conception of enlightenment strikingly resembles free-thinkers' theorisation of their 'enlightened age'. That resemblance has much to do with the fact that our historiographical conception of Enlightenment is predominantly occupied by historians' attention to religiously heterodox discourse.[647]

This chapter concludes Berkeley's dialectics of free-thinkers' enlightenment and reconstructs his own conception of enlightenment. For Berkeley, the enlightenment means the process through which human beings come to the 'light' so as to understand

[645] Ibid., pp. 246–8.
[646] Koselleck, '"Progress" and "Decline": an appendix to the history of two concepts', in Idem., *Practice of Conceptual History*, pp. 218–35.
[647] This undertaking itself is an implicit and subtle adaption of the ideological reduction of Enlightenment as the process of secularisation, for despite the fact that most of these thinkers claimed to have believed in one form of Christianity, more often than not they depicted as and criticised for being infidels, if not atheists.

the divine will to the general well-being. This is a theological content of enlightenment that has been rendered obsolete by historians, philosophers, and political theorists. The reconstruction of Berkeley's theological enlightenment puts us into a position of reflecting, even criticising, the dominant scholarly articulations of modernity that still preoccupy scholars in today. In the conclusion of this dissertation I shall further clarify how Berkeley's enlightenment as hitherto reconstructed can be connected to broader arguments about modernity.

Conclusion: History and Secular Modernity

I

To a certain degree, Berkeley's project for the genuine, theological Enlightenment was a failure due to unexpected consequences. Berkeley attempted to defeat religiously heterodox arguments first by reconfiguring them as a systematic discourse and, then, by exposing mistakes in its methodology as well as the dangers of its intention. But his conceptualisation of a systematic heterodox Enlightenment appeared to strengthen and consolidate his contemporaries' various arguments against priestcraft.

His dialectic of this Enlightenment rendered it more formidable, actively forging a discourse out of a wide range of arguments. This partly explains why *Alciphron*, the philosophical dialogue in which Berkeley's two languages of the Enlightenments meet and debate, was put into the Index Librorum Prohibitorum in 1742. In fact, *Alciphron* was taken as '*un tissue de sophisms libertins*' that was 'created with pleasure to destroy the soundest and the highest principles of morality, politics, and religion' by the authors of *Observations sur les Écrits Modernes* (*Observations on Modern Writings*), as the authors appeared to have taken Alciphron, the leading free-thinker of the dialogues, as Berkeley's spokesman.[648] Ironically, it was Voltaire who came to vindicate Berkeley, noting that 'this is a holy book, filled with many powerful arguments against the libertines'.[649] Moreover, even Berkeley's arguments for the genuine, eschatological Enlightenment was interpreted in terms against his intention. His ideas that one can

[648] Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines et al, 'Lettre huitieme', in Idem., *Observations sur les Écrits Modernes*, Tom. I (Paris, 1735), p. 179–80. C'est un tissue de Sophismes libertins, forgés à plaisir pour détruire les principes les plus sùrs & les plus élevés de la Morale, de la Politique, & même de la Religion.
[649] Voltaire, *Le Préservatif, ou Critique des Observation sure les Éscrits Moderne*, in Idem., *Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire, Vol. 20C: Micromégas and Other Texts (1738-1742)*, eds. Nicholas Cronk, Thomas Wynn et al. (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2017), pp. 379-80. ... c'est un livre saint, rempli des plus forts arguments contre les libertines ...

only have notions of other beings, and that human knowledge is essentially the conception/imagination and perception of the mind – both are the ontological foundation of his argument for the reasonableness of the being and attributes of God – were picked up by Hume, who famously noted that Berkeley's writings constitute 'the best lessons of scepticism', superseding the writings of Pierre Bayle.[650]

Yet perhaps the most significant sign of failure is to be seen in the posterity of Berkeley's reputation. His attempts to restore the meaning of the genuine Enlightenment waned in the reception of his works, and his reputation became attached to metaphysical speculation. We can clearly see this in John Stuart Mill's vindicatory acknowledgement of Berkeley's philosophical genius. Mill asserts that Berkeley was 'the one of the greatest philosophic genius' alongside 'Plato, Hobbes, Locke, Hartley, and Hume; Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Kant'.[651] For Mill, these are philosophers who have contributed to the modernity of Victorian philosophical reasoning. But it is not difficult to see how Berkeley was listed alongside his contemporaries whose metaphysics was exactly what he intended to dismiss. The science of freedom which Berkeley conceptualised for the heterodox Enlightenment overshadows his teleological Enlightenment, and Berkeley himself becomes a member of modern paganism.[652]

This generates an important question. If Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments have been absent in posthumous understandings of his philosophy, and if that absence does not hinder later generations' interests in studying Berkeley's

[650] David Hume, *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding ... etc.*, ed. P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), pp. 154–5.
[651] J. S. Mill, 'Berkeley's life and writings', in Idem., *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill, Vol. XI: Essays on Philosophy and the Classics*, ed. John M. Robson (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1978), pp. 451–70.
[652] I am alluding to Peter Gay's *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, 2 Vols.* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995 reissued).

writings or other related subjects such as Enlightenment, what is the meaning of reconstructing Berkeley's intention? There underpins a broader question about the meaning of historical reconstruction to the uses of understandings of the past. And the exploration of this question can either be conducted in theoretical terms or in terms of empirical cases.[653] But theoretical formulation of the relationship of historical knowledge to understandings is beyond the scope of this conclusion. Due to the nature of a conclusion to a doctoral thesis, I shall confine myself to a position that answers the question from a perspective of contemplating about the meaning of studying Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments. Before answering the question, it would be helpful to revisit the narrative of this dissertation.

