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Berkeley and the University

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5. Berkeley and the University

Berkeley is seldom ranked among the great educators of his day. He was not a dedicated teacher and administrator like Daniel Waterland, nor, despite the brilliance of his early epistemological works, a dedicated scholar in Richard Bentley's mould. Yet throughout his life Berkeley devoted much of his energy to education both through his long affiliation with Trinity College, Dublin, and in his ambitious attempt to found a college in Bermuda. In his writings Berkeley often celebrates British universities as vigorously as Locke had attacked them. These passages provide, when collected, a coherent defence of the traditional curriculum and of the university's place within the Church. Berkeley's thoughts on education also reflect and illuminate issues in his philosophy, particularly the hermeneutic analogy which informs both his apologetics and epistemology. In defending the place of the classics in the university syllabus, Berkeley elaborates his belief that meaning is often affective and pragmatic, that 'the raising of some passion' and 'the exciting to, or deterring from an action' are regular and valuable ends of language.¹

Berkeley took his B.A. in 1704 from Trinity at the age of nineteen, receiving his M.A. and becoming a fellow of the College three years later.² To bolster his application for the fellowship, Berkeley published his *Arithmetica*, a slim mathematics handbook for undergraduates designed to display his competence as a teacher and his willingness to engage the minds of his students. Berkeley spent the next five years performing a variety of College offices, including those of Junior Dean and Junior Greek Lecturer. But he found his duties as a fellow onerous, the more so because he suffered from depression and colic, which he attributed to Dublin's damp weather; he complained to his friend John Percival that he found little 'health and tranquillity' in the College (8:70). So in 1713 he applied for and was granted an extended leave of absence on the grounds of health and improvement of learning, and went to London. There he was delighted to become an intimate of Pope and Swift, but with Tory powers on the wane and London's climate proving in every way as execrable as that of Dublin, he secured an extension to his leave and embarked on tours of the Continent, first as a chaplain, and then as a private tutor. Berkeley found this sort of teaching much more

agreeable. He happily led the son of the Bishop of Clogher on a four-year tour spent mostly in Italy, and here Berkeley managed to serve his personal ends of health and learning. His tour journals show him educating himself in art and architecture, visiting the Vatican library, and investigating such natural phenomena as the tarantula and the exhalations of Vesuvius.

When in 1721 Berkeley returned to Trinity, he took both the bachelor and doctor of divinity and became an active Senior Fellow. Over the next two and a half years he served as Senior Proctor and Lecturer in Greek, Hebrew, and Divinity. His letters from the period, however, reveal a preoccupation with preferment — he had been granted the Deanery of Dromore by the Duke of Grafton, but the Duke's right to confer the living was contested, and the subsequent lawsuit was tiresome and, for Berkeley, unsuccessful. Berkeley's eagerness to leave Trinity is not extraordinary; fellows received small salaries and could not marry. Colleges did, however, control substantial livings, and so a fellowship was regarded as a first step in a successful ecclesiastical career. Indeed, the path from the provostship of Trinity to the choicer Irish sees was particularly well-worn. When Berkeley finally did get his Deanery (that of Derry in 1724) and resigned his Fellowship, it was only with the help of the College, which threw two small livings in its gift into the balance to secure the preferment.

While the Deanery bestowed a considerable income and a relative freedom from duties, it also granted Berkeley sufficient authority to launch the great project he was formulating — the founding of a college at Bermuda. He had fixed on this ambitious scheme in the summer of 1722, and it was to command his energies for the next ten years. On becoming Dean, he travelled to London to print his *Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in our Foreign Plantations*, a pamphlet which laid the Bermuda scheme before the public with great success. By April of 1725 the charter for St. Paul's College received royal assent, and by December £3400 had been raised by public subscription for the support of fellows and scholars. Berkeley, who was to be president of the school, had interested friends at Trinity in the scheme. Three of these committed their services as fellows of the new College. The story of the failure of the project is well known: Walpole withheld the funds promised for the College's foundation, even though Berkeley left for America in 1728 both to show his own integrity and to force Walpole's hand.³

After the demise of this project, Berkeley still managed to pursue one of the ends of his *Proposal*. When the Bermuda subscribers refused his offers to return their gifts, he used the money to expand the libraries at Harvard and Yale, collections he had already augmented with gifts from his own library on leaving Rhode Island. As Bishop of Cloyne he main-

tained an interest in Trinity, establishing an annual medal for excellence in Greek, and providing a Greek font for the College's new press. Berkeley's services to the College were rewarded with an offer of the Vice-Chancellorship; he declined on the grounds that the distance between Cloyne and Dublin would prevent his taking an active role in Trinity's affairs. Appropriately, he spent the last months of his life in Oxford, supervising the education of his eldest surviving son.

