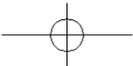
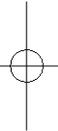
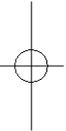




# Enlightenment and Dissent

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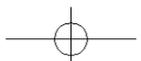
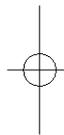
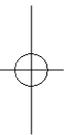
## EDITORIAL

When the three volumes of the correspondence of Richard Price edited by D O Thomas and Bernard Peach were published one did not have great expectations of further letters being discovered. In this issue we publish another twenty! Part of the explanation for this lies in the searchable facilities now available through new online data bases. Genealogical research has also been facilitated in the same way enabling the identification of members of the complex dynasty of the Price/Morgans. Fruitful contacts with the genealogists and descendants of Price – John Morgan, David Perry, and Nicola Bennetts – has yielded from the family archive a new letter from Price, which give us an insight into the family life of Price, and more accurate identification of the Prices and Morgans. Of course, one should not underestimate the amount of traditional archive work which has gone into the findings of Rémy Duthille and Paul Frame. We are grateful for their willingness to publish their findings in this journal.

One special feature of this number is the twenty one illustrations for Professor Dickinson's article. Authors will know how difficult it is to persuade presses to publish illustrations even when there is an obvious need for them. We are therefore especially grateful to the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland for supporting the publication of these illustrations especially those in full colour.

Last November the Dr. Williams's Centre for Dissenting Studies hosted a symposium in celebration of this journal, on the broad topic of 'Enlightenment, Dissent and Toleration'. It proved to be a very successful occasion and the papers will be published in the next number. We extend our thanks to the Centre for its support.

MHF  
JD



## CLARKE ON VIRTUE AND REASONABLENESS

*S H Smith*

Historians of ideas have had a number of reasons to be interested in the work of Samuel Clarke. His correspondence with Leibniz in defence of Newton is important in the history of the philosophy of physics. He is important in the history of Dissent, due to his subtle view of the nature of Christ and the consequences of its publication<sup>1</sup>. His sermons on moral subjects have also been praised for their outstanding literary qualities.<sup>2</sup> However, while Clarke's ethical theory (as outlined in his second set of Boyle lectures<sup>3</sup>) was seriously debated at the time of its publication, he occupies a less exalted position in the history of British moral philosophy than might be expected from his intellectual stature in his lifetime<sup>4</sup>. There are two related reasons why this might be the case.

First, later British writers such as Wollaston and Price expounded doctrines in meta-ethics that had a significant similarity to Clarke's views; however, they placed moral philosophy at the centre of their concerns, whereas Clarke's views, as we shall see, often served his natural theology. This theology was often the focus of contemporaries, sometimes to the exclusion of his ethical theory, and became unfashionable in the

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<sup>1</sup> See J P Ferguson, *Dr Samuel Clarke: An eighteenth century heretic* (Kineton, 1976) for a detailed account.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Johnson considered Clarke as having written the best sermons in the English language 'bating a little heresy'; clearly referring to Clarke's supposed Arianism. See G B Hill ed., *Johnsonian miscellanies* (2 vols., Oxford, 1897) II, 305.

<sup>3</sup> *A discourse concerning the being and attributes of God, the obligations of natural religion, and the truth and certainty of the Christian Revelation*, in Samuel Clarke, *Works* (4 vols., 1738, reprinted New York, 1978), II, 595-733. In what follows, I quote these lectures as passages from *Works*.

<sup>4</sup> An anecdote concerning Clarke's doctoral examination demonstrates how far Clarke's abilities exceeded the majority of his contemporaries, and even his superiors. This can be found in Ferguson, *Dr Samuel Clarke*, 40-1. For a brief snapshot of Clarke's polymathism, see W Sorley, *A history of British philosophy to 1900* (Cambridge, 1965), 155.

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generation after Clarke.<sup>5</sup> Second, later commentators on Clarke have generally interpreted him as leaving unresolved a major tension between virtue and self-interest – a tension that finally suggests incoherence. I contend that the reason for such interpretations is that later commentators have, paradoxically, not taken account of the theological context of his arguments, and that plausible interpretations are available which eliminate the supposed incoherence.

I

Clarke is generally considered to be one of the ‘ethical rationalists’ of British moral philosophy in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> His predecessors were Cambridge Platonists such as More and Cudworth;<sup>7</sup> his successors, to greater or lesser degrees, were Balguy, Wollaston, and Price. Broadly, the doctrine of ethical rationalism was that reason by itself determines the fundamental principles of morality – morality that is itself ‘eternal and immutable’.<sup>8</sup> Clarke was also influenced very greatly by Cicero.<sup>9</sup> Through Cicero, Clarke was influenced by middle Stoics such as Panaetius (of whom Cicero takes himself to be an expositor<sup>10</sup>). The relation of Cicero’s views to Clarke’s will be mentioned in section V of this essay; all of these influences will be relevant to the interpretation of Clarke.

The particulars of Clarke’s moral theory, as he presents it in the greater part of the second Boyle lecture, are as follows. Clarke has a Platonic view of the grounds of moral truth and virtuous action that is derived in

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<sup>5</sup> Joseph Butler corresponded with Clarke (as ‘a Gentleman in Gloucestershire’) concerning Clarke’s arguments for the existence of God: but not about his ethical theory. This correspondence was later published: see Clarke, *Works*, II, 735-58. For some of the history of the tendency towards natural theology in British philosophy, see J J MacIntosh, ‘The argument for the need for similar or ‘higher’ qualities: Cudworth, Locke and Clarke on God’s existence’, *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 16 (1997), 29-59.

<sup>6</sup> See Stephen Darwall, *The British moralists and the internal ‘ought’* (Cambridge, 1991), 111.

<sup>7</sup> See Darwall, *The British moralists*, 112, footnote 9.

<sup>8</sup> See Frederick Beiser, *The sovereignty of reason* (Princeton, 1996), 267.

<sup>9</sup> For a summary, see Martha K Zebrowski, ‘The Christian Platonism and natural law of Samuel Clarke’, in *Enlightenment and Dissent* 16 (1997), 3-28, at 25-8.

<sup>10</sup> Cicero, *De officiis* (New York, 1912), 9.

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its outline from Cambridge Platonists such as Cudworth.<sup>11</sup> He believes that moral truths are eternal, immutable, a priori, and necessary,<sup>12</sup> and that they are acquired through the operation of a faculty that he variously calls Reason, or the Understanding.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes he uses metaphors of perception to describe the operation of this faculty.<sup>14</sup> At other times he uses such metaphors of intuition as the detection of mathematical inconsistency or contradiction.<sup>15</sup> Moral truths are not created through the power of some agent, state, or even by being willed by God.<sup>16</sup> However, there is reason to hold that he believed these truths ultimately to originate with the Reason of God.<sup>17</sup> The existence of certain entities in the world (including people) entails certain abstract relations between those entities and others; and certain actions on the part of agents are fit or unfit in light of these relations, thus generating unchanging obligations, the acknowledgement and carrying out of which constitutes virtue.<sup>18</sup> What sort of relations could generate such fitnesses? Clarke outlines the following:

That there is a *Fitness* or *Suitableness* of certain *Circumstances* to certain *Persons*, and an *Unsuitableness* of others; found in the

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<sup>11</sup> In the following, where I quote from Clarke, *Works*, I also reproduce page numbers in parentheses for the appropriate sections in D D Raphael ed. *British moralists 1650-1800* (Indianapolis, 1991) hereafter referred to as *BM*, for those without access to the 1978 Garland Press reprint of the *Works*, and where passages appear in both. In references to *BM*, I refer to the actual page of volume that the quotation appears on, *not* the volume's own system of numbering (which takes the pagination of a previous edition of the Boyle lectures).

<sup>12</sup> *Works*, II, 627 (*BM*, 213).