This dissertation tells a story of how Berkeley formulated a religiously heterodox Enlightenment project, and how he attempted to defeat it by a language of Enlightenment based on divine teleology and theodicy. But what is the relevance of this narrative? A convenient answer is that this dissertation effectively enriches our understandings of aspects Berkeley's intellectual life. It can also be that this thesis shows how placing Berkeley's writings in their historical and discursive contexts shall dismiss

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[653] Gadamer's *Truth and Method* stands out as a comprehensive philosophical speculation on the subject. Some reflections on the relationship of historical narrative to senses of the past Mark Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Jacques Rancière, *The Names of History: On the Poetics of Knowledge*, trans. Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). But theoretical articulation on that relationship is not always informed by empirical study of history, and, sometimes, whilst novel arguments made by historical reconstruction turn the meaning of the past to historiographical understanding dynamic, theoretical articulation might take the other direction, rendering the past 'dead' as it abstracts the relationship of the past to understandings from certain fixed historical narratives. For this view, see: Brian Young, 'The tyranny of the definite article: Some thoughts on the art of intellectual history', *History of European Ideas* 28:1-2 (Jan., 2002), pp. 101–17. But, of course, the theoretical and the empirical are not always irreconcilable in thinking about the question. Peter E. Gordon, 'Contextualism and criticism in the history of ideas', in McMahon and Moyn eds., *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History*, pp. 32–55; Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*; Pocock, 'The origins of study of the past: a comparative approach' and 'Time, institutions and action: an essay on traditions and their understanding', in Idem., *Political Thought and History*, pp. 145–86, 187–216.

the myth that Berkeley's intellectual career was devoted to developing a systematic philosophy for idealism and immaterialism.

These are reasonable arguments, but I would like to venture a more ambitious point. This dissertation is not an intellectual biography of Berkeley. It is first and foremost a study of Berkeley's experiences of the Enlightenments, meaning that the historiographical ground of this dissertation is as much affected by my engagement with Enlightenment historiography as by my reading of Berkeley scholarship. Whilst the narrative itself shall adequately provide an answer to the relevance of this study to Berkeley scholarship, the meaning of this dissertation to recent Enlightenment historiography deserves further elaboration.

Here I want to make two points. The first point is about the contribution of this thesis to Enlightenment intellectual history. The second is about how such a re-assessment of the 'Enlightenment' as a historiographical concept lead to questioning the secular modernity thesis in recent moral and political philosophy, particularly in arguments about post-secularism.

II

In the Introduction, I discuss how more careful historians have come to challenge the myth that the Enlightenment was characteristically secularising and that the Enlightenment's secularism was what constituted the origin of modern liberal values. The type of Enlightenment's secularism under challenged can be seen in terms of Peter Gay's interpretation of the Enlightenment. For Gay, Enlightenment's secularism was essentially about the mindset of eighteenth-century thinkers; that is to say, Enlightenment was the product of eighteenth-century thinkers' increasing disbelief in

the Christian God.[654] The same interpretation can be seen in Jonathan Israel's Enlightenment, for whom the genuine Enlightenment was introduced by Spinozists across the British Isles and continental Europe.[655] This is often done by confusing anticlericalism with atheism. And counter arguments are made by showing that, despite their anticlericalism, Enlightenment thinkers were not as secular as secularism narrative suggests.

Yet this does not mean that recent emphasis on Enlightenment and religion is free from the thesis of secular modernity. John Robertson's history of a European Enlightenment can be taken as a prominent example. Robertson's history begins with tracing ways in which Christian – Protestant as well as Catholic – intellectual worlds faced the challenges of Cartesian, Epicurean, Stoic, and other branches of philosophical arguments, culminating in Pierre Bayle's scepticism, which in turn led to Vico's and Hume's theories of human nature and sociability. This was a transitional phase towards modernity, as eighteenth-century thinkers increasingly conceptualised the future of political society without turning their minds to theological principles. It can be seen in the rise of political economy as a 'modern' way of philosophising the human condition.[656] This is surely not an account for Enlightenment's secularism, but it nevertheless is a narrative of secularisation. One can sense the way in which theological disagreements were gradually carried away by debates about political economy. It basically characterises Enlightenment in terms of one's tendency of framing questions

[654] Gay expresses his view on the Enlightenment and its contribution to twentieth-century modernity in the preface to the second volume of his study. See: Gay, 'Preface' in Idem., *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation, Vol. II: The Science of Freedom*, pp. ix–xiii.
[655] Israel reinforces this thesis in his 'Introduction' to Idem., *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 6–29.
[656] Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment*, *passim*.

about the human condition in secular terms without consulting providence.

