CrossMark

*Modern Intellectual History*, 12, 2 (2015), pp. 453–473 © Cambridge University Press 2014
doi:10.1017/S1479244314000572

# BERKELEY, IRELAND AND EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY INTELLECTUAL HISTORY

JAMES LIVESEY
Department of History, School of Humanities, University of Dundee
E-mail: j.livesey@dundee.ac.uk

Marc A. Hight ed., *The Correspondence of George Berkeley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Scott Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley: Virtue and Society in the Anglo-Irish Context* (New York: Palgrave, 2010)

Daniel Carey and Christopher J. Finlay, eds., *The Empire of Credit: The Financial Revolution and the British Atlantic World, 1688–1815* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2011)

Eighteenth-century Irish intellectual history has enjoyed a revival in recent years. New scholarly resources, such as the Hoppen edition of the papers of the Dublin Philosophical Society and the recently published Berkeley correspondence, have been fundamental to that revival.[1] Since 1986 the journal *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: Iris an dá chultúr* has sponsored a complex conversation on the meaning and legacy of the eighteenth century in Irish history. Work in the journal and beyond deploying "New British" and Atlantic histories, as well as continuing attention to Europe, has helped to enrich scholarly understanding of the environments in which Irish people thought and acted.[2] The challenge facing historians of Ireland has been to find categories of analysis that could comprehend religious division and acknowledge the centrality of the

[1] K. Theodore Hoppen, ed., *Papers of the Dublin Philosophical Society 1683–1709*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 2008); Marc A. Hight, ed., *The Correspondence of George Berkeley* (Cambridge, 2013).

[2] See David Dickson, *Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster, 1630–1830* (Cork, 2005); Michael O'Dea and Kevin Whelan, eds., *Nations and Nationalism: France, Britain, Ireland and the Eighteenth-Century Context* (Oxford, 1995); Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English: The Irish Aristocracy in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2012).



https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

confessional state without reducing all Irish experience to sectarian conflict.[3] Clearly the thought of the Irish Catholic community could not be approached without an understanding of the life of the Continental Catholic Church. *Archivium Hibernicum* has been collecting and publishing the traces of that history for a hundred years and new digital resources such as the Irish in Europe database have extended that work in new directions.[4] The Atlantic and "New British" contexts have been more proximately important for the Protestant intellectual tradition. Despite a roll call of authors that in the early eighteenth century alone included Petty, Toland, Swift, Berkeley, Hutcheson and the Molyneux brothers, the concept of an Irish Enlightenment has never been sharply defined. For want of a convincing frame of analysis the various biographies did not amount to a history. Paradoxically, the specificity of Irish Protestant intellectual life becomes clearer once the context is broadened. Irish Protestant intellectual debate was not conducted within Ireland, but is best understood as a set of voices that spoke from an Irish base into the dynamic and troubling British Atlantic eighteenth-century world.

George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, has been particularly badly served by a historical debate too narrowly focused on Ireland. Berkeley was obviously Atlantic; one of the highlights of his career was his effort to found St Paul's College in Bermuda to serve the British colonies in the western hemisphere. Just as his Irish background framed his American plans, his residence in Rhode Island from 1728 to 1731 conditioned his later career in Ireland. His proposal for a national bank in Ireland, for example, was inspired by his experience of the efforts of the American colonies to combat a depression of trade by issuing paper money.[5] He is best understood alongside Atlantic Irishmen such as Arthur Dobbs, latterly governor of North Carolina, and William Johnson, British agent with the Six Nations Iroquois. Yeats claimed that Berkeley exemplified an Irish refusal of Lockeanism, Newtonianism, and, with them, modernity, based on the undergraduate flourishes in his notebook, "we Irish men cannot attain to these truths … we Irish men can conceive no such lines … we Irish men

---

[3] Work responding to this challenge includes Toby Barnard, *A New Anatomy of Ireland: The Irish Protestants 1649–1770* (New Haven, 2003); Sean Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland 1630–1800* (Oxford, 2008); Ian McBride, *Eighteenth-Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves* (Dublin, 2009).

[4] For the Irish in Europe project see www.irishineurope.com, accessed 15 Feb. 2013.

[5] Richard A. Lester, *Monetary Experiments: Early American and Recent Scandinavian* (Princeton, NJ, 1939), 56–102; Christine Desan, "From Blood to Profit: Making Money in the Practice and Imagery of Early America", *Journal of Policy History*, 20/1 (Jan. 2008), 26–46.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

are apt to think something and nothing are next neighbours".[6] That claim was overstated and incredible; after all, Berkeley went on to mediate his claims for Irish philosophical specificity with his note that "I publish not this so much for anything else as to know whether other men have the same ideas as we Irishmen".[7] On the other hand, Berkeley fitted uneasily into a genealogy of British empiricism that concentrated on his early philosophical work to the exclusion of his later work on theology and political economy. The idealized polarities of empiricist and idealist, British and Irish, disfigured Berkeley's complexity and importance. The work of the Trinity College Dublin philosophers Luce and Berman restored the integrity of Berkeley's thought, but did not attempt to clarify the contexts in which Berkeley wrote and worked.[8] Placing Berkeley's thought in the context of Atlantic empire rescues it from both a too narrow British genealogy and an overstated Irish tradition.

Hight's new edition of Berkeley's correspondence performs a tremendous service in this respect. The chronological arrangement of the letters illustrates how themes in Berkeley's life and work were woven across the various domains in which he thought and wrote. His correspondence with Samuel Johnson of Stratford, Connecticut has long been used as a means of gaining insight into Berkeley's own understanding of his theories of knowledge and vision. In the Luce edition of the works the letters were gathered into Volume 2 as an addendum to the *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, the *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* and the first draft of the *Introduction to the Principles*. Hight's chronological edition of the letters complements the philosophical interest of the exchange between Berkeley and Johnson by placing them in the context of Berkeley's efforts in America. Having a philosophically trained and interested correspondent was important to Berkeley, and he urged Johnson to come to Rhode Island to enable a more intense discussion between them.[9] However, Johnson was more than a companionable philosophical interlocutor; he was also a means through which Berkeley sought to rescue the goals of his American enterprise. The letter immediately following his invitation to Johnson was to the Harvard-trained Henry Newman, corresponding secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, thanking him for some cases of books but expressing his anxiety about the erosion of support in London for his

6 George Berkeley, "Philosophical Commentaries, Notebook B", in *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 9 vols. (London, 1948–57), 1: 47.