<sup>13</sup> *Works*, II, 612 (*BM*, 198-9). For the remainder of this essay I refer to this faculty as 'the understanding', where Clarke sometimes uses 'Reason'. Clarke's usage, while consistent, does not assist the reader in perceiving the difference between 'Reason' and 'reasonableness'. The term 'understanding' in place of 'Reason' makes the difference clearer, and so for purposes of exposition the alteration is well motivated.

<sup>14</sup> *Works*, II, 609-11 (*BM*, 194-7).

<sup>15</sup> *Works*, II, 613-4 (*BM*, 200-1).

<sup>16</sup> *Works*, II, 626-7 (*BM*, 212-4).

<sup>17</sup> *Works*, II, 612 (*BM*, 198-9). See also Zebrowski, 'Christian Platonism', 19-21; and Ernest Albee, 'Clarke's Ethical Philosophy II', in *The Philosophical Review*, vol.37 no.5 (July 1928), 403-432, at 405.

<sup>18</sup> *Works*, II, 608 (*BM*, 192-3).

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*nature of Things* and the *Qualifications of Persons*, antecedent to all *positive* appointment whatsoever; Also that from the different relations of *different Persons one to another*, there necessarily arises a fitness or unfitness of certain *manners of Behaviour* of some persons towards others: is as manifest, as that the Properties which flow from the Essences of different *mathematical Figures*, have different *congruities* or *incongruities* between themselves.<sup>19</sup>

What are these ‘Qualifications of Persons’ and ‘relations of different Persons one to another’? Clarke does not give a general answer, but provides seven particular instances of these relations. The most suggestive of these are: that of God’s existence and infinite superiority necessitating an attitude of admiration and reverence in us;<sup>20</sup> adherence to the rule of equity and the aim of universal benevolence as being the duties we owe to others on pain of self-contradiction;<sup>21</sup> and our duty to preserve our own person, both because God made us (thus generating responsibilities towards him) and because it would be a dereliction of duty to allow ourselves to perish without carrying out our proper obligations.<sup>22</sup>

Thus we get a general but rather vague picture of what Clarke means when he talks about relations giving rise to virtuous action. These are primarily interpersonal relations. The individual arguments for each of these duties are beyond our subject here, except to reiterate that it is clear that Clarke claims they are generally inferred by the faculty of the understanding, which determines fitnesses from the existence of certain interpersonal relations.<sup>23</sup>

The received view of this ethical theory is that it has two major difficulties. The first is the supposed implausibility of the account. Numerous objections and counterexamples were raised against it in the

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, II, 608 (*BM*, 192).

<sup>20</sup> *Works*, II, 608 (*BM*, 192).

<sup>21</sup> *Works*, II, 609, 613, 621 (*BM*, 193, 200, 209).

<sup>22</sup> *Works*, II, 613, 622-3 (*BM*, 200, 211).

<sup>23</sup> Compare Balguy’s treatment of the same, outlined in Beiser, *Sovereignty of reason*, 304-5.

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generation after Clarke (notably by Hume and Hutcheson).<sup>24</sup> I do not tackle these objections in this essay, although there is plenty to be said in defence of Clarke's account, given a close reading of his proposals.<sup>25</sup> The second difficulty is that, as Sidgwick and LeRossignol comment, it seems that Clarke has a *prima facie* contradictory account of how we are to act upon moral truths arrived at by the understanding. It is this latter problem that I will examine.

## II

The key passage that seems to cause problems for Clarke's primary claim – that we must carry out fit actions dictated by the eternal relations of things – is the following:

It being indeed neither possible nor truly reasonable, that Men by adhering to Virtue should part with their lives, if thereby they eternally deprived themselves of all possibility of receiving any Advantage from that adherence. Virtue, 'tis true, in its proper Seat, and with all its full Effects and Consequences unhindered, must be confessed to be the *chief Good*; as being truly the Enjoyment, as well as the Imitation of God. But, as the Practice of it is circumstantiated in this present World, and in the present State of things; 'tis plain it is not itself the chief Good, but only the *means* to it; as Running in a Race, is not in itself the Prize, but the way to obtain it.<sup>26</sup>

There is clearly a puzzle about the relation between the Platonic picture previously outlined and the passage above. Clarke seems to hold that perception of certain relations by the understanding constitutes an

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<sup>24</sup> A systematic account of Hutcheson's objections against the whole project of ethical rationalism can be found in Beiser, *supra*, 307-19. For a recent summary of doubts about the prospects of Clarke's brand of ethical rationalism, however, see D O Thomas, 'Reason and Revelation in Samuel Clarke's Epistemology' in *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 16 (1997), 114-135, at 114-126.

<sup>25</sup> Some objections, e.g. Hutcheson's objection that Clarke's theory allows ascription of moral properties to inanimate objects (see Ferguson, *Dr Samuel Clarke*, 31), are misunderstandings of Clarke's theory, as they do not pay attention to the examples that Clarke himself gives of the relevant relations that give rise to moral obligation.

<sup>26</sup> *Works*, II, 646.

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obligation; but he also seems to indicate that man is not rational ('reasonable') to act in such a way, if the effects with respect to himself are unwelcome. Sidgwick's criticism is that,

if a man deviates from the rules of Equity and Universal Benevolence ... it is not, in Clarke's view that he has solid reasons for so deviating ... but when he comes afterward to argue the need of future rewards and punishments we find that his claim on behalf of morality is startlingly reduced ... he admits implicitly a reasonableness from the individual's point of view in the preference of self-interest to virtue, if the empirically known conditions of human life are alone taken into account; although from an abstract or universal point of view it is reasonable to prefer virtue to self-interest.<sup>27</sup>

LeRossignol's book-length exposition of Clarke is more comprehensive than Sidgwick's, but surprisingly he still interprets Clarke as having an ethical theory that has little to do with the perceptions of the understanding. He writes as if virtue and (expected) happiness were two different things, the relation between which is unclear:

[Clarke] asserts, with [the Stoics], that 'virtue is truly worthy to be chosen for its own sake', but he denies that virtue alone is the chief good ... in Clarke's own words, it is clear that the essential element in the chief good is not virtue, but happiness.<sup>28</sup>

Sidgwick claimed that this supposed dualism in Clarke's thought exemplified a more general dualism in British moral philosophy until Shaftesbury and Butler: that until the psychological egoism of Hobbes was definitely overthrown, 'the utmost demonstration of the abstract reasonableness of social duty only leaves us with an irreconcilable antagonism between the view of abstract reason and the self-love which is allowed to be normal in man's appetitive nature'.<sup>29</sup>

Armed in addition with facts about the historical position of Clarke, particularly in respect of his being sandwiched between the rationalist Cambridge Platonists and proto-Utilitarians such as Cumberland and

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<sup>27</sup> Henry Sidgwick, *Outlines of the history of ethics for English readers* (New York, 1902), 183.

<sup>28</sup> James LeRossignol, *The ethical philosophy of Samuel Clarke* (Leipzig, 1897), 79-82.

<sup>29</sup> Sidgwick, *Outline*, 183-4.

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Butler, it might seem natural to conclude that he tried to pay homage to both strands of thought without resolving the conflict between them.<sup>30</sup> My aim in this rest of this paper is to demonstrate that this picture may not be correct; and that Clarke may not be in so great a muddle about the relation between virtue (as known through the understanding) and reasonableness as Sidgwick and LeRossignol make him appear.

### III

There is an account of the Boyle lecture material that does not interpret Clarke to be retracting his theory about unchanging obligations to virtuous action that are accessed by the understanding. We should see his later statements concerning the role of reasonableness to be an elaboration and clarification of the theory of virtue that was previously stated. The correct way to solve the problem, I submit, is to adopt the view that this 'reasonableness' Clarke talks of, when objective and not illusory, is a subset of virtue, presented in another guise. Reasonableness is not accessed through the understanding in the same way that virtue is (i.e. variously by intuition or abstract reason), but rather through practical reasoning and prudence. Nevertheless, it picks out a class of actions within, and perhaps identical with, the class of virtuous actions. This is due to the existence of afterlife rewards and punishments.