In early modern England the Church had a virtual monopoly on university education. The majority of undergraduates trained for the clergy, with only a small percentage studying law or medicine. Some scholars, Locke and Newton included, went to lengths to earn those few fellowships which did not entail taking orders, and many Whigs bridled at the entrenchment of high-church interests in what they regarded as properly secular public institutions. In contrast, Berkeley, a moderate Tory and a cleric, approved of the training of priests as the university's central task. Indeed, he had two ends in mind as he drew up his plans for the Bermuda college, both of them religious. First, he had heard of a general decay of religious knowledge in the American colonies, which had led to 'a most notorious Corruption of Manners' (7:345). He knew that many American parishes were vacant, that the prospects of easy wealth in the plantations tempted many priests into trade. At the same time, only William and Mary of the American colleges trained candidates for the English Church, and with no American episcopacy yet established any colonist who was called to the Church had to be ordained in London. Moreover the dissenters had a strong hold in the colonies. When, in the first edition of the *Proposal*, he speaks slightly of Harvard and Yale, 'two presbyterian colleges of New England, which have so long subsisted to little or no purpose' (7:354), he is clearly offering St. Paul's to the public as a way of ensuring the place of the Church in America, an institution to train an indigenous ministry and provide 'a constant Supply of worthy Clergymen for the *English Churches in those Parts*' (7:345).⁴ He promises that special care will be taken with the moral education of the students, with the prospect that a new fund of clergymen of good character will, by example, effect a general reformation of American manners. Berkeley chose Bermuda primarily because it had only light trade, and so would offer few immoral distractions to his pupils. Indeed, that very isolation from society for which the universities were so often satirized was for Berkeley a prerequisite for serious learning.⁵ The bursting of the South Sea bubble had hardened Berkeley in his Tory distrust of money and trade, and Bermuda, though in some ways inconveniently situated, was at least free of the vice that he felt sure must infect more prosperous colonial ports. In the *Proposal* he looks forward to his tropical provost-

ship as 'a retired academical Life, in a Corner from whence Avarice and Luxury are excluded' (7:353), confessing privately to Percival that he also hopes the Bermudian climate will prove 'the most effectual cure for the cholic' (8:128).

The second function of St. Paul's was to train native Americans to be missionaries to their own people. In the *Proposal* Berkeley raises the threat of the vigilance of French and Spanish missionaries, and hints at the SPG's limited success in reaching the indigenous peoples. He reasons that native missionaries could do much better, free of the barriers of race and language, and proposes that St. Paul's admit native Americans at a young age, before their manners are fixed. These students are to be procured either peacefully from the friendly colonial tribes, or 'by taking captive the Children of our Enemies' (7:347). Harry Bracken has recently called these plans 'incredible and totally out-of-character savagery.'⁶ Yet, however unpalatable today, empire in all of its forms was a favourite theme of the Augustans. Berkeley would have had no doubts that he was offering his native students not just a spiritual salvation that far outweighed any earthly pain, but an education that was, after all, unavailable to the vast majority of Britons. To his credit, he insisted on a full, traditional course of study for his native priests, proposing that they earn an M.A. and take holy orders, including ordination in London, before taking up their mission.

The university is, then, first and foremost a '*Seminary of Religion*' for Berkeley. But the repercussions of this relationship between the Church and the schools are wide-ranging. The assumption behind the *Bermuda Proposal* is that the spiritual health of a nation depends upon an educated clergy disseminating orthodox religious knowledge. Berkeley brought this message home to Britain on his return from America in the form of *Alciphron*, his great dialogue on contemporary irreligion. *Alciphron* is clearly the product of the frustration of his years at Rhode Island, and in a letter from this period he makes an explicit connection between the growth of religious scepticism in Britain and the failure of St. Paul's:

What they foolishly call free thinking seems to me the principal root or source not only of opposition to our College but of most other evils in this age, and as long as that frenzy subsists and spreads, it is in vain to hope for any good either to the mother country or colonies, which always follow the fashions of Old England. (8:212)