7 Ibid.

8 David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (Oxford, 1994); A. A. Luce, *The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne* (London, 1949).

9 Berkeley to Samuel Johnson, Rhode Island, 24 March 1730, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 200, at 320.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

proposed college in Bermuda.[10] This letter underlined the ambition of Berkeley's project. It was designed to respond to the "death of Great Britain" at the hands of "a set of men who under the notion of liberty are for introducing licence and a general contempt of all laws divine or human".[11] This kind of pessimism about Britain's moral collapse was not expressed in the public pamphlets announcing his plans, though it was privately transmitted to his friend John Percival in verse as "The Muse's Refuge".[12] That poem was not intended for public circulation. Percival was informed that Berkeley "desired to show it to none but of your own family, and suffer no copy to be taken of it".[13] Berkeley's politics were ambitious but stealthy.

His fears that the money promised to support his Anglican college would be withdrawn materialized. James Oglethorpe's alternative project to found a new colony of Georgia to pursue the same goals of "charity and humanity" replaced Berkeley's initiative and alienated its funding. As Oglethorpe explained, in Berkeley's scheme "mankind it is true was to be benefitted, and learning and revealed religion extended", but it was politically impossible since "no private view was to be gratified, no relation served, nor pander preferred, nor no depraved opposition indulged".[14] Oglethorpe pointed out that Berkeley had been impolitic, and even contradictory, as his scheme failed to account for the probable effects of the depravity that was the reason for his removal to America in the first place. Berkeley's subsequent relations with Johnson supplemented his trust in providence with a little more political cunning. Effectively he tried to use Johnson, through his continuing good relations with the rector Elisha Williams, as a cat's paw to capture the College of New Haven for Anglicanism from its Congregationalist roots by introducing Anglican literature into the library, particularly Chillingworth and Hooker, and endowing the college with scholarships for students, to be chosen by the senior Episcopal missionary in New Haven, and lands to support the foundation.[15]

After leaving America, Berkeley presented the college with the basis of the best general library collection in the colonies. That collection reflected other aspects

---

[10] Berkeley to Henry Newman, Rhode Island, 29 March 1730, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 201, at 322.

[11] Ibid.

[12] George Berkeley, *A Proposal for the better supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations and for converting the Savage Americans to Christianity* (London, 1725).

[13] Berkeley to John Percival, London, 10 Feb. 1726, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 143, at 219.

[14] James Oglethorpe to Berkeley, London, May 1731, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 211, at 338.

[15] Indenture 17th day of August in the seventh year of the reign of George II, Beinecke Library, Ms Vault Berkeley, witnessed by Isaac Brown, John Piersen and Henry Newman.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of his experience. The four books catalogued as political essays among the more than eight hundred volumes he presented were made up of the six volumes of Davenant's tracts, Grotius's *De jure belli ac pacis*, the then recently published 1731 edition of William Temple's *Works* and William Petty's *Political Arithmetic*.[16] All of these texts reflected Berkeley's Irish Protestant experience. Davenant was the most important interlocutor for Irish political thinkers in the early eighteenth century, Temple came from an Irish family and Petty was one of the founders of the Dublin Philosophical Society that had included Berkeley as one of its members. Finally, Grotius was particularly important to Irish Protestant thought because his views on sovereignty buttressed their position on conquest theory, a view that Berkeley had articulated in his sermons of *Passive Obedience* and his *Advice to the Tories*. Locke and other authors that were difficult for the orthodox Irish Protestant tradition to accommodate were excluded.[17] Berkeley's politics of influence had an effect, if not exactly what he had planned. Yale, as it was renamed under Thomas Clap in 1745, resisted the temptation to Anglicanism, if not erudition, but Johnson subsequently became the founder of an alternative Anglican foundation, King's College in New York, which evolved into Columbia University.

* * *

Hight's edition allows us to appreciate the complex mix of political, philosophical and religious interests that drove Berkeley's intellectual life and the Irish, British and Atlantic contexts in which they developed. Scott Breuninger exploits precisely this comprehensive approach to locate Berkeley in "Anglo-Irish context".[18] Irish Protestants, and particularly clergy such as Berkeley, found themselves in an odd circumstance. As members of the established church they were the only inhabitants of the country who enjoyed full civil and political rights; they formed the political nation. However, Protestants were a minority, flanked by Catholics and Dissenters. Increase in the Protestant proportion of

---

16 Andrew Keogh, "Bishop Berkeley's Gift of Books in 1733", *Yale University Library Gazette*, 8/1 (1933), 25–6.

17 Locke remained central to the Patriot tradition associated with William Molyneux. Patrick Kelly, "Perceptions of Locke in Eighteenth-Century Ireland", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 89c (1989), 17–35; Jacqueline Hill, "Ireland without Union: Molyneux and His legacy", in John Robertson, ed., *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge, 1995), 271–96; Patrick Kelly, "William Molyneux and the Spirit of Liberty in Eighteenth-Century Ireland", *Eighteenth-century Ireland: Irís an dá chultúr*, 3 (1988), 133–48.

18 Scott Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley: Virtue and Society in the Anglo-Irish Context* (New York, 2010).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the population, even if slow, was an important element in legitimating the rule of the established church. In consequence, when British commentators took Ireland for a Protestant kingdom but a Catholic country, Irish Protestants would strongly object. Berkeley got very exercised in 1733 when "a certain person now here hath represented the papists as seven to one; which, I have ventured to affirm, is wide of truth".[19] Moreover, the kingdom in which they exercised their citizenship was constitutionally dependent on the crown of England after the foundation of the kingdom in the Crown of Ireland Act of 1542, and, from 1720, after the Declaratory Act, on the British Parliament.[20] The constitutional and demographic particularities of Ireland made debates between Whigs and Tories in the conditions of the emerging British Empire complicated and difficult.