This brings back the Introduction's point on the subtler dimension of Enlightenment and secularisation. Despite recent criticisms, it is difficult to avoid linking Enlightenment to secularisation. This is because of the underpinning idea that secularisation is itself a process of modernisation in the West, a process through which 'not believing in God' becomes a possible utterance in the public sphere.[657] I will come back to this in the second point of this conclusion. But for now, this account of Western modernity means that insofar as Enlightenment is entangled with one's search into the origin of modernity, a historical narrative of Enlightenment could easily be caught by a sense of secularisation.[658]

Enlightenment's entanglement with modernity is particularly difficult to challenge. In fact, even in the case of historians with more sophisticated arguments and more careful means to studying historical materials, one can still discern different tendencies of searching for modernity in their histories of Enlightenment. So, for example, Dan Edelstein argues for a strict definition of enlightenment defined by French literati's discrimination of ancient and modern, whilst John Robertson and István Hont, each in their own part, argue that political economy is a modern form of enquiry about the improvement of civil society.[659]

This tendency is more evident in philosophical history that is initiated by attempts to rethink the pathogenesis of contemporary questions. One recent example is Giorgio

[657] The philosophical background of this judgement is taken from Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2007).
[658] Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Enlightenment: History of an Idea*, trans. Elisabetta Tarantino (Princeton: Princeton Unviersity Press, 2015).
[659] Edelstein, *The Enlightenment*; Hont, *Jealousy of Trade*; Idem., *Politics in Commercial Society*; Robertson, *The Case for the Enlightenment: Scotland and Naples*.

Agamben's genealogies of government. When Agamben delineates the historical formation of government, he traces how the ancient notion of divine œconomy is turned into 'the economy of the moderns' in the hands of Rousseu and Smith. Agamben argues that Rousseau and Smith had inherited a tradition of theological languages in their conceptions of political economy, and turned them into modern understandings of economy and government.[660]

One can easily find resonance of Karl Löwith's *Meaning of History* in Agamben's genealogy: the moderns inherit the Christian language and become confused as the confessional significance of that language waned.[661] In other words, modernity is the product of secularisation in the sense of the elimination of divinity from theological language. This brings to mind a similar interpretation of the language of modernity in terms of the 'secularised eschatology' as informed by Reinhart Koselleck's *Critique and Crisis*, which argues that difficulties in modern society are essentially embedded in the Enlightenment's problematic turn to criticism and that, precisely in this sense, the Enlightenment is the pathogenesis of the modern, bourgeois world.[662]

What we are facing here is a different kind of secularisation than Peter Gay's thesis of 'modern paganism'. These arguments emphasise the ways in which religion was becoming absent in thinking about the common good.[663] The argument of Agamben's

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[660] Giorgio Agamben, *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa and Matteo Mardarini (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
[661] Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1949)
[662] Reinhart Koselleck, *Critic and Crises: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988). I take the term 'secularised eschatology' from Niklas Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2012).
[663] The introduction to the recently published volume, *Isaiah Berlin and the Enlightenment*, which argues that the historiography of enlightenment intellectual history still follows Gay's argument, could be better informed by recent debates in the field, and should, perhaps, be more careful in distinguishing different arguments about the Enlightenment's characteristic as a historiographical concept. Brockliss, 'Introduction' to *Isaiah Berlin and the Enlightenment*, pp. 3–18.

philosophical history is not that distant from Hont's and Robertson's history of political thought, because their histories shared an idea that the Enlightenment can be defined as an increasing concern of finding ways to improve the human condition by secular economy. One can find traces of Carl Schmitt's argument about the theorem of secularisation in modern political language in Agamben, Koselleck, and Löwith.[664] And notwithstanding that Hont and Robertson do not share the same philosophical horizon, their history of enlightenment political thought in terms of the secularisation of the languages of political society nevertheless show resemblance to this Schmittian theorem.

If we take this entanglement into account, it becomes striking how the secular modernity thesis has actively shaped our understandings of Enlightenment as a historiographical concept. The first point about the relevance of this thesis is that the historiographical understanding of Enlightenment can be rescued from this entanglement. This can be done by distinguishing between historical agency's understanding of Enlightenment and Enlightenment as historiographical conception.[665] This dissertation shows that, whilst the historiographical conception of Enlightenment is closely intertwined with the secular modernity thesis, Enlightenment in historical senses were quite distant from it.

Berkeley's case demonstrates that languages of Enlightenment can be conflicting, and that their opposite meanings should not be conflated by a historiographical term denoting intellectual activities of a chronological period. Berkeley's theological

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[664] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Jeffrey Andrew Barash, 'The sense of history: on the political implications of Karl Löwith's concept of secularization', *History and Theory* 37:1 (Feb., 1998), pp. 69–82; Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2005); Olsen, *History in the Plural*, pp. 23–6.

[665] A good example of this distinction in historiographical narrative is: J. G. A. Pocock, 'Historiography and Enlightenment: a view of their history', *Modern Intellectual History* 5:1 (Apr., 2008), pp. 83-96.

Enlightenment was a mode of conceiving the Enlightenment as the modus operandi of theodicy in the secular world. In this conception, the significance of alluding to the metaphor of light is an aphorism of the Genesis creation narrative. The meaning of EnLIGHTenment lays in the fact that God created light and carried human beings out of darkness.[666] It highlights human beings' responsibility to employ their natural light of reason for making the best possible political constitution and social mores in order to co-operate with the divine, general will. There is nothing secularising in this conception of Enlightenment. Here, secular activities are merely practices of divine justice.