This sort of account, suitably elaborated, would resolve the supposed conflict between virtue and reasonableness. But is not such an interpretation ruled out by some of Clarke's statements? For instance: doesn't Clarke *say*, in the previous quotation seized upon by Sidgwick, that reasonable actions and virtuous actions may come apart?<sup>31</sup> Even if the harmony of virtue and prudentially reasonable action is a solution to the philosophical puzzle, can it be ascribed to Clarke as his own theory? I argue in the final two parts of this essay that, despite first appearances, such a view coheres with and explains the text, when understood properly. But in order to see this we first need to pay sufficient attention to the

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<sup>30</sup> See Albee, 415-20.

<sup>31</sup> *Works*, II, 646.

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particular place of his moral theory within the overarching argumentative strategy of the Boyle lectures. The architectonic of his argument is as follows.

Clarke had aimed to establish the existence and moral attributes of God in the first Boyle lectures of 1704. Clarke's aim in the second lectures of 1705 is to demonstrate that the existence of moral obligations arising from fitnesses (which are capable of being established by Reason), coupled with the natural theology of the first lectures, entails the truth of the Christian Revelation. The schematic of Clarke's entire argument is set out in the early part of the second lectures in a series of core propositions.<sup>32</sup> I summarise and paraphrase these below, for convenient reference:<sup>33</sup>

(i): Necessary and eternal relations between things and people generate moral obligations. These are perceived by the understanding.

(ii): The existence of such obligations is also the will of God.

(iii): The obligations known through the understanding are binding even when considered apart from any reward or punishment. However, God's honour and other moral attributes are not compatible with the absence of rewards and punishments for behaviour.

(iv): It is incompatible with God's attributes that he would design a world in which men live only a short time and in which there is little correspondence between virtue and reward, vice and punishment; therefore there must have been a Corruption not of God's design; and there must be a future state of man in which there are rewards and punishments meted out so as to finally restore the correspondence between virtue and reward, vice and punishment.

(v): Mankind has been so far unable to clearly perceive the truth of (i-iv) because of carelessness, poor education, and unreasonable passions; men require instruction in these matters.

(vi): A few wise Heathens have on occasion perceived some of the truth of these matters, yet indistinctly; and they have had little

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<sup>32</sup> *Works*, II, 596-600.

<sup>33</sup> For comparison, see Ferguson, *Dr Samuel Clarke*, 29-30.

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success in convincing others of what they have perceived and changing their behaviour.

(vii): Therefore a divine revelation of these matters is needed.

(viii) – (xv): No other religion than Christianity is a candidate for being such a revelation. Christianity is the rational scheme of belief to hold.

Of these, only (iii) and (iv) are of immediate interest to us. The argument of these propositions is clear, and their proposed conclusion is that an afterlife exists in which there is some reckoning of rewards and punishments. Notice that in (iii), Clarke is clear that reasonable self-interest does not overrule the obligations of virtue as perceived by the understanding: the text reads ‘these moral Obligations are also incumbent indeed on all rational Creatures, antecedent to any respect of Particular Reward or Punishment; yet they *must* certainly and necessarily be attended with *Rewards and Punishments*’.<sup>34</sup>

This overview provides the background for determining what Clarke believed about the relationship between virtue and prudentially reasonable action. The key to this question lies in understanding his ideas about how the onset of corruption changed matters with respect to our perceptions of virtue and our perceptions of reasonableness. Clarke nowhere explicitly spells out the details of how this argument relates to the difference between the understanding and prudential reasoning, and the view I believe he must have held on this issue is rather complex. I first spell out what this view is and then defend its coherence with Clarke’s text. It runs as follows:

*Before the corruption occurred, it is certain that the ordinary relations of things in the world to each other (including those concerned with, for example, man’s equality and happiness) entailed that men should carry out certain virtuous actions. Virtuous action naturally and inevitably had its requital in reward, and evil action in punishment or some other negative consequence. Which actions were virtuous was a matter immediately given to our understanding, and generated obligations to act. However, there was also another way of determining whether some*

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<sup>34</sup> *Works*, II, 597. Ernest Albee, defending a view akin to Sidgwick’s, virtually ignores proposition (iii). See Albee, 421.

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*action was to be performed – a way that has become of closer import since corruption set into the world – namely, to ask the question of whether or not it is prudentially reasonable to carry out such actions. Before the corruption, reasonableness was already aligned with virtue due to the natural correspondence of virtue with reward. Therefore, if an action counted as virtuous according to the understanding, thinking about its reasonableness would never count against performing it (although it is possible that in some cases virtue might be neutral with respect to reasonableness).*

*After the corruption, it might have been expected that the understanding would identify different actions as virtuous than it had before, because the circumstances of the world had changed. However, this did not occur. That part of our understanding that perceived virtuous action (without thereby considering prudential reasonableness) was changed very little; it still identified broadly the same actions as virtuous; and indeed it is hard to see how such actions as conforming to the rule of equity and self-preservation could have been comprehended by an attentive understanding as non-virtuous simply because of the fact of corruption (although, as in the case of Stoic doctrine, some degree of error was possible). However: the corruption did considerably affect the perception of the reward-and-punishment relations that underpinned the previous judgement that virtuous actions were always reasonable. This means that although the understanding can still give us reliable knowledge of what we should do to be virtuous, we often have trouble **seeing** that it is in our interest - that it is reasonable - to do that thing. In one way our rational faculties tell us (through the understanding) what to do: in another way (through prudential reasonableness) they tell us to do the opposite. This is of course an absurdity: and there is good reason to think that God could not allow such a state of affairs. In fact, both virtuous action and actually reasonable action (that is, those actions that will turn out best for us) are the same now as they were before the corruption. What has changed is our **perception** of prudentially reasonable action, which has become faulty because we are not in full possession of the relevant facts concerning what is in fact prudent. The key point is that, because the idea that our rational faculty could give contradictory instructions is absurd, there must be more to the facts than*

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*just ordinary-world rewards and punishments - namely, there must be a whole afterlife of rewards and punishments that we must factor into our thinking about what is prudentially reasonable. Of course, once we have knowledge of this, the normative judgements offered by both our perception of reasonableness and our perception of virtue harmonise. But the addition is necessary to make sense of a world that a good God created (which is already established on other grounds by Clarke).*

It is easy to see how the distinction between *actual* prudentially reasonable action (i.e., actions which in fact would have the best consequences for us, regardless of our estimation of them) and *perceived* prudentially reasonable action makes it possible both that actual prudentially reasonable action be a subset of virtuous action, and that the perception of prudential reasonableness be detached from the perception of virtue. On the one hand, Clarke retains a unitary account of his eternal Platonic relations and moral truths; on the other, he can explain how our impression of matters makes it seem as if virtue contradicts prudential reasoning. The impossibility of the latter perceptions being accurate furnishes an argument that *actual* prudentially reasonable action must not go against *actual* virtue. And the only thing that could make this the case is a system of afterlife rewards and punishments. Clearly, if a dualism of virtue and prudential action were possible, as Sidgwick and LeRossignol think that Clarke allows, we would have no reason to think that there must be an afterlife reckoning. Clarke could not even put forward his argument for the afterlife reckoning if he was not able to cite the absurdity of there being different requirements of virtue and of prudential reasonableness. Thus, if the views of Sidgwick et al. were correct, Clarke's argument for afterlife reckonings as described in (iii)-(iv) would be incomprehensible. So the view of the relation between virtue and prudential reasonableness that Sidgwick et al. ascribe to Clarke – namely, that prudential reasonableness abrogates virtue – is unlikely to be correct.