In exposing the sources of contemporary atheism, *Alciphron* inevitably focuses on false learning. Each of the two free thinkers in the dialogue represents in his own way a failure in modern education. Alciphron's studies began at the Temple, continued in a Grand Tour when an estate

came his way, and ended in an indulgence in the amusements of London. Alciphron's associate Lysicles did go to university, but managed to emerge with both his ignorance and complacency unscathed: 'I had the spending [of] three hundred pounds a year in one of [the universities],' he explains, 'and think it the cheerfulest time of my life. As for their books and style, I had not leisure to mind them' (3:197). These fashionable free thinkers not only promote vice and irreligion, but prove energetic critics of the universities, calling them 'nurseries of prejudice, corruption, barbarism, and pedantry' (3:197). Alciphron is clearly a caricature of Shaftesbury whose influential *Characteristicks* (1711) had satirized the clergy and the universities. Alciphron and Lysicles describe with enthusiasm a new method of education which is taking hold. Learning is now to be had

where our grave ancestors would never have looked for it — in a drawing-room, a coffee-house, a chocolate-house, at the tavern, or groom-porter's. In these and the like fashionable places of resort, it is the custom for polite persons to speak freely on all subjects, religious, moral, or political; so that a young gentleman who frequents them is in the way of hearing many instructive lectures, seasoned with wit and raillery, and uttered with spirit. Three or four sentences from a man of quality, spoke with a good air, make more impression and convey more knowledge than a dozen dissertations in a dry academical way. (3:48)

Against these claims, Berkeley, through the characters Euphranor and Crito, mounts a defence of the universities and the traditional curriculum. The loose thoughts and shallow principles of the modern free thinker reveal the inadequacy of their coffee-house educations, and prove the importance of the university's traditional emphasis on logical training and on the writings of 'the wise men of antiquity' (3:329). At the end of *Alciphron* the university stands alone, the only stay against the impending moral and spiritual ruin of Great Britain.

In defending the religious and moral mission of the universities in *Alciphron*, Berkeley emphasizes the role of the traditional curriculum. Undergraduate studies were predominately philological, devoted mostly to grammar, logic, and rhetoric, along with the classics and, often, condensed versions of Aristotle's ethics. Physics and mathematics had their places, but usually the study was elementary. John Gascoigne has argued that the universities of the seventeenth century were not as hostile to the new science as has been commonly supposed. Scholastic natural philosophy proved flexible enough to admit new ideas within a traditional Aristotelean framework, and vigorous scientific cultures flourished at the peripheries of the universities, often in private lectures, laboratories and clubs.⁷ Universities were, however, still regarded as

custodians of established knowledge rather than centres for academic innovation, and statutes and curricula did not necessarily reflect the research interests of fellows or even the reading of the more ambitious undergraduates. Both Oxford and Cambridge began the century by filling new professorships in the physical sciences with prominent researchers, but with time college tutors took over the teaching of these subjects and in some cases the professorships became sinecures for scholars of classics and theology.⁸ Oxford, the more conservative institution politically and intellectually, was the slowest to admit Locke's new logic.⁹ In 1721 Nicholas Amhurst, admittedly an adamant Whig with a grudge against Oxford's Tory establishment, made the not uncommon complaints that lectures were neglected, that professorships were 'given away, as pensions and sinecures,' and that Aristotle still ruled unchallenged in the disputations, indeed that the University 'by statute obliged her *matriculated* issue to defend and maintain all his *peripatetical* doctrines, right or wrong together, to the last gasp of their breath.'¹⁰ At Cambridge, as Gascoigne has shown, the efforts of Richard Bentley, William Whiston, and Roger Cotes had succeeded in popularizing Newton's philosophy and establishing its place, along with the work of Locke and Samuel Clarke, in a curriculum that remained none the less to a large degree classical.¹¹ Daniel Waterland of Magdalene College describes the typical course of undergraduate reading in his *Advice to a Young Student* of 1730. Waterland recommends that, throughout the four years of the degree, the student should spend his mornings reading '*philosophy*,' by which he means mathematics, physics, astronomy, chronology and ethics, as well as metaphysics. Locke's *Essay* is recommended as philosophical reading for the second year, 'being a book so much (and I add so justly) valued, however faulty the author may have been in other writings.'¹² Evenings are to be set aside for divinity, particularly English sermons, on the assumption that the pupil intends to enter the Church. Every afternoon, save Sunday, is to be devoted to a close reading of classical literature from a comprehensive syllabus. Waterland's aim is principally stylistic proficiency, and Cicero and Virgil are particularly recommended as rhetorical models. He urges the student to 'Endeavour in your exercises, prose or verse, not to copy out, but to imitate and vary the most shining thoughts, sentences, or figures you meet with in your reading.'¹³