Berkeley's theological Enlightenment exposes the gap between Enlightenments in historical sense and the Enlightenment in historiographical conception. The significance of this gap is to be strengthened as Berkeley was not the only case in which Enlightenment was understood in terms of the teleological progress of human society as part of divine jurisprudence. The last chapter of this thesis has argued the similarity between Berkeley's theological Enlightenment and Locke's soteriological Enlightenment in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*.[667] It has also suggested that similar understandings of the relationship of the divine will to the secular world underpins Leibniz's explanation of evil in human history as part of divine jurisprudence. '*Le meilleur des mondes possibles*' is sensible because of the being and attributes of the divine justice.[668] It can be suggested that the theological meaning of EnLIGHTenment and the significance of theodicy to human well-being were shared by thinkers across

[666] It is a pity that Martin Jay's brilliant intellectual history of visual metaphors does not take into account the significance of this theological aphorism to the meaning of EnLIGHTenment. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 83–147.
[667] John Marshall, *John Locke: Resistance, Religion and Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 414–55.
[668] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*, trans. E. M. Huggard (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), pp. 127–9.

confessional identities. Enlightenment's unsecular character in the sense that the secular world is part of the divine design was not uncommon amongst eighteenth-century thinkers.

This emphasis on the religious dimension of the historical Enlightenments also challenges the sense of modernity in the historiographical Enlightenment. As I have argued, insofar as the concept of Enlightenment remains confined to our presentism's regime of historicity, its definition would continue to be determined by the present's need to constitute a historical narrative for its existence, resulting in the extension of the present into the past.[669] But once the historiographical conception of Enlightenment is informed by the kind of historical enlightenments reconstructed in this study, it becomes characteristically incompatible with a narrative of modernisation.

A historiographical conception of Enlightenment summarising the manifold of historical enlightenments is only possible when it defined itself in a broad sense as the self-realisation of rational agency for improving the human condition. Yet once it is defined in this way, it necessarily entails different understandings of the end of reason and of the diverge means that can bring about those ends. It becomes a concept that is open to be shaped by different languages of Enlightenment. And these languages no longer necessarily lead to our experiences of the world.

But that does not mean that such a historiographical concept is antiquarian. The meaning of this historiographical concept of Enlightenment to our experiences of modernity is genealogical in the sense that it disrupts our tendency to search for historical continuity by problematising the present's regime of historicity and our

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[669] Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*.

experiences of modernity.[670] It is in this sense that one might overturn the paradigmatic critic of Enlightenment in terms of a paradox between reason and myth that constitutes modernity.[671] This Enlightenment now constitutes a historiographical critique of our understandings of modernity and our senses of historicity.

This point about the Enlightenment as historiographical critique can be garnished by further cases. A historiographical conception of Enlightenment developed from Berkeley's theological Enlightenment entails an idea that human well-being can be achieved by the self-realisation of rational agency in terms of the agent's use of the natural light of reason to discover theodicy and to co-operate with the divine design. We have seen how this principle can work with Leibniz's conception of divine jurisprudence and Locke's soteriological Enlightenment. One more useful case summarising the divine origin of secular behaviours is Burke's verses on religion, in which Burke reinforces the theological responsibility of one's social life.[672] This is also the ground on which Joseph Priestley formed his argument that the genuine principle of individual liberty and the happiness of an individual's political life are not determined by constitutional arrangement but by cultivating an individual's natural light of reason.[673] And when Richard Price came to argue for the legitimacy of a free government, he built his argument on the basis that 'all men are naturally equal' and that such natural equality is the first natural right of men endowed by divine justice.

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[670] I take this understanding of genealogy from: Raymond Geuss, 'Genealogy as critique', *European Journal of Philosophy* 10:2 (Aug., 2002), pp. 209–15; Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013).

[671] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

[672] Edmund Burke, 'Religion', in Idem., *Pre-Revolutionary Writings*, ed. Ian Harris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 82–7.

[673] Joseph Priestley, *An Essay on the First Principles of Government, and on the Nature of Political, Civil, and Religious Liberty ...*, in Idem., *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 1–127.

This divine origin of secular beings was what shaped his idea that the coming of Jesus established absolute equality in secular societies, and was the underlying principle of his argument that a free government is the only answer to political difficulties.[674] Price's explication of men's natural equality and independence also shows how the sense of theodicy explains the principle that legitimatises the American war of independence, as the revolutionaries appealed the reason of their war to the idea that their natural rights, which rendered their social life meaningful, have been violated by a corrupted, representative constitution.[675]

I am not suggesting that there was a Berkeleian moment in eighteenth-century political thought, nor am I arguing for a Berkeleian Enlightenment. Everything I suggest is that there was a discourse of 'Enlightenment', which treats rational agency's capacity of improving the human condition with profound theological awareness. Appreciating this discourse allows us to distance our understandings of Enlightenment from the secular modernity thesis, and would give rise to more fruitful discussions about Enlightenment and the normative principles of the modern world.

III

This brings me to the second point. I want to demonstrate how this thesis's contribution to the historiographical conception of Enlightenment as critique can contribute to modern moral and political discussions. The case for this point is the so-called 'post-secular' accounts in recent moral and political philosophy, particularly in the writings of Charles Taylor and Jürgen Habermas. Post-secular accounts operate on

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[674] Richard Price, *Two Tracts on Civil Liberty, the War with America, and the Debts and Finances of the Kingdom: with a General Introduction and Supplement*, in Idem., *Political Writings*, ed. D. O. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 14–100.