#### IV

Having outlined the crucial distinction in understanding Clarke's arguments, I now come to the task of explaining passages that seem to explicitly say that virtuous action and prudentially reasonable action can

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come apart. The straightforward explanation of these is that Clarke uses terms such as e.g. ‘reasonableness’ differently depending on whether he is talking about e.g. actions that are *actually* reasonable or actions that are *perceived as* being reasonable. These different uses can be respectively labelled ‘actual’ and ‘perceived-as’. In passages such as the above quoted at *Works*, II, 646, Clarke at times contrasts *actual* virtue with what is *perceived as* being reasonable action; as we have already seen, there is no problem about a conflict between these; such a conflict is central to Clarke’s argument for afterlife rewards and punishments. By paying attention to this variety of usage, we can see that many of the seemingly contradictory things that Clarke says about both virtue and prudential reasonableness throughout the Boyle Lectures are explicable; and moreover, are usually explicable in terms of his ultimate goal, to argue for the existence of an afterlife and for the truth of the Christian Revelation. For instance, one passage that might have been used as evidence against my interpretation (amongst others) is the following:

Lastly, *This Law of Nature* has its full obligatory Power, antecedent to all Consideration of any particular private and personal *Reward* or *Punishment*, annexed either by natural Consequence, or by positive appointment ... ‘tis plain that the view of *particular Rewards or Punishments*, which is only an After-consideration, and does not at all alter the nature of Things, cannot be the original Cause of the Obligation of the Law, but is only an additional Weight to enforce the practice of what men were before obliged to by right Reason.<sup>35</sup>

Clarke here admittedly discusses virtue in a way which *prima facie* suggests that it has no connection with prudential reasonableness at all, the latter being only an ‘After-consideration’. It might be thought that passages like this are severely problematic for the view I have put forward. But it is in fact not so. We can read Clarke as talking here about both virtue (the ‘Law of Nature’) and prudential reasonableness (‘Rewards or Punishments’) in the ‘perceived-as’ sense. His point is that actions that we *see* as virtuous are obligatory regardless of whatever the

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<sup>35</sup> *Works*, II, 627-8.

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case may be with actions that we *see* as reasonable, which are not considered obligatory merely by the fact of such a perception.<sup>36</sup>

When Clarke claims that it would not be ‘truly reasonable’ for men to part with their lives on Virtue’s behalf if there were no eventual reward for this, he can be read as contrasting the actions that are *actually* prudentially reasonable with those that may happen to be *perceived as* being virtuous. He is noting the ways in which other men (i.e. Stoic thinkers) have misperceived virtue. It clearly does not follow from this that every action that is perceived as prudentially reasonable is justified whether or not it agrees with our perceptions of what is virtuous; neither does it follow that actions we perceive as virtuous are not always obligatory, even if a misperception occurs. Passages that speak of some gap between ‘virtue’ and ‘reasonableness’ cannot therefore be treated as unambiguous evidence that Clarke thought that the *actually* virtuous actions and the *actually* reasonable actions could come apart, because he may have been, and often is, using the terms in their ‘perceived-as’ sense.

Indeed, this distinction explains some passages that are otherwise obscure. Even in a passage such as the aforementioned *Works*, II, 646, which is so crucial to the interpretations of Sidgwick et al., he claims that ‘Virtue... with all its full Effects and Consequences unhindered, must be considered to be the chief Good’. If the view of Sidgwick et al. is correct, then the occurrence of this statement is inexplicable. If virtue is separable from reasonableness, and Clarke finally thinks that such prudential reasonableness is the chief arbiter of rational action, then why mention virtue as the ‘*chief* Good’? The statement would be idle on such an interpretation. Clearly there is something more complex going on. According to the scheme I have outlined, it seems that at this stage in the argument for the afterlife, it suits Clarke to stress the importance and existence of rewards: yet he does not wish his audience to thereby think that virtue as arrived at through the understanding is no longer important. In a much later passage, speaking of educated non-Christian seekers after truth in past ages, he says ‘Nothing could be more *Certain*, (as they all well knew,) than that *Virtue* was unquestionably *to be chosen*’.<sup>37</sup> If he

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<sup>36</sup> *Works*, II, 597.

<sup>37</sup> *Works*, II, 664.

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had, as Sidgwick et al. thought, finally admitted that reasonableness trumps virtue, then whence appears this passage? Clearly he thought neither that reasonableness had trumped virtue, nor that the issue was subject to a vague, dualistic treatment.

Worries may emerge about what is entailed by this interpretation. Does this make Clarke's theory a species of consequentialism? Extensionally, it is identical with a very weak consequentialist view, because it states that actual virtue never goes against actual prudential reasonableness (although it leaves open the possibility that virtue might sometimes be neutral in respect to it). But it does not claim that from the point of view of the agent, it is always best to consider consequences. It is certainly not a species of act-consequentialism. In fact, most of Clarke's argument is directed against the idea that perceptions of reasonableness *in isolation* are, *ceteris paribus*, an adequate moral epistemology.

Neither does Clarke unwittingly become a classical Stoic. It may be wondered why he does not, given that he believed that virtue was reached by considering reason, and that it was 'truly worthy to be chosen, even merely for its own sake, without any respect to any recompense or reward'.<sup>38</sup> Clarke did not, however, believe the further proposition that virtue (in the perceived-as sense) was its own *reward* – he held that virtue, in this sense, was 'manifestly not self-sufficient' for its own happiness. This is the key difference between Clarke and the Stoics. Clarke's explanation of the reason that the Stoics held this view is that they had simply not perceived virtue correctly – principally, in the matter of the duty to self-preserve.<sup>39</sup> A lack of belief in the necessity of self-preservation, together with the belief that there should be some reward for virtue – or at least that it should not be punished – clearly leads to the idea that virtue must be its own reward. For how else is one to justify a virtuous act that may lead to one's death, if not by claiming that the act itself is its own reward?

The important point to grasp is that this difference between Clarke and the Stoics does not rely upon a juxtaposition of virtue and

<sup>38</sup> *Works*, II, 646.

<sup>39</sup> When citing their errors, he generally considers cases in which one has to surrender one's life in order to perform some apparently virtuous action. Compare *Works*, II, 629 (*BM*, 215) and *Works*, II, 646.

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reasonableness simpliciter, which would again raise the issue pointed out by Sidgwick et al. Rather, what it relies on is a juxtaposition of virtue in the *perceived-as* sense, and *actual* virtue (which is identical with actual reasonableness). Clarke's point is that the Stoics misperceived virtue; they did not correctly perceive the fitness of self-preservation. This led them to the false belief that virtue is its own reward, which is Clarke's main departure from them. Did the Stoics only misperceive virtue because they did not take reasonableness into account? If that were the case, then Clarke would have difficulty explaining why people should pay attention to fitnesses rather than simply attending to reasonableness. According to Clarke's account, however, this is not necessarily the root of their misperception. The duty to self-preserve is not one that is necessarily understood only by considering prudential reasonableness. Rather, the duty to self-preserve can be known by considering the fitnesses that are perceived by the understanding.<sup>40</sup> Understanding the duty of self-preservation thus does not necessarily constitute a case of attending to reasonableness while being indifferent to virtue, but rather having a correct perception of virtue as opposed to an incorrect perception.<sup>41</sup> Clarke's mention of what is 'truly reasonable' underlines the point, but does not constitute its core. Finally, the Stoics' failure to perceive the

<sup>40</sup> *Works*, II, 613, 622-3 (*BM*, 200, 211).

<sup>41</sup> Questions arise here about exactly what systematic relation holds between perceptions of fitness and obligations arising from them, especially as it touches Clarke's view of the Stoics. Clarke is best thought of as committed to two claims about the relation between obligation and its recognition: (1) that if a fitness existing in reality entails that someone has a certain obligation, then he/she will have that obligation regardless of whether he/she recognises it; and (2) that if someone *believes* themselves to be obligated to act in some way, then he/she is nevertheless obligated to so act, even if that belief is false. Thus: 'Whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind, is necessarily self-condemned: and the greatest and strongest of all obligations is that, which a man cannot break through without condemning himself' (*BM*, 202). The Stoics, even though they misperceived virtue, were obliged to follow what obligations they considered themselves to have: even though 'we', having greater understanding, do not consider their actions (considered agent-neutrally) to have been the right ones. Some further explanation is obviously needed of how a faulty perception of fitnesses can generate an obligation as weighty as that generated by actual fitnesses: this could perhaps be given by showing how such fitnesses can exist between (false) beliefs and actions, but I will not attempt it here.