Breuninger argues that Berkeley navigated his way through this complex situation by his commitment to virtue, the core principle of the patriot tradition.[21] Virtue was at the heart of the values that integrated the community and allowed Berkeley, and Irish Protestants like him, to form the political nation in Ireland and to participate in politics and society throughout the British Atlantic world. In his book Breuninger offers a compelling narrative that integrates Berkeley's philosophical and political concerns. His early philosophical work combating epistemological "error" was supplemented by his experience in London and Europe, but the crisis of commercial society, illustrated by the South Sea crash, drove him to a realization of the proximate ruin of Great Britain and toward a project to rescue virtue in the Americas. After the failure of his Bermuda project Berkeley returned to rural Ireland to exemplify virtue through his ministry as a bishop and to institute it through his support for improvement. Virtue is the thread that pulls together a very diverse set of experiences and makes the coherence of Berkeley's intellectual career comprehensible.

Breuninger's stress on virtue locates Berkeley in the heart of the English Enlightenment identified by J. G. A. Pocock.[22] Berkeley's moderate tone and his embrace of sociability and improvement as principles that accommodated the realities of emerging commercial empire while defending the ethics of orthodox Christianity do lend him a family resemblance to the intellectually active but

[19] Berkeley to Thomas Prior, London, 1 May 1733, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 222, at 351.

[20] Ireland 33 Hen. 8 c. 1; 6. Geo. I, c. 5.

[21] For context see Peter Miller, *Defining the Common Good: Empire, Religion and Philosophy in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge, 1994).

[22] J. G. A. Pocock, "Clergy and Commerce: The Conservative Enlightenment in England", in R. Ajello, ed., *L'Età dei Lumi: studi storici sul settocento europeo in onore de Franco Venturi* (Naples, 1985), 524–662; Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion,* vol. 1*, The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737–1754* (Cambridge, 1999), 13–49.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

conservative divines that made up the English Enlightenment.[23] However, that resemblance does not survive closer inspection. Berkeley, in common with the vast majority of eighteenth-century political thinkers, did use the language of virtue as a vehicle for political commentary. However, he explicitly rejected the embrace of virtue as a sufficient moral or political principle, particularly in his attack on Shaftesbury in the *Alciphron*, published in 1732 just after Berkeley's return from New England. Berkeley was not trying to accommodate Christianity to commerce, but to inflect commerce in a Christian direction. Some Irish thinkers, notably Francis Hutcheson, did unite virtue with utilitarian social ethics in order to give virtue content appropriate to a commercial society, but Berkeley completely rejected this option. He used the language of virtue as a conventional vocabulary, not as a substantial ground for political and moral insight. Berkeley's ideas on the nature of the religious community and the optimal strategy of improvement for the political community do not reflect a consensus generated in the Glorious Revolution, but rather mark an index of the range of possibilities opened to the communities of the British Atlantic by political and economic change.[24] Approaching debates on religion and politics through Irish writers such as Berkeley opens up new perspectives on the varieties of institutional possibility for the church, the state, markets, society and money that were imagined in the early eighteenth-century British empire.

The cornerstone of Berkeley's thinking about the moral integrity of the community was not a political principle, virtue, but a religious ideal, charity or *agape*. In his sermon on charity, delivered in Italy in 1714, Berkeley explicated the orthodox idea that charity was the core Christian virtue, "as nothing is better calculated to procure the happiness of mankind, so nothing can carry with it a surer evidence of its being derived from the common Father of us all".[25] His sermon went on to argue that the benefits of commercial society, division of labour and international commerce were also evidence of the effects and efficacy of charity.[26] In the concluding pages of the *Alciphron* Berkeley explained how charity framed virtue: "a sceptic, as well as other men, is member of a

---

23 Brian Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford, 1998); Robert Sullivan, "Rethinking Christianity in Enlightened Europe", *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 34/2 (Winter 2001), 298–309.

24 William Deringer, "Calculated Values: The Politics and Epistemology of Economic Numbers in Britain, 1688–1738", unpl. PhD thesis, 2012, Princeton University; Brent Sirota, "The Trinitarian Crisis in Church and State: Religious Controversy and the Making of the Postrevolutionary Church of England, 16878–1702", *Journal of British Studies*, 52/1 (Jan. 2013), 26–54. For the Glorious Revolution as the origin of contested eighteenth-century politics see Steven Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009).

25 George Berkeley, "On Charity", in *Works*, 7: 27–39, 27.

26 Ibid., 35.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

community, and can distinguish between good and evil, natural or political. Be this then his guide as a patriot, though he be no Christian".[27] Berkeley's letter to John James, counselling him against conversion to Catholicism, revealed his thinking on charity more clearly than any other document. James wished to be a member of the universal church, and Berkeley endorsed that idea, "there is indeed an invisible Church, whereof Christ is the head, linked together by charity ... this is the universal church militant and triumphant".[28] The invisible church of charity, ideally, was the salt that gave flavour to the virtuous empire.

The idea of an invisible universal church of charity as the sustaining moral framework for the community was sufficiently capacious to allow Berkeley to adapt to different political circumstances. Virtue depended on an active and visible commitment to a public good; in moments of corruption virtue had little purchase. Charity was not so constrained: "there is an unseen cement of the faithful ... although they may be members of different political or visible congregations, may be estranged or suspected or even excommunicate to each other".[29] So in Newport Berkeley cheerfully spoke in the Society of Friends meeting house and remarked to his friend Thomas Prior on the variety of sects in the colony, "the people living peaceably with their neighbours, of whatever profession. They all agree in one point, that the Church of England is second best".[30] In Ireland he was fiercely critical of Roman Catholicism, but cooperated easily with Catholics and even canvassed the help of the Catholic clergy for the project of improvement in the *Word to the Wise*. There is evidence that Berkeley's idea of a universal church extended very far indeed. Anne Foster, Berkeley's widow, in her correspondence with William Samuel Johnson, the son of Berkeley's American friend, passed on copies of manuscripts that had been given to her husband by Nathanial Hooke, the translator of Fénelon, and Madame Guyon.[31] Anne Berkeley was sensitive enough to her husband's reputation for Jacobitism to protect it from any imputation of Catholic mysticism and asked Johnson to be sure that no one else saw them, "To most people alas! such presents are forbid as we must not cast pearls—but Dr Johnson sees farther and is preparing for us a more important change of scene than from Old England to the New".[32] Further research on Berkeley's politics would do well to interrogate

[27] George Berkeley, *Alciphron; or the Minute Philosopher*, in *Works*, 3: 322.