[675] Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1992, enlarged edition), pp. 245–319.

the ground of secular modernity thesis. The prefix suggests that one can only make sense of the 'post-secular' after one successfully characterises the meaning of 'secular'. In other words, post-secular narratives require a historical account of secularisation in order to explicate the characteristics of modern, secularised societies and to explain how they come into being.

The question posed by post-secularism is first and foremost a question of modern political significance. Informed by the idea that modern, secularised societies are increasingly experiencing socio-political violence occasioned by religious conflicts, the question in fact asks how can one make sense of the nature and the cause of these conflicts, and how can problems accompanied such violence – such as the advent of religious fundamentalism – be solved in a secularised civil society?[676] Post-secularism thus endorses a structure of time in which historical narratives (secularisation) are made for making sense of the present state of crises (post-secularism) so as to find conceivable means for resolving them in the future. This is essentially what Michael Oakeshott calls a 'practical past' which separates historical understandings of the past from the actual, historical past, as the former is only meaningful when engaging with present concerns whose temporal horizon focuses on the present-future.[677]

The force of post-secular narratives depends on the relevance of their analyses of secularisation to actual experiences of the present secularism and their proposals for resolving secularism's crises of faith. In its most straightforward and primitive form, the story would first show how a theologically informed, Catholic moral and political

[676] These questions are posed in the opening remark of the forum on 'Secularism's Crisis of Faith' in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 25:4 (Fall, 2008), p. 16.
[677] Michael Oakeshott, *On History and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), pp. 1-48.

normativity was shaken by the Reformation, and then how the development of the new science disenchanted human life and the natural world from supernatural presence. This secularisation story often gives rise to portraying the current state of affairs as a lost child in a crowded wonderland, in which one is alienated, left alone, and schizophrenic.

The story has its moral judgement. Unlike the pre-Reformation Catholic world, modern, secularised societies can no longer have certain answers to what Brad Gregory calls 'Life Questions'; that is, questions about 'human values, aspirations, norms, morality, and meaning'.[678] For Gregory, modern societies' plural answers to Life Questions are only a disguise of their loss of religious certainty, and it is this 'hyperplurality' that contributes to modern conflicts that are essentially recurrences of early modern theological disputes. This story implies that the crises of post-secularism inherit the character of early modern religious conflicts, and that a foreseeable solution is to regenerate a shared, harmonising sense of religiosity in the spirit of, although not a return to, the pre-Reformation, Catholic world. In short, the crises of post-secularism are to be resolved by unsecularising modern societies.[679] This story rings a reminder that post-secular narratives often express the narrators' concerns about the future of religion, not the future of modern societies: their illocutionary act is that 'religion matter, and we have to come to terms with it'.[680]

A philosophically much subtler account is provided by Charles Taylor, for whom the definition of secularism is that religion is reduced to an option in one's life choices.

[678] The story I produce here is an abstraction of Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How A Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012). One can almost sense an accusation of the Reformation for opening a road to recent socio-political violence in Gregory's attempt to reassert the relevance of the Catholic faith.

[679] Ibid., pp. 365–87.

[680] Philip S. Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, 'The post-secular in question', in Idem eds., *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), pp. 1–22.

The kind of secularisation/modernisation which Taylor has in mind is a loss of what Taylor calls the spiritual certainty of our moral senses. In his view, we have lost the moral ontology constituted by understandings of the self, of the end of the self (normally having a good life), and of the means by which we can achieve that end.[681] That ontology was once consolidated by a teleology: there is a notion of the highest, general good; and our lives are never completed until we can fully integrate our lives with that good. Leading our lives towards that good is the teleology of life, and that good is the source of our moral senses. Arriving at that telos requires articulations about the good, about the way in which we can come closer to the good, and about centring our living activities around those articulations.

But, in Taylor's view, this ontology was liquidated after the Reformation's affirmation of ordinary life. What Taylor means here is that Protestant theology essentially transformed the meaning of 'good life'. What is required in this theology is not articulations about the general good; but living one's life through labours in order to live up to the expectation that one's life might deserve that good. Since the Reformation, the good has lost its position as the centre about the meaning of which we articulate and towards which we attempt to strive. In other words, we have lost the certainty that our articulations, done correctly, would lead to the ultimate good. The meaning of the good is now thrown back to ourselves. In a Kantian language, we no longer have the highest good as the reference of our moral thinking. We can only live to find out what might be good to each of us. The general good as the source of moral senses is now distilled into what suits best to our lives.

[681] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

This point is further elaborated in Taylor's magnum opus: *A Secular Age*. Here, Taylor's theorising is constituted by contingent consequences of events that he categorised under the headings of (A) 'Intellectual Deviation' and (B) 'Reform Master Narrative'. The former means intellectual discoveries that allow one to make sense of a meaningful cosmos without necessarily tending to articulate about the attributes of God, as demonstrated in the mechanic world view. The latter indicates the Reformation's attempts to reform Catholic theological principles, which constitute the normative foundations of moral life within the realm of Christian faith. As we have seen, reformation theology threw the question about the ends and meanings of moral life – the fundamental question of eschatology – back to human beings themselves.[682]

According to this account, what characterises modern societies is as much their secularism as their dependence on the notion of selfhood. This emphasis on selfhood opens the door for pluralism, as ways of searching for meanings, alongside with disparate understandings of what constitutes the meaningful, are now possible to the self. The road to secularism seems inevitable. With the ascent of the sense that meanings are to be found by the self, and with the atrophy of the notion that meanings are to be found in God as God renders human life and the cosmos meaningful, 'a lot of things look problematic that didn't before'.[683]