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necessity of self-preservation is not *entailed* by their lack of knowledge of Christian revelation and the future rewards and punishments spoken of therein: the duty to self-preserve is one that could be perceived through reflection alone, although the Stoics did not.<sup>42</sup> Clarke's criticism of Stoic thought is therefore consonant with his general aims and his emphasis on the importance of virtue.

## V

How are we to judge Sidgwick's diagnosis that Clarke's ethical theory exemplifies the generally dualistic structure of British ethical theories until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century?<sup>43</sup> Sidgwick is clearly correct that in this period of British moral philosophy there is a tension between abstract reason and self-interest (or 'reasonableness'). But rather than inferring that Clarke's momentary employment of this dualism was part of a general pattern in the progression of ethics from theological to secular, Sidgwick should perhaps have concluded that Clarke really belonged squarely in the camp of the ethical rationalists such as Cudworth and More, and that the great emphasis laid by him on the Platonic account of moral truth suggests a more subtle reading of later passages concerning reasonableness.

It will perhaps be objected that the above interpretation of what Clarke is doing in seemingly contrasting virtue and reasonableness finds an unclear basis in the text. Certainly Clarke never explicitly mentions his two different uses of the terms as I have described them. This objection is fair to the extent that this interpretation is a rational reconstruction of what a person with Clarke's aims might have intended by what appears on the page. I have four responses to make, however.

First: the fact that Clarke did not spell out the different uses of terms indicates very little. At times, philosophers express their theories in a way

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<sup>42</sup> If Clarke had asserted that the Stoics misperceived virtue due *only* to their lack of a Revelation, he would have had to also claim that he, Clarke, had a better grasp of virtue than the Stoics due *only* to his knowledge of Revelation. But this would beg the question in the context of his argument for the truth of the Christian Revelation. For a thorough assessment of the problems with Clarke's stance on the a priori nature of moral truth and his simultaneous contention that Revelation is necessary for most men, see D O Thomas, *Reason and revelation*, 121-6.

<sup>43</sup> Sidgwick, *Outline*, 183-4.

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that incorporates distinctions easily identifiable by later thinkers, but the use of which they themselves were only faintly aware. That is not to say that the distinction in question was not legitimately ascribable to their theories.

Second: given the context in which Clarke's material appeared, the failure to clarify this distinction is understandable. The aim of the Boyle Lectures, as I have repeatedly stressed, was not finally to offer an ethical theory but rather to establish the truth of the Christian Revelation. So it is not to be expected that every nuance of his meta-ethics would find a clear expression in the text. We should expect to have to probe a little in order to have any idea of his thoughts on these comparatively complex issues.

Third: A similar meta-ethical view to that which I have described is present in the work of Cicero. The strategy of his *De Officiis* was to demonstrate that virtuous actions and expedient actions are (despite appearances) identical. Cicero claimed that the separation of moral rectitude and expediency was a 'pernicious doctrine' that 'overturn[s] the fundamental principles established by nature'.<sup>44</sup> Following Panaetius, he claimed that only what *seemed* expedient could clash with what is morally right.<sup>45</sup> His reason for this claim is that 'we cannot discover [expediency] except in good report, propriety, and moral rectitude'.<sup>46</sup> The fact that Cicero was such an influence on Clarke, who litters the text of the Boyle lectures with references to his works, and the resulting explanatory power of interpreting Clarke as having followed Cicero on many of these points, is surely strong evidence that these views are implicitly part of Clarke's argument.

Fourth: there is the question of the principle of charity in interpretation. The testimony to Clarke's scholarship, disputational abilities and logical acumen is voluminous. It seems, then, incongruous to ascribe to Clarke such a grievous unresolved inconsistency as that between proposition (iii)<sup>47</sup> and the key passage at *Works*, II, 646 if such

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<sup>44</sup> Cicero, *De officiis*, 177, 379.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, 301.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, 379.

<sup>47</sup> *Works*, II, 597.

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an ascription can be avoided. The only way to make sense of the manifold apparent contradictions in the text (of which it beggars belief that Clarke himself was completely oblivious) is to postulate some distinction that explains why at least the bulk of the contradictions are *only* apparent. There is the additional fact that if Sidgwick et al. were correct in their views of Clarke's position, the structure of the Boyle lecture material would be inexplicable. It would be exceedingly strange if Clarke were to outline a broadly Platonist theory of virtue and emphasise its importance at length, only to finally contradict it with a few brief and inconclusive remarks concerning prudential reasonableness. I have tried to show a way in which such stances can be avoided that I hope is not generous to an inappropriate degree.

Part of the reason that writers such as Sidgwick gave for largely ignoring Clarke's particular version of ethical rationalism was that, even if the theory of 'fitnesses' had been plausible, the ethical theory as a whole was not, due to the incoherency of certain passages with Clarke's stated theory. Perhaps doubt over this dismissal might focus attention on a more sympathetic appraisal of 'fitnesses' than has been generally offered, and their relation to more modern positions, such as ethical intuitionism and particularism. It could be objected against Clarke, of course, that his Boyle lectures provide no general solution to the problem of how to reconcile various particular duties given by the understanding – such as the duty of universal benevolence and the duty of self-preservation, perhaps. But we do not have a problem in Clarke about the relation between the general categories of the duties given by the understanding, and the actions suggested by prudential reasonableness.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> I would like to record my thanks to Professor Stefan Bernard Baumrin for encouraging the writing of this essay, and to two anonymous referees whose comments were extremely useful in improving it.

## THOMAS PAINE AND HIS BRITISH CRITICS\*

*H T Dickinson*

Two hundred years after the death of Thomas Paine all his works remain in print and he remains the subject of much ongoing research. Even before Paine died, John Adams, who was not an unstinting admirer of his, could admit: 'I know not whether any man in the world has had more influence on its inhabitants or affairs for the last thirty years than Tom Paine. ... Call it then the Age of Paine.'<sup>1</sup> There are certainly very good reasons why Paine attracted so much interest during his lifetime and ever thereafter. He was a prolific writer, propagandist and controversialist and his most famous works were more widely distributed and noticed than any other contemporary works in the English language. Within a year of its publication, in January 1776, his first major work, *Common sense*, appeared in twenty-five different editions in the American colonies, in addition to being widely discussed in newspapers, periodicals and private correspondence.<sup>2</sup> It has frequently been claimed that between 120,000 and 150,000 copies were distributed in the American colonies. These figures largely rest on the claims made by Paine himself, who boasted that this short pamphlet had 'the greatest sale that any performance ever had since the use of letters'.<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested recently, however, that while *Common sense* was widely distributed around Philadelphia and was reprinted in several northern colonies, it could not have been disseminated in such large numbers.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it almost certainly outsold any other contemporary political pamphlet published in the colonies at this time. The two parts of his *Rights of man* (1791-92)

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\* Earlier drafts of this paper were delivered as lectures in London, Rouen and Munich. I wish to thank commentators on those occasions for their observations and to thank my colleague Dr F D Dow for very helpful comments on a final draft of this article.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in David Freeman Hawke, *Paine* (New York, 1974), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (Oxford, 1976), xi.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Hawke, *Paine*, 47.

<sup>4</sup> Trish Lohran, 'Disseminating Common Sense: Thomas Paine and the Problem of the Early National Bestseller', *American Literature*, 78 (2006), 1-28.