[28] Berkeley to John James, Cloyne, 7 June 1741, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 282, at 426.

[29] Ibid., 427.

[30] Berkeley to Thomas Prior, Newport, Rhode Island, 24 April 1729, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 180, at 271–2.

[31] Anne Berkeley to William Samuel Johnson, Cookham, 21 June 1770, Beinecke Library Z Z117 0021, unfoliated.

[32] Anne Berkeley to Dr Johnson, Canterbury, 1771, Beinecke Library Z Z117 0021, unfoliated.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

his relationship with Anne Berkeley. They married just before they left Ireland for Rhode Island and, at least from his side, the attraction was intellectual, "I chose her for the qualities of her mind and her unaffected inclination to books".[33] Anne Berkeley was connected to the bluestocking circle through her friendship with Catherine Talbot and was acknowledged as an intellectual force in her own right well into her old age. Her son wrote to the younger Samuel Johnson in 1780 that "the powers of her mind are, thro' mercy, as great as ever, and very few persons have exceeded her in this respect, as well as in the application of them to purposes of importance".[34] It would be particularly interesting to investigate the contribution Anne made to the *Alciphron*, the most extended statement of Berkeley's politics, written while they were relatively isolated together in Rhode Island from late 1728 to 1731.

Berkeley's criticism of Roman Catholicism lay against its claim to monopolize the universality of the church while being in fact particular, and "it would be a blunder to say particular universal".[35] His defence of a universal church, set alongside his criticism of Catholicism, helps explain the hostile reception of Berkeley by varieties of Catholic opinion.[36] Berkeley's idea of a universal church occupied ground too close to the centre of Catholic apologetics. His ideas on charity were very useful to Irish Catholics though. The idea of an invisible church, ordered around charity rather than ecclesiastical discipline, however uncomfortable it may have been to the Continental church, was a concept that reflected the most optimistic elements of the experience of eighteenth-century Irish Catholics.[37] Breuninger notes that Charles O'Conor of Belangare, co-founder of the Catholic Committee, modelled his early work on Berkeley and acknowledged the inspiration.[38] In letters to his clerical nephew training in Rome, O'Conor argued that Berkeley's defence of Christian orthodoxy implicitly drove him to Catholic revival: "anarchy in Religion is so great, that the late protestant Bishop Berkeley, declared it must end in Popery, and I trust that his predication will be verified, if zeal and learning unite on the part of our English

---

33 Berkeley to John Percival, Greenwich, 3 Sept. 1728, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 172, at 260.

34 George Berkeley to Samuel Johnson, Kent, 24 June 1780, Beinecke Library Z Z117 0021, unfoliated.

35 Berkeley to John James, Cloyne, 7 June 1741, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 282, at 427.

36 Harry M. Bracken, *The Early Reception of Berkeley's Immaterialism 1710–1733* (The Hague, 1965), 10–31.

37 James Livesey, *Civil Society and Empire: Ireland and Scotland in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (New Haven, 2009), 90–127.

38 Breuninger, *Recovering Bishop Berkeley*, 160.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and Irish ecclesiastics".[39] O'Conor explained that English religious controversy was providential:

> a service to religion should on many accounts make its first appearance in England, the land of heterodoxy, but the land of incessant inquiry also. There, Protestantism fatigued by systems, is taking a sort of repose in Deism, and Deists without their knowing it, serve the Catholic cause by bringing division to such an extreme, as must necessarily bring about a return to truths first controverted by men who styled themselves reformers.[40]

Berkeley would not have endorsed this particular vision of the British Empire as the incubator of a Catholic universal church, but he shared the neo-Augustinian vision of history that informed it and adhered to the idea of charity that animated it.

Charity was one of a plethora of governing ideas proposed for the emerging British Empire in the extremely confused moment of its creation.[41] The politics of charity did not exclude Christian idealists such as Berkeley and O'Conor from debate and discussion of the emerging commercial polity; they were not committed to anti-commercial simplicity. Nor were the politics of charity restricted to the "Christian agrarianism" of Fenélon and his circle.[42] The idea of charity, as an alternative to Mandevillian self-interest, was an inspiration for the alternative strategy of economic development, centred on the improvement of agricultural productivity and domestic industry, promulgated by "economic societies" such as the Dublin Society.[43] Even political economists who were committed to a sceptical politics that did not appeal to a shared moral framework worried that engrossing trade as a strategy of national assertion destabilized the international system and fostered warfare.[44] The domestic route to commercial flourishing ideally encouraged a natural commerce generated out of exchange between societies enjoying relative comparative advantages.[45] This is why, despite

39 Charles O'Conor to Charles O'Kelly, Belangare, 18 Aug. 1786, Huntington Library STO 889.

40 Charles O'Conor to Charles O'Conor, Belangare, 27 Dec. 1783, Huntington Library STO 887.

41 It is an example of a "religious international". See Abigail Green and Vincent Viane, eds., *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith* (Basingstoke, 2012).

42 Lionel Rothkrug, *Opposition to Louis XIV: The Political and Social Origins of the French Enlightenment* (Princeton, 1965); Henry C. Clark, *Compass of Society: Commerce in Old Regime France* (Plymouth, 2007), 54–64.

43 See the essays in Koen Stapelbroek and Jani Marjanen, eds., *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 2012).

44 Istvan Hont, *Jealousy of Trade: International Competition and Nation-State in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, MA, 2005).

45 For these ideas in French context see Paul Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy* (Cambridge, MA, 2010).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the obvious evidence of international rivalry and the expansion of slavery, Montesquieu could argue that commerce was *doux*.