But this is not a new story. That secularisation/modernisation could be pinned down to the liquidation of the Catholic normative conformity through the Reformation, the rise of the new science, and the emerging significance of the self was a commonplace in twentieth-century philosophical history of modernity. One can easily

682 Taylor, *A Secular Age*, pp. 773–6.
683 Idem, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 305–20; *A Secular Age*, pp. 1–22.

find resonance with Hannah Arendt's philosophical explication of the modern human condition in Taylor's arguments about 'Intellectual Deviation' and 'Reform Master Narratives'. For Arendt, the modern human condition is constituted by a three-fold alienation that led to modern societies' emphasis on the self.[684] The first alienation is European oversea explorations, resulting in the conquest of the earth by speed, indicating that the actual geographical space is now subordinated to human agency's experiences of travelling through space-time. The second is the alienation of the Reformation's throwing of the meaning of human existence back to human beings themselves. It should be noted that, in Arendt's view, this 'throwing' is less a beginning of secularisation than a return to the early Christian principle demarcating the realms of Caesar and that of God. The final alienation is a series of technological breakthroughs that allows human beings to reorder the empirical, sensual world.

What is significant in Arendt's explication is that secularisation only ensued from alienations of the sensual, empirical world in the advent of the self.[685] According to Arendt, this throwing back to one's self in modern society means that the emphasis of *vita contemplativa* over *vita activa* in classical political thought is overturned, and that *vita activa*, whose meaning is now integrated with economic production, has become the primary manifestation of the self's searching for its meanings in the form of pursuing happiness.[686] For Arendt, happiness is a characteristically modern understanding of the ends of moral and political life that only emerges in the French Revolution, as

[684] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 248–325.
[685] 'With the disappearance of the sensually given world, the transcendent world disappears as well, and with it the possibility of transcending the material world in concept and thought.' Ibid., p. 288.
[686] Ibid., pp. 313–325.

culminated in Saint-Just's claim that 'Le bonheur est une idée neuve en Europe'.[687]

Arendt's history of this three-fold alienation leads to modern societies' worldlessness, which has to be distinguished from the Christian idea of otherworldliness sustaining Martin Heidegger's *vita contemplativa*.[688] In Arendt's history, secularisation is only a part of the bigger story about how the classical meaning of politics has been made impossible. The crises of modernity were one political crisis in which politics becomes meaningless. Once the self's actions are concerned exclusively with manifesting its own happiness, these actions no longer attain political meaning.

In Arendt's view, the full significance of politics to one's life is only sensible when pursuits of freedom constitute the ends and the goals of human actions. With the advent of the idea that the self's life is the highest good, politics is reduced to its primitive form as the protection of the self's possibilities to realise its pursuits of happiness.[689] Furthermore, the modern self's experiences of warfare, which threatens the essential existence of the self and sabotages the self's pursuits of happiness, exacerbates the crisis of political meaning. Political actions are now understood solely in terms of performances of sheer forces for fulfilling politics' desire for vain glory at the expense of the self's realisation of its happiness.[690] Modern societies are left with its prejudices against, not the meaning of, the political. This is what constitutes modern crises, which arguably stemmed from but not rooted in the Reformation's throwing of human beings back onto themselves.

Tracing Taylor's secularism to Arendt's crisis of the political shows that

[687] Idem., *On Revolutions* (London: Penguin, 2006), pp. 49–131.
[688] Idem., *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), pp. 201–4.
[689] Idem., 'Introduction *into* Politics', in Ibid., pp. 114–53.
[690] Ibid., pp. 191–200.

secularisation is no more than a perspective of modern political questions. It also exposes the groundless assumption of the primitive story of post-secularism, which takes difficulties of religious diversity as the consequence of modern (hyper-)pluralism that is made possible by the Reformation. These are histories that are preoccupied with the secular modernity thesis which tend to take Enlightenment as the threshold between two historical worlds.

This tendency is particularly evident in Jürgen Habermas's treatment of post-secular questions. For Habermas, secularisation means the state's independence from interferences of religious normative principles in its administrative, juristic, and operational dimensions.[691] In his view, histories of the Reformation are meaningful to post-secular thinking in the sense that they provide a precedent for a normative settlement of confessional conflicts. But, as Habermas points out, that settlement is also part of European Christians' exclusive historical experiences. And modern societies' moral, social, and political difficulties in relation to religious issues are not directly connected with episodes in early modern European history. Imposing the post-Reformation settlement on these modern crises is equally enforcing a myth of legitimate impartiality that not only oppresses diversity but also implies a discrimination of historical progress: the West has learned from the tormenting consequences of confessional conflicts and has achieved secular, democratic normativity; it is time for populations of different religious beliefs to go through this 'learning process' so as to

[691] Jürgen Habermas, 'Notes on post-secular society', *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25:4 (Fall, 2008), pp. 17-29.

accommodate themselves in a secularised, democratic society.[692]

In Habermas's view, this is simply not how democratic normativity functions. Democratic normativity requires citizens' willingness to participate and to appropriate their differences so as to work out a co-dependent framework. He thus argues that, whilst non-Christian religious groups are 'expected to appropriate the secular legitimation of constitutional principles under the premises of their own faith', the secularised, post-Reformation Christian groups are also expected to go through a 'complementary learning process' that rethinks the implicit religiosity in their legal and political structure.[693] In other words, religion ought to respect and to co-operate with the rational normativity of the secular state, and the state ought to acknowledge and respect the fact that religion exists, and that the state may not set itself up as the judge concerning truths of faith.