At Berkeley's Trinity it seems that some students had exposure to Locke's *Essay*; according to William Molyneux the College's bachelors were being examined on the book as early as 1692,¹⁴ and Berkeley's notebooks of 1707 and 1708 show him immersed in the *Essay* as a junior fellow. But lists of texts from 1736 for undergraduate lectures and term examinations show a curriculum divided between the classics (predomi-

nately Homer and Virgil, but including Caesar, Horace, Lucian, Cicero, Longinus, and Tacitus) and the 'sciences,' meaning logic and metaphysics with some physics and astronomy. The latter list of lecture texts includes Le Clerc's and the Port-Royal logics, but not Locke's *Essay*.¹⁵

Throughout this period, the traditional university syllabus was widely criticized as antiquated, a mire of book learning which left the scholar unfit for polite company and ignorant of the exciting new truths about the sensible world. The characters of the scholar and the gentleman were, moreover, often depicted as antithetical, that too much book-learning distracted the young scholar from the pressing affairs of the world. Locke, who admitted that the corpuscularians were overtaking the peripatetics in the schools, still lamented in his *Thoughts on Education* that the preponderance of graduates came away with nothing more than a load of Latin and logic.¹⁶ He advocated private tuition in 'real Knowledge' over the classical education offered by the grammar schools. For Locke, studies which engaged the young scholar's senses, such as geography, astronomy, anatomy, and geometry, should precede logic and metaphysics, with their 'hard Words, and empty Sounds.'¹⁷ Metaphysics itself should not be treated deductively, but experimentally as a branch of natural philosophy. Grammar is entirely peripheral, since languages are best learned by immersion, though Locke even questions the value of ancient languages for British students. '*Latin*,' he remarks dryly, 'is a language foreign in their Country, and long since dead everywhere.'¹⁸ Locke was not, of course, alone in raising doubts about the value of a classical education for the upper classes. Where most educational theorists of the period stressed the value of law and history as fitting a gentleman for the world, they were mixed in their attitudes to the study of classical languages.¹⁹ None denied that some facility in Latin was an essential accomplishment for the eldest son of an aristocratic family: the careful imitation and translation of latin authors was widely admitted as the best way of improving one's own style as a writer of English. But many saw the advanced study of Latin and Greek as necessary only for those destined to be clerics or physicians. These issues were brought into focus and invested with considerable emotion in the course of the controversy over ancient versus modern learning at the end of the seventeenth century. Richard Bentley, a thoroughgoing modern in both his commitment to natural philosophy and his techniques of textual scholarship, was, ironically enough, portrayed by his opponents as the consummate pedant — the medieval schoolman reborn.²⁰ Pope perpetuated this popular image of Bentley with the caricature of Aristarchus in *The Dunciad*. Pope's Aristarchus confesses that 'on Words is still our whole debate,' and he stuffs his students with linguistic detail while offering only a superficial smattering of the solid sciences.²¹

There is much in Pope's attack on Bentley with which Berkeley would agree. Indeed the seeds of Pope's lampoon may be found in one of Berkeley's early contributions to *The Guardian*, No. 77, in which he condemns the limited perspectives of the philologists, those

criticks, who, seeing that Greek and Latin are in request, join in a thoughtless pursuit of those languages, without any further view. They look on the ancient authors, but it is with an eye to phraseology, or certain minute particulars which are valuable for no other reason but because they are despised and forgotten by the rest of mankind. The divine maxims of morality, the exact pictures of human life, the profound discoveries in the arts and sciences, just thoughts, bright images, sublime sentiments, are overlooked, while the mind is learnedly taken up in verbal remarks. (7:211)

Berkeley finds time here to expound what Pope in his satire only hints at — the value of ancient literature in moral and rhetorical training. Berkeley seems to be addressing Locke when he stresses the utility of the classics, which, far from turning the young scholar into a gauche and bookish introvert, make him fit for public service. Cicero, Berkeley tells us, offers 'the noble sentiments of virtue and a publick spirit,' while the ancient historians offer us 'illustrious patterns' on which we may form our own lives (7:212). Berkeley also conveys a sense of the pleasures of classical studies, pleasures which he explored as he reminisced about his own education in *Guardian* No. 62. Here he defends grammar school imitation exercises, exercises which Locke had condemned, as a 'grateful employment,' permitting the students the delight 'of admiring and raising themselves to an imitation of the polite stile, beautiful images, and noble sentiments of ancient authors' (7:203).