* * *

The financial revolution, and the consequent explosion in public credit, challenged every conception of politics, values and commerce, including the idea of charity. Daniel Carey and Christopher Finlay's recent edited volume places Irish efforts to understand and master the new politics of money, including Berkeley's, alongside the recent work on the contemporaneous institutional and intellectual innovations in Britain and the Americas.[46] The essays in this volume underline how debates around the nature of money brought the consequences of the financial revolution to bear on the communities of the British Atlantic. Finance not only supplied the "sinews of war"; it was a revolutionary force that transformed political and social relations. The founders of the Bank of England had understood its potential from the first. William Paterson argued that the prime public good that would be fulfilled by the bank would be to lower the price of money by making more of it:

> the want of a bank, or publick fund, for the convenience and security of great payments, and the better to facilitate the circulation of money, in and about this great and opulent city, hath, in our time, among other inconvenience, occasioned much unnecessary credit, to the loss of several millions by which trade hath been discouraged and obstructed.[47]

Paterson's inspired idea was to use government debt held by the bank as an asset to back further credit, which he foresaw would eventually transform the nature of the money supply:

> if the proprietors of the bank can circulate their foundation of twelve hundred thousand pounds, without having more than two or three hundred thousand pounds lying dead at one time with another, this bank will be in effect as nine hundred thousand pounds, or a million of fresh money brought into the nation.[48]

Paterson's was far from being the only bank scheme and, as George Caffentzis explains, design of financial institutions reflected the deep normative

[46] Daniel Carey and Christopher J. Finlay, eds., *The Empire of Credit: The Financial Revolution and the British Atlantic World, 1688–1815* (Dublin, 2011). Other work on Ireland and the Financial Revolution includes Charles Ivar McGrath and Chris Fauske, eds., *Money, Power, and Print: Interdisciplinary Studies on the Financial Revolution in the British Isles* (Cranbury, NJ, 2005); Sean Moore, *Swift, the Bank and the Irish Financial Revolution: Satire and Sovereignty in Colonial Ireland* (Baltimore, 2010).

[47] [William Paterson], *A Brief Account of the Intended Bank of England* (London, 1694), 1.

[48] Ibid., 14.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

assumptions about the nature of the empire.[49] What possibly needs more emphasis is the extent to which such assumptions were politically contestable and contested. Different kinds of bank and different kinds of money fostered different notions of society, of trust and distrust. Faith in the value of money was faith in a particular vision of the future.

It is therefore completely understandable why control of the issue of money became one of the most explosive political issues in the eighteenth-century British Empire. Commercial expansion had provoked innovation. John Asgill, in 1696, explained why a new kind of money had become necessary, "the past contracts now depending in the kingdom for payment of moneys in specie do far surmount all the species of money in the kingdom".[50] However, by the mid-eighteenth century, Josiah Tucker argued that control of issue of their own money had allowed colonies, acting as political communities, to escape the disciplines of credit and so the control of the mother country:

> laws were enacted first to issue out bills of credit to a certain amount, and then to make a tender of those bills to be considered as an adequate discharge of those debts, and a legal release from payment. A most compendious method this for getting out of debt.[51]

Of course, this looked rather different from the other shore. While Berkeley had been in Rhode Island, the colony, in common with the other American colonies, had very successfully managed a paper currency and pursued a strategy of economic development that had ended the commercial depression of 1729.[52] However, the losses suffered by British merchants, forced to accept depreciated colonial currency as legal tender in settlement of colonial debts, provoked Parliament to pass the Currency Act of 1751 making such paper illegal for settlement of private obligations.[53] The 1751 Act only covered the New England colonies and after 1755 the other colonies continued to issue paper, especially to support the costs of war. Virginia alone issued over £440,000 between 1755 and 1757.[54] The difficulties that the colony faced in meeting those debts, and the temptation to devalue them by inflating colonial paper, provoked the Currency

49 C. George Caffentzis, "The Failure of Berkeley's Bank: Money and Libertinism in Eighteenth Century Ireland", in Carey and Finlay, *The Empire of Credit*, 229–48.

50 John Asgill, *Several Assertions Proved in order to Create another Species of Money than Gold and Silver* (London, 1696), 1–2.

51 Josiah Tucker, "The true interest of Great Britain set forth in regard to the colonies", in Tucker, *Four Tracts, together with two sermons, on political and commercial subjects* (Glocester [*sic*], 1774), 150–1.

52 Lester, *Monetary Experiments*, 56–102.

53 24 Geo. II c. 53.

54 Jack P. Greene and Richard M. Jellison, "The Currency Act of 1764 in Imperial–Colonial Relations, 1764–1776", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 18/4 (1961), 485–518, 486.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Act of 1764 that prohibited the emission of any colonial paper currency.[55] Limiting the capacity of the colonies to issue their own money became one of the grievances that drove the Americans to revolution and, as Hermann Wellenreuther argues, became emblematic of British "tyranny".[56] In the aftermath of the Revolution, debates about money became central to the institutional design of the new nation and Fechner gives an illuminating account of the contribution by the Scottish president of the College of New Jersey, John Witherspoon, to the elaboration of an ideology of hard money.[57]

Given Ireland's peculiar constitutional situation it is unremarkable that the financial revolution in Ireland followed a very eccentric path. The first significant public loan was subscribed in 1716, and included Berkeley's future father-in-law, Speaker Foster, among its subscribers.[58] However, every effort to found a National Bank, authorized to monetize the debt and issue a debt-backed paper currency, failed until 1783, when the Bank of Ireland received its charter. Seán Moore's account of the vested interests that impeded the creation of new institutions of public credit is possibly overstated.[59] Work on traditional and informal credit mechanisms in other eighteenth-century circumstances has revealed that new and old credit institutions sold into different markets and did not compete with one another.[60] The political impediments to the foundation of a bank in Ireland were specific to its place and role in the empire. Supporters and critics of the various bank schemes floated across the eighteenth century framed their arguments in terms of Britain and the empire. Swift thought Ireland's place in the empire made a bank impractical;

55 4 Geo. III, c.34.

56 Hermann Wellenreuther, "Britain's Political and Economic Response to Emerging Colonial Economic Independence", in Carey and Finlay, *The Empire of Credit*, 122–39.

57 Roger J. Fechner, "'The Sacredness of Public Credit': The American Revolution, Paper Currency, and John Witherspoon's *Essay on Money* (1786)", in Carey and Finlay, *The Empire of Credit*, 142–67; but see Christine Desan, "The Market as a Matter of Money: Denaturalizing Economic Currency in American Constitutional History", *Law and Social Enquiry*, 30/1 (2005), 1–60.

58 Charles Ivar McGrath, "'The Public Wealth Is the Sinew, the Life, of Every Public Measure': The Creation and Maintenance of a National Debt in Ireland, 1716–1745", in Carey and Finlay, *The Empire of Credit*, 171–207, 171–2.