This mode of post-secular thinking reinforces the idea that post-secularism is essentially experiences of political questions. This means that post-secular crisis is basically part of conflicts occasioned by experiential differences. It explains why, as Habermas sees it, a solution to post-secularism is conceivable within the logic of what he calls 'discourse ethics'. The first step for this is a recognition of each individual citizen as a rational, autonomous being who is capable of sharing a sense of moral normativity through communication. That is what Habermas calls 'discourse ethics'. In Habermas's own words, according to democratic normativity, we ought to talk with

[692] Here I combine Iris Marion Young's criticism of the jurisprudential ideal of impartiality with Habermas's reflections on secularism's religious consciousness. See: Irish Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 96–121.
[693] Habermas, 'Notes on post-secular society', pp. 28–9.

each other, not to talk about each other.[694] Resolving post-secular experiences of conflicts, then, requires a reciprocal learning process, instead of revivals of any particular mode of religiosity, such as re-establishing spiritual certainty.

But, as plenty of criticisms remind, we can see how Habermas's discourse ethics operate on an understanding of morality in terms of Kantian rational universalism, and how this universalism already presupposes a transcendental ideal that might exclude particular experiences of differences.[695]

This can be exemplified by scrutinising the historical conception underpinning Habermas's post-secular thinking. Habernas's 'modern' societies are conceived as rational and secularised, a conception without which the term 'post-secular' would not be intelligible. And this conception of secular modernity is based on Habermas's abstraction of early modern West European, if not German, history, an abstraction that is largely informed by a Hegelian notion of state formation as a process corresponding to the teleology of Geist's fulfilment of freedom. But this is a history shaped by the secular modernity thesis which I have been criticising throughout this dissertation.[696]

Of course, questioning the historical narrative constituting Habermas's diagnosis of the 'post-secular' situation does not lead to challenging his prescription through 'complementary learning process'. What I am arguing here is that such a 'complementary learning process' can well benefit from learning about the questionable, self-fashioned historicity of secular modernity.

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[694] Idem., 'An awareness of what is missing', in Habermas et al, *An Awareness of What is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-Secular Age* (Cambridge: Polity, 2010), pp. 15–22. See also: Habermas, 'A genealogical analysis of the cognitive content of morality', in Idem., *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, eds. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo de Greiff (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), pp. 3–46.

[695] Axel Honneth, 'The other of justice: Habermas and the ethical challenge of postmodernism', in Idem., *Disrespect: The Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), pp. 99–128.

[696] For a recent example, see: Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. 37–79.

We can further integrate this 'learning about oneself' with one of the leading critics of Habermas. I am thinking of Axel Honneth's argument that differences amongst particularities are to be recognised, and that the normative foundations of moral and political judgement are to be integrated with the publicised reciprocal caring which can be found quite naturally in family and friendships.[697] Admittedly, Honneth's criticism of Habermas enters into a field of debates about appropriating Kantian and Hegelian moral philosophy for a normative ground of modern moral and political thinking, a field that has gone beyond the scope of this dissertation.[698] The concern of this thesis is not to philosophise nor to theorise a normative moral and political theory.

This turning to Habermas and Honneth only serve to argue that this dissertation's critique of secular modernity's senses of historicity can be taken as a contribution to reconciling experiential differences through one's 'caring to know/learn' about the contingency and the heterogeneity of one's ideological allegiance to norms that are informed by certain historiographical arguments.[699]

IV

By reconstructing the significance of theological questions to late-seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century conceptions of Enlightenment, this thesis problematises secular modernity's assumption that its moral, social, and political thinking has achieved a state

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[697] Ibid. See also: Idem., *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005, reprinted), pp. 92–130.

[698] Idem., *The Pathologies of Individual Freedom: Hegel's Social Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). See also: Idem., 'Of the poverty of our liberty: The greatness and limits of Hegel's doctrine of ethical life', in Axel Honneth and Jacques Rancière, *Recognition or Disagreement: A Critical Encounters on the Politics of Freedom, Equality, and Identity*, eds., Katia Genel and Jean-Philippe Deranty (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), pp. 156–176.

[699] I use the term 'ideology' in the sense similar to Michael Freeden's definition, which means an intellectual map allowing one to situate oneself when encountering moral, social, and political events. See: Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

of rational normativity through the Enlightenment. Its analysis of how the Enlightenment is conceived in modern historiography exposes how historical narratives have been employed for consolidating the ideological ground of secular modernity.

It is in this sense that I take this thesis as a genealogical and historiographical critique.