This humanist conviction that the classics provided effective aesthetic, rhetorical and ethical training committed Berkeley to the defence of a traditional, language-centred curriculum. He was, moreover, conscious of the dangers of Newtonianism's growing prestige, and of the moral and religious consequences of materialism. But this did not mean that Berkeley rejected outright Locke's call for more 'real knowledge.' He not only wrote speculatively on physics, but often devoted himself to the study of natural phenomena, particularly in later life when he spent years collecting evidence on the curative properties of tar-water. Berkeley finds a place for these things in the curriculum he sketches in his *Proposal*; his native scholars are to be exposed to mathematics, medicine, and history. But overall the syllabus maintains a traditional emphasis on religion, ethics and rhetoric, and finds a central role for the classics in preparing the students for a mission as much moral and exemplary as spiritual and didactic:

They should not only be incited by the common Topics of Religion and Nature, but farther animated and inflamed by the great Examples in past Ages, of public Spirit and Virtue, to rescue their Countrymen from their savage Manners, to a Life of Civility and Religion. (7:348)

Berkeley's sense of the importance of language studies in the universities informs his substantial gifts of books to the fledgeling libraries of Yale and Harvard. Despite the curriculum's emphasis on languages, the eighteenth-century undergraduate often had little encouragement to read: he spent much of his time writing his own compositions in Latin for performance, and much being read to by tutors and lecturers. He also had surprisingly little access to books, apart from the dozen or so volumes he bought himself each year under his tutor's directions. Among these, there were sure to be ancient poetry and oratory in the original, but much of the rest would be seventeenth-century compendia and handbooks in such subjects as logic and ethics. University libraries in this period were not for undergraduate use; their collections of rare books and manuscripts were meant to supplement the private libraries of senior members of the university. Trinity's new library was completed in 1732, but in the preceding decades the collection was in disarray. As college librarian in 1709 Berkeley complained at having to pass 'the better part of a sharp & bitter day in the Damps & mostly [*sic*] solitudes of the Library without either Fire or any thing else to protect Me from the Injuries of the Snow that was constantly driving at the Windows & forcing its Entrance into that wretched Mansion' (8:24). Eleven years saw no improvement: 'it is at present so old and ruinous, and the books so out of order, that there is little attendance given' (8:126). Acquisitions were sometimes haphazard; the Bodleian, for example, relied largely on bequests of private libraries, with only a small proportion of new books being registered under the Copyright Act and an average of just ten pounds devoted annually to accessions in the mid-century.²²

In this context, it is striking that Berkeley not only committed himself to building the libraries of the American colleges, but also to providing books for undergraduate use. On his departure from America, Berkeley left a box of his own books with his friend, the American philosopher Samuel Johnson, with the request that the Greek and Latin volumes be distributed 'to such lads as you think will make the best use of them in the College [Yale], or to the School at Newhaven' (8:213). Visiting Harvard before taking ship, he noticed their lack of classics and left them some of his own Greek volumes. Back in England, he used the unspent private donations for St. Paul's to buy a case of 'all the Latin Classick Authors in quarto' for Harvard library and one thousand volumes for Yale. This latter gift was a complete library in itself, providing essential

texts in all subjects and designed, as Berkeley put it, 'to promote sound learning and true religion' and to 'shed a copious light in that remote wilderness' (8:219-20).