59 Seán Moore, "'Vested' Interests and Debt Bondage: Credit as Confessional Coercion in Colonial Ireland", in Carey and Finlay, *The Empire of Credit*, 209–28.

60 Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *Priceless Markets: The Political Economy of Credit in Paris 1660–1870* (Chicago, 2002); Gilles Postel-Vinay, *La terre et l'argent: L'agriculture et le crédit en France du XVIIIème au début du XXème siècle* (Paris, 1998); Philip Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay and Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, "What Do Notaries Do? Overcoming Asymmetric Information in Financial Markets: The Case of Paris 1751", *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, 154/3 (1998), 499–530.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> he could not understand how a country wholly crampt in every branch of its trade, of large extent, ill peopled, and abounding in commodities, which they had neither liberty to export nor encouragement to manufacture; could be benefitted by a Bank, which be all he had read, or heard, or observed in his travels, was only usefull in free countries.[61]

Henry Maxwell, who was in favour of a public bank, accepted that the imperial context made it dangerous, but thought that the risk was inherent in the nature of empire in any case: "England does not want the assistance of a bank, either to cramp our trade, or increase our dependence ... so a bank in this respect makes us neither better nor worse."[62] Ireland could not protect itself by refusing to participate in the new kinds of financial institution.

Berkeley's plan for a bank was a creative response to this conundrum. The problem he confronted was practical and urgent. Thomas Prior calculated that the money famine in Ireland drove interest rates as high as 7 per cent and led to the stagnation of business.[63] His proposed solution was to stop the withdrawal of money from Ireland in rent by its reinvestment in agriculture. Prior was to become one of the leading lights of the Dublin Society, alongside Arthur Dobbs, and their writings supported the strategy of founding a bank backed by the profits of domestic improvement rather than the promotion of trade.[64] Berkeley's *Querist* was remarkable because it accepted the fundamental insight that money represented the value of the work done in a society but developed it in a way that shook off the agrarian limitations of Prior, Dobbs and their friends.[65]

The *Querist* is a difficult text, constructed as series of linked questions. Happily we have a key to its interpretation offered to us by Berkeley himself. Through his friend Thomas Prior, Berkeley had a letter planted in as many outlets as he could, explaining that its goal was to present "the reasons for a national bank, and the answers to objections".[66] While the pamphlet ranges widely over the landscape of economic thought it has one direction of travel. Berkeley understood the political constraints around Irish economic strategy perfectly, "whether our hankering after the woollen trade be not the true and only reason, which hath

61 [Jonathan Swift], *The Eyes of Ireland Open; being a short view of the project for establishing the Bank of Ireland* (London, 1722), 11–12.

62 Henry Maxwell, *Mr Maxwell's Second Letter to Mr Rowley; wherein the objections against the Bank are answered* (Dublin, 1721), 9.

63 Thomas Prior, *A List of the Absentees of Ireland* (Dublin 1729), 19. Madden advanced the same argument. Samuel Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland as to their Conduct for the Service of their Country* (Dublin 1738), 4–7.

64 Arthur Dobbs, *An Essay on the Trade and Improvement of Ireland* (Dublin, 1729).

65 George Berkeley, *The Querist: containing several queries proposed to the consideration of the public* (Dublin, 1735–7).

66 Berkeley to Thomas Prior, Cloyne, 5 March 1737, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 263, at 399.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

created a jealousy of Ireland in England".[67] He did not allow his thinking to be constrained by the political impasse of trade restrictions. Berkeley inquired whether the assumptions that the only route to wealth was through trade, and that trade required a staple, were in fact justified. He even wondered if money might be supplied in some new way—"a nation within itself might not have real wealth, sufficient to give its inhabitants power and distinction, without the help of gold and silver".[68] Berkeley's real breakthrough was his insight that wealth was only represented by coin; real wealth was productive activity, or, as he put it, "industry". He went on to argue that wealth, or industry, might be represented by any and all forms of paper money, so breaking the connection between sovereignty and money.[69] The key issue was not to amass wealth through trade but to mobilize the productive capacity of the country. Berkeley's critique transcended the Irish situation and addressed all state economic strategies obsessed with engrossing trade.[70] He fully endorsed the alternative development strategy, "whether on the whole, a domestic trade may not suffice in such a country as Ireland, to nourish and cloathe its inhabitants, and provide them with the reasonable conveniences and even comforts of life".[71] The most direct route to that end was labour-intensive agriculture: tillage. Query 115 encapsulated the strategy of the nascent Dublin Society most succinctly: "might we not put a hand to the plough or the spade, though we had no foreign commerce?"[72] Berkeley was moving the object of economic analysis away from the politically represented nation toward society. Money might be issued by the state, but the value it represented was generated in society. The central concern of the pamphlet was therefore with an institutional design that would rationally relate the state and society in such a way that the capacity to issue money would not have perverse results.

The *Querist* has been recognized in the history of economics as a significant moment in the development of modern monetary theory; George Caffentzis has examined the nature and importance of Berkeley's idea of money in an important body of work.[73] He explains that Berkeley's vision of a bank was designed to support his realist moral theory and undermine the possibility of

67 Berkeley, *Querist* (1735), 19.

68 Ibid., 24.

69 David Berman, *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man* (Oxford, 1994), 168–9.

70 Patrick Kelly, "Ireland and the Critique of Mercantalism in Berkeley's *Querist*," in David Berman, ed., *George Berkeley: Essays and Replies* (Dublin, 1986), 109–12.

71 Berkeley, *Querist* (1735), 24.

72 Ibid., 23.

73 See Constantine George Caffentzis, *Exciting the Industry of Mankind: George Berkeley's Philosophy of Money* (Dordrecht, 2000); Caffentzis, "Locke, Berkeley and Hume as Philosophers of Money", *International Archives of the History of Ideas*, 201 (2011), 57–71.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

"libertine" politics.[74] Institutional design reflected moral and political purpose; "it should seem the difficulty doth not consist so much in the contriving or executing of a national bank and in bringing men to a right sense of the public weal".[75] Caffentzis explains beautifully the integration of Christian moral ideals, anti-materialist ontology and patriotic politics in Berkeley's scheme. What has not attracted sufficient attention is the evolving nature of Berkeley's *Querist*; how the politics of its reception shaped the nature of the text itself and its subsequent influence. The text was first published in three parts between 1735 and 1737, then reissued in a London edition in 1750.[76] That edition also formed part of the *Miscellany* of Berkeley's work on politics that he edited and published in 1752.[77] The later editions include substantial revisions of the original 1735–7 texts and these are not simply more polished versions of the original but follow a distinct pattern revealing Berkeley's increasing perception that an imperial state would not tolerate political pluralism. In consequence the site of the public authority that he imagined would guarantee that the value of currency was transformed.