This is a point about the relevance of historical research to political thinking. This thesis's self-fashioning as a critique of secular modernity's regime of historicity means that it understands history in the light of Oakeshott's 'practical past'.[700] It indicates that the relation of the study of history to the present condition is not a rediscovery of the road not taken, nor a contemplation about a possible, alternative future in the mirror of the untaken road. History actively interferes with the present condition by reassessing, rethinking, and reworking prejudices of modern historical consciousness that constitute one's senses of the present. It means that historiography has to be critical and self-critical so as to lead to thinking about sensible solutions of the present predicaments.[701]

In the current state of the division of academic labour, studying history as reflections on modern political thinking is mostly done by philosophical historians such as Arendt and Isaiah Berlin. It can be demonstrated by Arendt's writing of the histories of revolutions in America and France for explicating the modern crisis of the political. In Arednt's view, what distinguishes the American and the French Revolution was their conceptions of the end of revolution: the Americans were preoccupied with republic

[700] Pocock, 'Time, institutions and action: an essay on traditions and their understanding', in Idem., *Political Thought and History*, pp. 145–86.
[701] Dominick LaCapra, *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

liberty, whereas their French counterparts were committed to the pursuit of the self's happiness. But professional historians have not been absent either. In a similar spirit, Pocock provides a much richer and historically subtler argument that the American Revolution was more preoccupied with the spirit of republican political thought than modern liberalism.[702]

In Pocock's reworking of American political thought in revolutionary years, he takes Berkeley's verses on America as a prophetic indication of how turning westward became the Founding Fathers' solution to the Machiavellian constitutional crisis. The verses begin with an image of America as a distant land 'Where Nature Guids and Virtue rules,/ Where Men shall not impose for Truth and Sense,/ The Pedantry of Courts and Schools'. America 'shall be sung another golden Age' because it is yet to be polluted by the art of free-thinking and misunderstandings of the nature and the future of political society. It is in the state 'Not such as Europe breeds in her decay; [but] Such as she bred when fresh and young'. And:

> When heav'nly Flame did animate her Clay,
> By future Poets shall be sung.
> Westward the Course of Empire takes its Way;
> The four first Acts already past,
> A fifth shall close the Drama with the Day;
> Time's noblest Offspring is the last.[703]

For Berkeley, America's present was Europe's past and future, had it followed the teleological course of the divine design. In his view, Europe's modernity was gravely threatened by free-thinkers' heterodox Enlightenment. But there was still time and space in America for fulfilling the theological Enlightenment, as America awaited to be

[702] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 506–52.
[703] *Verses on America*, in *Works VII*, pp. 373–5.

enlightened by ‘heav’nly Flame’. Yet Berkeley’s hope for an American enlightenment ended in disappointment, like his Bermuda project. America in our age has long lost its opportunity to welcome a Berkeleian theological Enlightenment, despite its zealous religiosity in communal lives. But in a curious way, America does present what Berkeley envisaged as Europe’s failed future. His formulation of the heterodox Enlightenment as a secularising project that will lead political societies into financial crises, socio-political difficulties, and military conflicts contingently corresponds with twentieth- and twenty-first-century American and European experiences of modernity.

As I have been arguing throughout this thesis, the crises of such secular modernity cannot be resolved with a simplistic account of reviving religiosity. My historical reconstruction of Berkeley’s disappointment is by no means an intention to become an argument for reinstalling the kind of religiosity that Berkeley encouraged. This is not a thesis about bringing Berkeley’s theological enlightenment back to practice. Berkeley’s vision of a better human condition – the genuine, theological Enlightenment – was part of his world, not ours. The point of recovering Berkeley’s experiences and visions of Enlightenments is to problematise secular modernity’s senses of the continuity of its being, and to make possible a conception of historiographical Enlightenment that is independent from secular modernity thesis. It provides a way of re-learning secularism’s religiosity by means of genealogy, and makes a point that a historiographical conception of Enlightenment in this spirit would constitute a helpful critique contesting secular modernity’s regime of historicity.

I would like to end this thesis with a personal reflection. Explaining modernity’s historicity in terms of a secular age is essentially an experience of the West. It means

that the expansion of this explanation, as well as the reception of this conception of modernity, to other areas of the world inevitably imposes this sense of historicity on the affected areas. This can be seen in the ways in which 'modernisation' indicates 'Westernisation', as presented by encouraging scientific reason, in late imperial and early republican China. This kind of 'modernisation = Westernisation' narrative is integrated with the historiographical concept of Enlightenment as entangled in a tripartite 'Enlightenment-Modernity-Secularity' theorem. What is disturbing is that this theorem has now become instrumental to analysing the global experiences of modernity. This exposes the questionable logic of recent arguments for global history. The globalisation in the twenty-first century appears to further assimilate the wide range of experiences of modernity into a shared network, culminating in the possibility of writing a global history. But what this implies is not only that disparate senses of historicity have been made commensurable, but that they have been contained in a regime of historicity, a regime of secular modernity. Against this phenomenon, a reworking of Enlightenment as historiographical critique that shakes the increasingly consolidated sense of a universal experience of temporality and historicity heading towards a shared global modernity, which eclipses disparate senses of historicity and temporality in different cultural and intellectual settings, is urgently needed.[704]

[704] There is a personal footnote to this argument. Arguments for the meaning and the necessity of global history can be seen in Sebastian Conrad, *What is Global History?* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016). A helpful account of late-imperial and early-republican Chinese intellectual history, as well as its appeal to 'the Enlightenment' for 'progress and rationality', see: Peter Zarrow, *After Empire: The Conceptual Transformation of the Chinese State, 1885-1924* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012). My anxiety and uncertainty about writing a global history is developed from Samuel Moyn, 'On the nonglobalization of ideas', in Samuel Moyn and Andrew Sartori eds., *Global Intellectual History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), pp. 187–204.

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