Yale was attractive to Berkeley because it had a large Anglican faction among its fellowship; Ezra Stiles believed that Johnson had convinced Berkeley 'that Yale College would soon become Episcopal.'²³ He recognized too that, in comparison with Harvard's collections, Yale's library 'was in its infant state.'²⁴ But the College also had a progressive lending policy, no doubt to compensate for the relative scarcity of academic books in America. In 1723 the Trustees confirmed that undergraduates in their third year had a right to borrow books, and Thomas Clap's laws of 1745 added that even sophomores could obtain special permission to borrow 'Some particular Books upon the Rudiments of Languages and Logic.'²⁵ Berkeley's donation is in entire accord with this policy, providing books the bulk of which are, like the Latin classics given to Harvard, for undergraduate use.²⁶ True, there were some prizes for scholars in the collection — *Transactions* of the Royal Society up to 1720, an extensive collection of the Fathers, and two copies of Ficino's complete Plato. But to complement Newton's *Opticks* and Keill's *True Astronomy* there were copies of the popular introductory handbooks on the subjects by Edward Wells. Most important, Berkeley provided multiple copies of the works that were essential reading for the undergraduate — twelve copies each of the Greek New Testament, of Cicero's orations and his *Offices*, of Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, Martial, Terence, and Livy. These volumes show Berkeley committed to the Christian and classical canon of his generation.

Fifteen years later, obviously still concerned with the Church's waning influence in the colonies, he spent fifty pounds of still unclaimed subscription money on 'the most approved writings of the Church of England' for Harvard to 'dispose them to think better of our church' (8:297).²⁷ When Johnson wrote to Berkeley of his plans to found King's College in New York, the latter replied 'Let the Greek and Latin classics be well taught. Be this the first care as to learning' (8:302). These concerns find expression in Berkeley's late work, *The Querist*, that catalogue of provocative questions on Irish affairs. Here he makes several radical proposals for Trinity College, not least that Catholics be admitted and that a second college be founded at Dublin for some healthy intellectual rivalry. But his vision of the curriculum remains unchanged: he asks, with his customary and disarming candour, 'Whether the collected wisdom of ages and nations be not found in books?' (6:121). Berkeley ends his queries on the future of Trinity with Homer's pithy definition of education: 'To be skilled both in words and deeds' (6:122).

The two themes of Berkeley's defence of the universities are connected: the religious mission of the schools depends on the study of ancient languages. In *Guardian* No. 62 Berkeley reminds all free thinkers that universities were founded and encouraged by states

as being esteemed a necessary means to have the sacred oracles and primitive traditions of Christianity preserved and understood. And it is well known that, after a long night of ignorance and superstition, the reformation of the church and that of learning began together, and made proportionable advances, the latter having been the effect of the former. (7:204)

Berkeley's target here, as in many of his essays in the *Guardian*, is Shaftesbury, who dismissed scholars along with priests as so many 'bearded boys' (3:198). Berkeley's reply to this scepticism is to point out that the *belles lettres* so cherished by Shaftesbury are, in fact, a product of the revived study of classics, studies revived for the service of Christianity. The cleric needs facility in the ancient languages for access not just to Scripture in its original forms, but to church history and the Fathers, and here Berkeley reveals a high church commitment to tradition in interpretation. But Berkeley nowhere goes so far as to insist on the special authority of the clergy in hermeneutics. *Alciphron* is broad-based apologetics, concerned with proving the truth and moral utility of the fundamental tenets of Christianity rather than with expounding difficult and contentious points of doctrine. He repeatedly insists on the lucidity and hence the universal accessibility of Scripture. Clearly, Berkeley's sense of the importance of ancient literatures in the curriculum goes beyond the acquisition of those linguistic skills requisite in a prospective public explicator of the ancient sacred texts. The value of the classics is, for Berkeley, ethical rather than philological, an emphasis which informs his account of our responses to language throughout his work. Where Locke had insisted that each word have its correspondent idea, Berkeley admits emotive and active as well as rational and speculative responses to language.

As *Alciphron* moves from an exposition of the principles of natural religion to a defence of the texts of revelation, Berkeley's evidence becomes increasingly factual and his argument utilitarian. The happiness and virtue of Christian lives and the justice of Christian societies are invoked to substantiate the truth of the revealed word, a word 'suited to popular improvement and the good of society' (3:182-83). For Berkeley, the faith demanded of us as we read Scripture is pragmatic, 'not an indolent perception, but an operative persuasion of mind, which ever worketh some suitable action, disposition, or emotion in those who have it' (3:301). This sense of the insufficiency of the merely notional resur-

faces in Berkeley's anniversary sermon before the SPG in 1732, shortly after his return from America. Works become inseparable from faith as he argues that the divine knowledge offered in the gospels is 'not ... a barren Speculation, either of Philosophers or Scholastic Divines ... but, on the contrary, an holy practical Knowledge' (7:116). Nor is this pragmatic model of reading reserved to explain our responses to scriptural mysteries where, admittedly, the relations between word and idea are far from simple. For even in the Introduction to the *Principles of Human Knowledge* (1710) where Berkeley lays the ground for the rhetoric of his epistemology, he warns of the complexity of our responses in reading:

the communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed. There are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to, or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition. (2:37)