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appeared in numerous cheap editions across the British Isles and in nineteen editions in America within a few years. Its distribution figures remain uncertain. They were almost certainly higher than those of any other radical pamphlet of the period, but the figure of 200,000 copies or more that has been cited by many modern historians is almost certainly an exaggeration.<sup>5</sup> The distribution figures for Paine's third great work, *The age of reason* (1794-95), are even more uncertain, but, by 1796, some seventeen American editions had appeared and it probably provoked more hostile responses in both Britain and America than his other two most celebrated political works.<sup>6</sup> Paine's greatest works attracted so many readers, many of them from the lower social orders, in part because of their cheapness, but more because of the newness and radical nature of his arguments and the attractiveness of his style. Paine was neither a profound scholar nor a first-rate intellect, but he astonished readers with his forthright attacks on the unquestioned acceptance of, and traditional deference to, all established institutions. He launched trenchant attacks on monarchy, aristocracy and the Christian religion. He rejected traditional appeals to prescription and historical experience, and pointed to how the world could be made anew. He poured scorn on the British constitution, America's colonial dependence on Britain, and all aspects of the *ancien régime* in France. Deeply concerned about the political oppression and economic grievances of the ordinary man, he maintained that popular action could create simpler, less costly and less corrupt republican and democratic institutions. Most inspiring of all, was Paine's success in forcing his readers to look anew at the problems facing the world, in suggesting radically different ways of addressing these difficulties, and in encouraging common men to believe they could free

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory Claeys suggests even higher figures in *Thomas Paine: social and political thought* (London, 1989), 110-17. The figure of 200,000 copies was first suggested by the author of the sixpenny edition of Paine's life, *Impartial memoirs of the life of Thomas Paine* (London, 1793), 14 and was then picked up by successive biographers of Paine. While acknowledging the success of Paine's *Rights of man* and the alarm that the appearance of cheap editions of it raised in government circles, William St Clair has cast severe doubts on such high figures for its distribution. See his *The reading nation in the Romantic period* (Cambridge, 2004), 256-57, 623-26.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 113 and John Keane, *Tom Paine: a political life* (London, 1995), 396-97.

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themselves from their chains and create a new and better world.<sup>7</sup> While often criticized by better-educated men for his grammatical errors and syntactical flaws, Paine wrote in a direct and plain style that greatly appealed to those less educated readers at whom he deliberately directed his writings. It is now widely accepted that Paine's prose was eminently suited to reaching a wide readership. He undoubtedly wrote with confidence, panache, passion and wit. His style is bold and clear, his arguments are well ordered and carefully signposted, and he shows a rare gift for combining rational arguments with the ability to touch the heart and stir the imagination. Finally, Paine is justly admired because he achieved such amazing success with his pen over many years and in different countries when he operated under severe handicaps. He was born and grew up in poverty, enjoyed limited educational opportunities, was very largely self-taught, and his opponents thrice dismissed him from office, subjected him to legal harassment and public humiliation, imprisoned him, and even came close to executing him.

Many scholars have commented on the positive merits and astonishing success of Paine's writings. This essay, by contrast, concentrates attention on the numerous criticisms made of his major works by his British contemporaries and on the attempts they made to ruin his reputation and to prevent readers gaining access to his works. It will first look at the published critiques of his works in Britain, showing where these seem legitimate and where they set out to denigrate the author rather than fairly respond to his arguments. This will lead to an examination of the contemporary biographies of Paine published in Britain that showed little appreciation of his writings, but concentrated instead on vilifying his character and making him an author to be despised and ignored. There follows an exploration of how the British government, encouraged by a powerful loyalist movement in the country, sought to use legal means to

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<sup>7</sup> For particularly good discussions of Paine's different approach to political change, see Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America*, 26-113; Gregory Claeys, *Thomas Paine: social and political thought*, 85-109; C E Merriam, 'Paine's Political Theories', *Political Science Quarterly*, 14 (1899), 389-403; and Jack P Greene, 'Paine, America, and the "Modernization" of Political Consciousness', *Political Science Quarterly*, 93 (1978), 75-92.

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punish Paine himself and to persecute and silence those admirers who endeavoured to sell and distribute his works. Finally, an analysis will be made of the numerous efforts of his British opponents to vilify and humiliate him, and to intimidate his admirers, by burning him in effigy in hundreds of places in the winter of 1792-93.

### **British pamphlet responses to Paine's writings**

Even convinced present-day admirers of Paine can accept that his works are open to legitimate criticism. He was not a well-educated scholar who engaged in prolonged research before he took up his pen, he did not possess a profound intellect, and he was neither rigorously logical nor linguistically precise in presenting his arguments. Moreover, since he was engaged in polemical disputes in an age of political revolution and religious crisis, it is hardly surprising that some of his contemporaries took opposing positions to those he advanced in his writings. Some of his writings, however, even though widely disseminated at the time and well regarded by modern scholars, failed to provoke much of a response in Britain beyond the occasional passing comment or brief review.<sup>8</sup> When Paine published *Common sense*, many Britons naturally resented the hostility he displayed towards his native country. It was subsequently published in Britain in several different editions and it was often mentioned, especially in the 1790s, as clear evidence of Paine's hatred of the British constitution and his betrayal of his native country. There were, however, few British attempts to counter the arguments Paine had

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<sup>8</sup> Works by Paine that do not appear to have elicited a single pamphlet in response include *The case of the officers of excise* (1772); *The American crisis* (1777-78); *Dissertation on government, the affairs of the bank, and paper money* (1786); *Letter addressed to the Abbe Raynal on the affairs of North-America* (1782); *A letter addressed to the addressers, on the late proclamation* (1792); *Dissertation on first principles of government* (1795); *Agrarian justice* (1797); and Paine's essays on American issues in the early nineteenth century. Paine's *A letter to Mr Secretary Dundas, in answer to his observations in the House of Commons, May 25<sup>th</sup>, on the Rights of man and the late proclamation* (1792) provoked only one response: *A letter to a friend in the country: wherein Mr Paine's Letter to Mr Dundas is particularly considered* (1792). This pamphlet briefly criticized Paine's *Rights of man*, praised the virtues of the British constitution, and is particularly noteworthy for observing that the new American constitution had not been thoroughly tested and might prove flawed.

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advanced in support of American independence. The three most effective responses to *Common sense* that were published in the British Isles were written by prominent American loyalists, Charles Inglis, James Chalmers, and Henry Middleton. These American loyalists, while recognizing that the colonists had legitimate complaints against Britain's exercise of imperial power, were deeply opposed to a complete breach with Britain and endeavoured to refute Paine's arguments. Despite its imperfections, they still believed that the British constitution was the best ever established in human history and they feared that any attempt to erect a republican form of government with more democratic institutions would result in political instability and social upheaval. They maintained that Britain had defended the colonists from France and Spain and had brought them considerable commercial prosperity. They were fearful that the colonists could not combat Britain's military and naval power in any armed conflict and that seeking the support of France would create more difficulties than it would solve. Instead of accepting Paine's advice in *Common sense*, they urged their fellow colonists to make renewed efforts at reconciliation with Britain.<sup>9</sup> The only response to Paine's *Common sense* that originated in the British Isles was written by 'a citizen of Dublin', almost certainly an Anglo-Irishman.<sup>10</sup> This pamphleteer rejected Paine's claim that government is invariably an evil and insisted that, since men are imperfect and subject to their passions but wished to live in large societies, government is an undoubted blessing. The only justification for rebellion is if the change achieved would definitely bring greater benefits

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<sup>9</sup> Charles Inglis, *The true interest of America impartially stated, in certain strictures on a pamphlet intituled Common sense* (Philadelphia, 1776); [James Chalmers,] *Plain truth: addressed to the inhabitants of America. Containing remarks on a late pamphlet intituled Common sense* (Philadelphia and London, 1776); [Henry Middleton,] *The true merits of a late treatise, printed in America intituled Common sense, clearly pointed out* (London, 1776); and the eight letters by 'Cato' addressed 'To the People of Pennsylvania' and published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* between 11 March and 29 April 1776. Five of these were re-printed in the *Virginia Gazette* in April and May 1776. 'Cato' was almost certainly Dr William Smith, a loyalist Anglican clergyman and provost of the College of Philadelphia. See John Keane, *Tom Paine*, 130-31.

<sup>10</sup> *Reason. In answer to a pamphlet entituled, Common sense* (Dublin, 1776).