The changes made real and substantive difference to Berkeley's account of money. In the 1750 edition, after the section in which Berkeley speculates that the value of money is conventional and that money is primarily an exchange commodity, Query 28 raises the problem of currency manipulation:

(1750 Q. 28, p. 4) Whether arbitrary changing the denomination of coin be not a public cheat?

From there, the questions move through a standard anti-bullionist observation that mineral resources and poverty can and do coexist to Query 31 which co-relates the value of money and property:

(1750 Q. 31, p. 4) Whether it be not the opinion of will of the people, exciting them to industry, that truly enricheth a nation? And whether this doth not principally depend on the means for counting, transferring and preserving power, that is, property of all kinds?

Read this way Berkeley is anticipating North and Weingast and arguing that hard money and secure property rights are the keys to economic prosperity.[78] This sequence also makes money less problematic by establishing a set of equivalences

---

74 Caffentzis, "The Failure of Berkeley's Bank", 231.

75 Berkeley to A B, Cloyne, 26 March 1737, in *Correspondence of George Berkeley*, Letter 264, at 403.

76 George Berkeley, *The Querist, containing several Queries, proposed to the Consideration of the Public* (London, 1750).

77 George Berkeley, *A Miscellany, containing several tracts on various subjects* (Dublin, 1752).

78 Douglas C. North and Barry Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England", *Journal of Economic History*, 49 (1989), 803–32.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

between property and value and so naturalizes it within a cycle of exchange. The implication is that manipulation of the coin would indeed be a public cheat. However the original 1735 edition had two further queries (29 and 30) that raised the possibility that money was not simply a reflection of the value of property within a social totality but a device to represent the relative power of "industry" that articulated the relative positions of different societies and whose value was determined, at least in part, by political will. Specifically, Berkeley was observing the deflationary possibilities confronted by less mature economies in a currency union:

(1735 Q. 29, p. 8) Whether nevertheless the damage would be very considerable, if by degrees our money were brought back to the English value, there to rest for ever?

(1735 Q. 30, p. 8) Whether the English crown did not formerly pass with us for six shillings? And what inconvenience ensued to the public, upon this reduction to the present value, and whether what hath been may not be?

Read with these queries in place the question of what value to give money and how to give it value remained open; not all manipulation would be a public cheat. Money did not represent the accumulated value of property but the anticipated value of industry. In a currency union, such as the British Empire of the middle eighteenth century, setting a value for money would be a matter for politics—that is, explicit negotiation—and the values set would condition the development possibilities for the elements of that union.

The excisions from the later sections of Part I of the *Querist* are even more pointed and consequential since the bulk of them developed Berkeley's project for a national bank. In both the 1750 and 1735 editions the fundamental proposal for a national bank as a stimulus to development is laid out in the same way:

(1735 Q. 223, p 24; 1750 Q. 204, p. 38) Whether a bank of national credit, supported by public funds, and secured by Parliament, be a chimera or impossible thing; and if not, what would follow from the support of such a bank.

In both versions Berkeley cites the example of the Bank of Amsterdam to argue that there was no inherent flaw in paper money and that the technical problem was how to establish the value of the currency based on the wealth, understood as industry, of the nation:

(1735 Q. 283, pp. 52–3; 1750 Q. 250, p. 27) Whether, therefore, the circulating paper, in the late ruinous schemes of *France* and *England*, was the true evil, and not rather the circulating thereof without industry? And whether the Bank of *Amsterdam*, where Industry had been for so many years subsisted and circulated by transfers on paper, doth not clearly decide this point?

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In the 1750 version what follows is a general abstract discussion of the benefits and dangers of such an institution that ends with a eulogy for the support given to the power of the English state by public credit in Queries 232 and 234. The first edition has a much more specific set of questions addressed to the politics of public banks, primarily in the British Empire, but more generally in the advanced states of Europe. The possibility that the bank might be a revolutionary force is addressed:

(1735 Q. 214, p. 40) Whether a bank in private hands might not even overturn a Government? And whether this was not the case of the Bank of St George in Genoa?

Among his analyses of the many bank schemes, Berkeley argued that the flaw in Law's scheme was that it allowed individuals to issue bills against mortgages, without securing the public interest in the quantity of paper in circulation (Q. 215, p. 40), and, of most relevance to Irish readers of the first edition, he thought that the problems with public issue of paper money in New England derived from flaws in their political economy, chiefly their lack of manufactures, and not from the principle of paper money itself (Q. 212, p. 39). He concluded that a bank that did not exhibit these pathologies would have to be truly public, rather than a corporation run in the public interests:

(1735 Q. 222, p. 42) Whether by a *national bank*, be not properly understood a Bank, not only establish'd by public authority as the Bank of England, but a bank in the hands of the public, where there are no shares whereof the public alone is the proprietor, and reaps all the benefit.

He later drew the same contrast between a truly public bank and a "private bank, as those of England and Scotland, which are national only in name" (1735 Q. 226, p. 43), and in later queries sketched in the governing structure he thought might best represent the public interest through a balanced set of representative and auditing committees (1735 QQ. 230–32) and the plans for issuing notes and credit. This political analysis of the place of a bank, its relation to imperial structures and the particular institutional form it should take, was missing in the 1750 edition, which left in its place only a moral anxiety about the temptation to luxury occasioned by public banks:

(1750 Q. 229, p. 25; 1735 Q. 220, p. 41) Whether the ruinous effects of Mississippi, South Sea, and such schemes, were not owing to an abuse of paper money or credit, in making it a means for idleness and gaming, instead of a motive and help to industry?