These concessions are part of Berkeley's plea for a sympathetic reading, but they also prepare us for the hermeneutics of sense experience he explores in the *Principles*. Immaterialism accounts the sensible object 'a mark or *sign*' (2:69): the fire that we see is a warning sign of the pain we will feel if we come too near. Within this linguistic model, the meaning of the sign lies with the will of the speaker and the correspondent activity of the hearer:

The steady, consistent methods of Nature, may not unfitly be stiled the *language* of its *Author*, whereby He discovers His *attributes* to our view, and directs us how to act for the convenience and felicity of life. (2:88)

The regularity and order of the world text permits us to develop our own grammar of habitual behaviour.

Berkeley's sense of the importance of a traditional emphasis on languages in the university curriculum is based, no doubt, on his belief that all knowledge, spiritual and sensible, depends on our skill at interpreting signs. Like Scripture and the sensible world, the classics are valued for their power to shape the way we act. Whenever Berkeley defends their place in the curriculum, he emphasizes the way they nurture habits of ethical response. He likewise insists on the motivational functions of the 'exact pictures of human life' and 'illustrious patterns' which abound in ancient literature, and proposes that his native students will be 'animated and inflamed by the great Examples of past Ages.' This recognition of the moral influence of example is apparent in Berkeley's preoccupation with forming the characters of his American priests, whose manners must serve as a model to their rugged parishioners, and

likewise apparent in his contempt for the philologist, whose life and thought remain unaffected by the texts he anatomizes. And it is in the context of the evil example set by contemporary men of fashion that Berkeley at the end of *Alciphron* calls for a reevaluation of the universities and a return to ancient literature:

If our youth were really inured to thought and reflexion, and an acquaintance with the excellent writers of antiquity, we should soon see that licentious humour, vulgarly called *free-thinking*, banished from the presence of gentlemen, together with ignorance and ill taste ... Their minds, therefore, betimes should be formed and accustomed to receive pleasure and pain from the proper objects, or which is the same thing, to have their inclinations and aversions rightly placed. (3:329)

As Berkeley reaches out here to the *Protagoras's* hedonistic formula for moral maturity, he reaffirms the recurrent theme of his hermeneutics, that raising passions and inciting to action are among the true and valuable ends of language. Literature's role in education is thus the gradual development of moral sentiments, nurturing what Berkeley calls that 'operative persuasion' or 'disposition of mind' by which we must live the many texts the world presents to us.

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Notes

- 1 *The Works of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne*, ed. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop, 9 vol. (London: Nelson, 1948-57) 2:37. All further references to Berkeley's writings will cite the volume and page numbers of this edition.
- 2 This account of Berkeley's career as an educator is based on A. A. Luce, *The Life of George Berkeley Bishop of Cloyne* (London: Nelson, 1949), and on his edition of the letters, vol. 8 of the *Works*.
- 3 See, for example, Luce, *Life*, 136-52, and Edwin S. Gaustad, *George Berkeley in America* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979).
- 4 Here Berkeley refers his reader to John Oldmixon's account of Harvard as beset by 'that wretched Affliction which we commonly call *Cant*,' *British Empire in America*, 2 vol. (London: J. Nicholson, 1708) 1:108. Berkeley's plans for St. Paul's may well have been inspired by Oldmixon's description of Harvard's success in training large numbers of native pastors.
- 5 David Fairer connects the growing political and social isolation of Oxford in the eighteenth century with changes in the aesthetic outlook of the poets it produced; see 'Oxford and the Literary World,' *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell. *The History of the University of Oxford* 5. (Oxford: Clarendon