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than that which it replaced. Britain had provided the American colonies with a form of government that could not be improved by any of Paine's suggestions. Britain's constitution and mixed government were superior to any other political system, whether a democracy, a republic or an elective monarchy. If the colonists follow Paine's advice, they will soon be at war with each other or subjected to some other European power.

The two volumes of Paine's *Rights of man*, which appeared in London in 1791-92, reached a huge and avid readership, and yet they evoked very few printed responses that endeavoured to take Paine's arguments seriously. Although Paine explicitly attacked Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) in the first part of his *Rights of man*, Burke made no sustained response to this attack. It has not often been noted, however, that in *An appeal from the new to the old Whigs*, published in August 1791, Burke undoubtedly included Paine among the dangerous new Whigs, though he never mentioned him by name or acknowledged that he was quoting from the *Rights of man*. Burke denied Paine's view that sovereignty rested consistently and inalienably in the people and he insisted that political contracts could be made that bound subsequent generations.<sup>11</sup> He went on to quote six times from the first part of the *Rights of man*, rejecting Paine's claim that England did not possess a constitution and refuting his attacks on aristocracy, the representative nature of the House of Commons, and the advantages gained by the Glorious Revolution.<sup>12</sup> Four years later, Burke lashed out at 'Citizen Paine', who 'is ready to blaspheme his God, to insult his king, and to libel the constitution of his country without any provocation from me'.<sup>13</sup>

The son of John Adams, who, like his father, was later to become President of the United States, wrote the only contemporary response published in Britain that concentrated solely on Paine's arguments and

<sup>11</sup> Edmund Burke, *An appeal from the new to the old Whigs* (1<sup>st</sup> edn., London, 1791), 56. Burke did read Paine's work and appears to have thought him mad. See F P Lock, *Edmund Burke: volume II, 1784-1797* (Oxford, 2006), 351.

<sup>12</sup> The quotations given in *An appeal*, 86-92, can be found in the first part of Paine's *Rights of man* (1<sup>st</sup> edn., London, 1791), 53-82.

<sup>13</sup> *Letter to William Elliot, 26 May 1795*, in *The writings and speeches of Edmund Burke: volume IX*, ed. R B McDowell (Oxford, 1991), 31.

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avoided any personal attack on Paine.<sup>14</sup> A sober critique, this pamphlet concentrated on pointing out the weaknesses in Paine's arguments. Adams denied Paine's claim that a sovereign people can reject the past and can enact whatever political changes they liked. There are eternal and immutable laws that restrict what men can do. As an American, it is not surprising that Adams admitted that every nation has the right to change its constitution and its system of government, but he cautions that this should be done only in cases of extreme emergency. He maintained that Britain did possess an ancient constitution that allowed the people through their legislature to redress grievances and to amend the political system without resorting to armed rebellion. There is more to be feared from the corruption of the people than from the flaws in the political system. The 'mob' is more capable of destroying all forms of government than they are able to erect improved ones. Moreover, even the American constitution, which Adams regarded as superior to those of Britain or France, still has weaknesses that are not easily amended. Sir Brooke Boothby, a moderate Whig, who sought to plot a middle course between the political views advanced by Paine and Burke, offered perhaps the best argued contemporary response to Paine's *Rights of man*.<sup>15</sup> Boothby admitted that Paine advanced some legitimate criticisms of Burke and he himself accepted that there were some abuses in the British electoral system, but he rejected all of Paine's major arguments and, as we shall see, he launched a number of personal attacks on Paine.

Paine's *Rights of man* provoked several dozen British writers into producing highly critical responses soon after its publication.<sup>16</sup> These authors frequently advanced the same general propositions in their efforts

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<sup>14</sup> John [Quincy] Adams, *Answer to Pain's Rights of man* (London, 1793). It was originally published in America.

<sup>15</sup> *Observations on the Appeal from the new to the old Whigs, and on Mr Paine's Rights of man. In two parts* (London, 1792) in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Gregory Claeys (8 vols., London, 1995), 6: 172-292.

<sup>16</sup> It is impossible to be certain how many responses to the *Rights of man* were published in Britain in the 1790s. See, however, Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'Towards a Bibliography of the *Reflections* and *Rights of Man* Controversy', *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 85 (1982), 65-103 and Amanda Goodrich, 'Surveying the Ebb and Flow of Pamphlet Warfare: 500 Rival Tracts from Radicals and Loyalists in Britain,

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to convince their readers that Paine's central arguments should be rejected. They resented Paine's claim that Britain was without a constitution, insisting that many acts of Parliament and centuries of the common law had evolved a constitution ever since Anglo-Saxon times. This mixed and balanced constitution combined the virtues of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, while avoiding the dangers presented by any of these forms of government in their pure form. Most of these authors were doubtful whether a state of nature had ever existed, but, if it had, men had certainly surrendered their natural rights in order to enjoy the benefits of civil society and civil government. These were created to establish the rule of law that constrained and restricted men's natural rights. Some degree of subordination was essential if men were to secure their persons and to safeguard their property. Men were not perfectly

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1790-1796', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 30 (2007), 1-12. The arguments presented in my essay are based on the following responses: that is, on the 29 works published in volumes 5 and 6 of *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, and, in addition, on *Letters to Thomas Paine; in answer to his late publication on the Rights of man: shewing his errors on that subject* (London, 1791); Amicus, *An Address to the yeomanry of Great Britain, upon the present situation of the country* (Edinburgh, 1792); John Gifford, *A plain address to the common sense of the people of England, containing an interesting abstract of Pain's life and writings* (London, 1792); Richard Hey, *Happiness and rights. A Dissertation upon several subjects relative to the rights of man and his happiness...* (York, 1792); Hannah More, *Village politics: addressed to all the mechanics, journeymen and day labourers in Great Britain* (London, 1792); George Neale, *Rights of citizens, a short but compleat anylisis [sic] and Refutation of 'Paine's Rights of Man'* (London, 1792); *A word of expostulation, in a letter from Corregidor, to Thomas Paine* (London, 1792); John [Quincy] Adams, *Answer to Pain's Rights of man* (London, 1793); James Brown, *The importance of preserving unviolated the system of civil government in every state...* (London, 1793); [Thomas Hardy,] *The Patriot: addressed to the people, ... with ... discussions of the principles advanced in the writings of Thomas Paine* (Edinburgh, 1793); *The interests of man in opposition to the Rights of man* (Edinburgh, 1793); *The True Briton's catechism; on the principles of government, the Rights of man, and the liberties of Englishmen* (London, 1793); H. Makenzie [that is, Henry Mackenzie, the Scottish writer, who appears to have written this in Edinburgh,] *An answer to Paine's Rights of man* (Philadelphia, 1796); and Robert Thomas, *The cause of truth, containing... a refutation of errors in the political works of Thomas Paine* (Dundee, [1797]).

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rational and independent beings, as Paine supposed, but were imperfect passionate creatures, who were born in a state of dependency on others and who needed to be coerced by laws. All men therefore ought to be aware that they had duties as well as rights. Paine was repeatedly attacked for claiming that all men were naturally equal. Rather, men were naturally unequal in such attributes as strength, courage, industry, intelligence, talent, capacity, and disposition. These natural inequalities were increased over time as societies became more complex and prosperous, and ambitious men acquired education and sought distinctions, honours and pre-eminence. No perfect system of government could ever be produced because of man's fallible nature and natural inequalities. Unequal societies inevitably produced governments in which the many were governed by the few, who possessed greater wealth, status, education, leisure, and independence. The British people were fortunate that their monarchy, aristocracy and social hierarchy produced many benefits, far more than had ever been produced by any republican or democratic society. They should remember this, especially when they saw how, in France, an unruly, licentious multitude produced an arbitrary government that rested on injustice, force and terror, and was bound to be short-lived. Paine's critics were not all outright reactionaries. Indeed, one critic, Christopher Wyvill, was a veteran reformer who was careful to distance himself from Paine even when seeking to defend the personal reputation and political principles of Richard Price and other moderate reformers. Wyvill singled out Paine for attack as a wild republican, who sought to abolish outright Britain's monarchy, aristocracy, and cherished mixed government:<sup>17</sup> 'the avowed purpose of that Writer is not to reform or amend the system of our Government, but to overturn and destroy it.'<sup>18</sup> Paine's more conservative critics in Britain acknowledged the right of resistance against blatant and arbitrary tyranny and they admitted that some reform of the system of representation might be possible at some future date, but they utterly rejected Paine's suggestion that each

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<sup>17</sup> Christopher Wyvill, *A defence of Dr. Price, and the reformers of England* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London and York, 1792), 67-70.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, v-vi.