The fundamental insight that a bank enjoying public confidence could drive development was retained in both versions but the key relationship between national political structures and a money-issuing bank was occluded in the later.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

What changes between the two editions is that the sharply defined "public" of the 1735 edition, the political nation, has become a far less defined, but oddly more capacious, entity in the 1750 version. In 1735 the political nation guaranteed the public interest through constitutional structures; in the 1750 version public ownership was praised but not specified. The issuing bank of the 1750 version had a public mission, but not a well-defined structure of public ownership. The excision of queries that defined public ownership as ownership by the political nation generated some incongruities in the 1750 text. In the 1735 version Berkeley reiterates in two linked queries his view that speculative manipulation was impossible in a truly public bank, but by excising the former query in the 1750 edition the comment on gaming lost its contextual meaning:

(1735 Q. 281, p. 52) Whether there be not a wide difference, between the profits going to augment the national stock, and being divided among private sharers? And whether, in the former case, there can possibly be any gaming or stock-jobbing?

(1735 Q. 281, p. 52; 1750 Q. 249, p. 29) Whether it must not be ruinous for a nation to sit down to game, be it with silver or with paper?

In the 1735 edition and the 1750 edition Berkeley's commitment to a public bank drives him to a capacious, inclusive vision of the public. Irish Protestants would never flourish in a sea of poor Catholics:

(1735 Q. 288, p. 54; 1750 Q. 255, p. 32) 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?

In the 1735 edition the conclusion drawn was not that simple political toleration should be extended to Catholics to involve them in the project of development, but rather that renewed efforts should be made to recruit Catholics to the established church. Would a bank in public ownership, with a wide conception of the public, politically represented, be threatened if a body of that public

(1735 Q. 298, p. 56) professeth in temporals a subjection to foreign powers, who holdeth himself absolved from all obedience to his natural prince and the laws of his country? Who is even persuaded, it may be meritorious to destroy the powers that are?

Berkeley tried to find a distinction between "mere Papists and recusants" (1735 Q. 299, p. 56) to make sense of his suggestion that "whether in granting toleration, we ought not to distinguish between doctrines purely religious, and such as effect the state" (1735 Q. 297, p. 56). All of this missionary zeal disappears from the 1750 version.

Berkeley timed the original pamphlet to appear in *Pue's Occurances* and the *Dublin Newsletter* a week before the opening of the Dublin Parliament in 1737. He even, for the first and only time, took his seat on the bishops' bench to introduce

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

his scheme. As Caffentzis explains in article, the bank measure was a total political failure and Berkeley could not muster enough support even to have it debated.[79] This political impasse explains the subsequent history of the text. Noting the excisions "relating to the sketch or plan of a national bank" in the preface to the 1750 edition, Berkeley explained that the original proposal had been untimely. "When the public shall seem disposed to make use of such an expedient", which he saw no prospect of, then a properly public bank would become a practical political project. In the interim, and in the face of hardening imperial structures and British commitment to wars against Spain and then France, Berkeley retreated to civil society, moral improvement and combating atheism. The vision of his bank was depoliticized as the virtue of the Irish political community had fallen well short of that of Rhode Island. Public virtue was not the absolutely necessary condition of a rational context for a bank; the charitable virtues could find other grounds to support public confidence. The new queries intruded into the 1750 edition are almost as interesting in this regard as those excluded. The new Queries 194 to 197 discuss the liberal virtues promoted by learning and Query 191 suggests that Catholics should be admitted to the University of Dublin on special terms:

> Whether in imitation of the Jesuits at *Paris*, who admit Protestants to study at their colleges, it may not be right for us also to admit *Roman-Catholics* into our college, without obliging them to attend chapel-duties, or catechisms, or divinity lectures?

Queries 202–16 introduced a whole new set of ideas about moral education in families. All these additions moved the focus of the public interest further away from the nation, the polity, and toward society, away from the structures of political representation and toward the family, the city, the counting house, all the entities that make up civil society.

The fortunes of the *Querist* elucidate the history of Irish Protestant reflection on the political and economic options open to the community in the conditions of the emerging British Empire. As the idea of the empire as a comity of Protestant nations retreated in the face of a much more integrated imperial regime, so the focus of political thought for many thinkers moved away from virtue. This did not mean that all public rationality was reduced to interest, though; alternative ideas of value remained relevant. Berkeley continued to promulgate his bank scheme even after his political check because he thought the moral principles that animated it were real and effective. Emulation in society offered an alternative form of moral pedagogy to politics and a field for charity. However, the implicit argument that the institutions that supplied money had to be governed by a substantive vision of justice if money was to encourage growth and development was muffled in the later versions of the pamphlet.

---

79 Caffentzis, "The Failure of Berkeley's Bank", 243–5.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The *Querist* also throws light on the manner in which the experience of the provinces of empire informed one another. The inspiration for Berkeley's bank scheme was the fiscal regime of Rhode Island, and his emended text in turn inspired Scottish thinking on money. In 1751, the same year that Adam Smith took up his teaching position at the university there, a Glasgow reprint of the London edition of the *Querist* was published as part of Foulis's series of classics in political economy.[80] A foreword explained that the text was designed to generate in Scotland the effect it had already produced in Ireland: "the *Querist* was wrote with a design to promote the improvement of Ireland ... We have nowhere found, in so small a compass, so just and extensive a view of the true sources of wealth and happiness to a country".[81] This project of intra-imperial emulation had an unforeseen consequence: Dugald Stewart, Smith's student and protégé, reports that Smith's account of money was directly inspired by his reading of Berkeley.[82] It is interesting to speculate if "the founding myth of our system of economic relations", the independence of money from the state, would have been altered had Smith read the earlier version.[83] In any case, the fortunes of the *Querist* illuminate the variety and complexity of imperial political economy in the eighteenth century and the crucial importance of understanding the particular role played by Irish thinkers in political debate.

80 The other texts were "the celebrated Mr Law's treatise on Money and Trade, next we reprinted Mr Gee on the Trade and Navigation of Great Britain, Sir Josiah Child on the Trade and Interest of Money and Mr Law's other treatise entitled, Proposals and Reasons for constituting a Council of Trade in Scotland".

81 George Berkeley, *The Querist, or, Several Queries proposed to the Consideration of the Public* (Glasgow, 1751), 3–4.

82 Dugald Stewart, *The Works of Adam Smith LLD, with an Account of his Life and Writing*, 5 vols. (London, 1811), 5: 548.

83 David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5000 Years* (New York, 2011), 28.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479244314000572 Published online by Cambridge University Press