- Press, 1986) 779-805. The *Proposal's* image of Bermuda again shows the influence of Oldmixon's travel book: 'the People of *Bermudas* seem to content themselves with the Pleasure and Plenty of their Country, with a safe and quiet Retreat from the Troubles and Cares of the other parts of the World, without any Ambition to enrich themselves.'; Oldmixon (n.4) 2:578.
- 6 'Bishop Berkeley's Messianism,' *Millenarianism and Messianism in English Literature and Thought 1650-1800*, ed. Richard J. Popkin. Clark Library Lectures 10. (Leiden: Brill, 1988) 73. In his SPG sermon of 1732 Berkeley deplors the treatment of slaves and natives he had witnessed on the plantations, and argues that they should be instructed in Christian doctrine and admitted to the sacraments. He even praises those Roman Catholic colonies where 'the *French* and *Spaniards* have intermarried with *Indians*, to the great Strength, Security and Increase of their Colonies' (7:222).
- 7 John Gascoigne, 'A Reappraisal of the Role of the Universities in the Scientific Revolution,' *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*, ed. David C. Lindberg and Robert S. Westman (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 207-60.
- 8 Nicholas Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1951) 51-52; John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 175.
- 9 See John Yolton, 'Schoolmen, Logic and Philosophy,' Sutherland and Mitchell (n. 5) 565-91.
- 10 *Terrae-Filius: or the Secret History of the University of Oxford* [1721], 2nd ed. 2 vol. (London: R. Francklin, 1726) 1:52, 117.
- 11 Gascoigne (n. 8) 142-51.
- 12 *Advice to a Young Student* [1730], *The Works of the Reverend Daniel Waterland*, ed. William Van Mildert, 2nd ed. 6 vol. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1843) 4:409.
- 13 *Works of Waterland* 4:402.
- 14 *Some Familiar Letters between Mr. Locke, and Several of his Friends* (London: A. and J. Churchill, 1708) 17. For Locke's influence on Irish thought see David Berman, 'Enlightenment and Counter-Enlightenment in Irish Philosophy,' *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 64 (1982): 148-65 and 257-79, and Patrick Kelley, 'Perceptions of Locke in Eighteenth-Century Ireland,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, section C 89 (1989): 17-35.
- 15 John William Stubbs, *The History of the University of Dublin* (Dublin: Hodges, 1889) 197-200. The best and most recent history of Trinity is R. B. McDowell and D. A. Webb, *Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982).
- 16 *The Educational Writings of John Locke*, ed. James L. Axtell (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968) 190.
- 17 *Educational Writings* 270.
- 18 *Educational Writings* 282. John Edwards can only splutter 'What would the Man be at? Is he against all *Latin*?' In responding to Locke's *Thoughts*, Edwards focuses on the implicit attack on universities in Locke's account of grammar schools. He is, moreover, sensitive to the political subtext of the *Thoughts*, claiming that Locke's '*New Education* was in order to the introducing a *New Religion*.'; *A Brief Vindication of the Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith* (London: J. Robinson, 1697) 5, 18.

- 19 See George C. Brauer, Jr., *The Education of a Gentleman* (New York: Bookman, 1959) 52-113.
- 20 For a thorough appreciation of the paradoxes of the Phalaris dispute, see Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991) 47-84.
- 21 Alexander Pope, *The Dunciad* (IV.209-70), ed. James Sutherland, vol. 5 of *The Poems of Alexander Pope* (London: Methuen, 1943) 363-70.
- 22 I. G. Philip, 'Libraries and the University Press,' Sutherland and Mitchell (n. 5) 740.
- 23 *Life and Correspondence of Samuel Johnson, D.D.*, ed. E. Edwards Beardsley, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1874) 79n.
- 24 See Henry Newman to Samuel Johnson, 1 June 1733, in A. A. Luce, 'Berkeley's Bermuda Project and His Benefactions to American Universities, with Unpublished Letters and Extracts from the Egmont Papers,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, section C 42 (1934-35): 111.
- 25 F. B. Dexter, *Documentary History of Yale University 1701-1745* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1916) 238; ----, *Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History*, 6 vol. (New York: Holt, 1885-1912) 2:17.
- 26 For the catalogue of Berkeley's donation to Yale, see 'Bishop Berkeley's Gift of Books in 1733,' *The Yale University Library Gazette* 8 (1933): 1-41.
- 27 It was no doubt for the same purpose that Berkeley had in 1730 ordered eight copies of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* and twelve of Chillingworth's works for Yale through the SPCK. See Luce (n.24) 104.