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generation had the right to re-model its constitution and its form of government just as a majority sought fit. Most of Paine's critics concentrated their attacks on the political arguments advanced in Part One of his *Rights of man*, though their repeated claims that Paine's stress on man's equality would lead to the poor attacking the property of the rich were probably influenced by his social welfare proposals in Part Two of *Rights of man*. One author, at least, explicitly rejected Paine's argument that the poor were over-taxed and that workmen should be free to bargain over their wages and working conditions,<sup>19</sup> while two others denounced Paine's social welfare proposals as impractical and highly dangerous.<sup>20</sup>

Paine's *The age of reason*, which appeared in two parts in 1794-95 (the first of which was published at Paine's own expense in Paris), provoked rather more substantial contemporary responses in Britain than the *Rights of man*.<sup>21</sup> It was defended by a small number of commentators. Abraham Binns, for example, supported many of Paine's major points, maintaining that human reason and the works of nature provided greater proof of the existence of God than did the revelations of the Bible. He also insisted that Deists like Paine were not atheists and were often as moral as the best Christians.<sup>22</sup> Another contemporary writer also accepted Paine's arguments about why the Bible, including the Gospels, could not be accepted as the revealed Word of God and how Christianity so often supported oppressive governments.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> John Gifford, *A plain address to the common sense of the people of England* (London, 1792), 37-41.

<sup>20</sup> *An address to the yeomanry of Great Britain*, 5-12; and, especially, [Frederick Hervey,] *An answer to the second part of the Rights of man* (London, 1792), in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 5: 378-98.

<sup>21</sup> Franklyn K Prochaska, 'Thomas Paine's The Age of Reason Revisited', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 33 (1972), 561-76; Jay E Smith, 'Thomas Paine and *The Age of Reason*'s Attack on *The Bible*', *The Historian*, 58 (1996), 745-61; and Edward H Davidson and William J Scheick, *Paine, scripture, and authority: 'The Age of Reason' as religious and political idea* (Bethlehem, PA, 1994).

<sup>22</sup> Abraham Binns, *Remarks on a publication, entitled, 'A Serious Admonition to the Disciples of Thomas Paine and all other Infidels'* (Stockport, 1796).

<sup>23</sup> [John Coward,] *Thomas Paine vindicated. Being a short letter to the Bishop of Llandaff's reply to Thomas Paine's Age of reason* (London, 1796). Paine's views were also defended by Coward in *Deism traced to one of its principal sources, or the corruption of Christianity the grand cause of infidelity* (London, 1796); Thomas

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Many more writers, however, attacked Paine's arguments and defended scriptural revelation and the role of the Christian churches.<sup>24</sup> A significant number of these British attacks on *The age of reason* were written by Anglican clergymen; the others were written by Dissenting clergymen or clearly devout laymen. These authors invariably pointed out that Paine possessed limited knowledge of the Bible and biblical criticism, and was ignorant of the relevant languages needed to make a profound study of the Scriptures. They often pointed out that similar Deist arguments to those of Paine had been advanced by better-qualified men in the earlier eighteenth century, such as John Toland, Viscount Bolingbroke and Voltaire. These infidels had, however, already been effectively answered by such noted and respected biblical experts as John Leland, Nathaniel Lardner, William Paley, Thomas Townson, and Gilbert West. Paine was accused of ignorance, arrogance, and scurrility and of substituting mere assertions for coherent and substantiated arguments. He was regularly attacked for his criticisms of the Old Testament prophets, for his rejection of any of the miracles recorded in the Bible, and for his rejection of all the evidence supporting the divinity of Christ. It was repeatedly pointed out that Paine's religion of nature offered no guidance on how men should lead their lives or how they might secure eternal salvation. Deism could never replace Christian revelation because only the Word of God as revealed in the Bible could offer men the moral guidance they needed and the prospect of everlasting life in a future state for which they yearned.

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Dutton, *A vindication of The age of reason by Thomas Paine; being an answer to the strictures of Mr Gilbert Wakefield and Dr Priestley, on this celebrated performance* (London, 1795); and Allan Macleod, *The Bishop of Llandaff's 'Apology for the Bible' examined* (London, 1797).

<sup>24</sup> Michael L Lasser, 'In Response to *The Age of Reason*, 1794-1799', *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 25 (1967), 41-43, lists 37 pamphlet responses to *The age of reason*. Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'Thirty Additional Titles relating to *The Age of Reason*', *British Studies Monitor*, 10 (1980), 36-45 adds substantially to this list. If we discount the non-British titles, those that supported Paine, those that were single-sheet tracts, and those that only incidentally responded to *The Age of reason*, we are still left with over forty substantial attacks on Paine.

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Some of these authors published serious and reflective treatises that sought to prove why the Bible should be accepted as revealing the Word of God and why it offered more than was revealed by nature. The best of these pamphlets, according to most contemporaries and to modern scholars, was written by Richard Watson, the Bishop of Llandaff. Watson claimed to be writing for a popular readership, rather than for other biblical scholars, because he feared that it was the uneducated masses that were most in danger of being infected by the poison of Paine's infidelity. This may have been his aim, but his work rested on a formidable body of biblical scholarship and he subjected the Bible to rigorous exegesis. He admitted that Paine possessed 'a considerable share of energy of language, and acuteness of investigation'<sup>25</sup> and he refused to subject Paine to a torrent of personal abuse: 'I am unwilling to attribute bad designs, deliberate wickedness, to you or any man; ... you think you have truth on your side, and that you are doing service to mankind in endeavouring to root out what you esteem superstition.'<sup>26</sup> Watson even accepted some of the minor points of biblical criticism advanced by Paine, but he consistently argued that Paine's work was based on unsupported assertions and a superficial study of the Bible. He himself was prepared to accept the miracles mentioned throughout the Bible, scriptural revelations even in the Old Testament, and the details of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as set out in the Gospels. He went further than just defending orthodox Christian beliefs. He maintained that the cold and rational abstractions of Paine, however optimistic they might appear at first sight, could not satisfy man's deepest longing nor give him something greater than himself in which to believe. Human beings needed the moral precepts of the Gospels and the reward of a future life held out by Christianity. Paine's absent deity offered little comfort to troubled humanity.

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Watson, *An apology for the Bible; in a series of letters, addressed to Thomas Paine, author of a book entitled The age of reason, part the second, being an investigation of true and fabulous theology* (London, 1796), 2. This famous pamphlet went through eight London editions within three years and was also printed in Scotland, Ireland, and at least three states in the USA within this short period.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

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Paine's pamphlet on *The decline and fall of the English system of finance* (1796) attracted very considerable attention in Britain and provoked some well-qualified authors into attempting to rebut his arguments. At this time, Britain's national finances were under considerable strain and the war with France was going badly and, hence, Paine's prediction that the imminent collapse of Britain's financial system would lead to military defeat and a political revolution threatened to undermine the nation's support for the war and for the present administration. At least five informed responses were published in London shortly after the appearance of Paine's pamphlet in an effort to counter his alarmist views and to reassure the British people that the country's finances were in far better shape than those of France.<sup>27</sup> All these authors revealed a superior grasp of the nature of Britain's financial system than did Paine and they were happy to point out his mistaken claims. They were also keen to warn their readers of Paine's ulterior motives. Simeon Pope claimed that Paine's pamphlet was 'evidently designed to mislead the unwary, create suspicions, weaken public confidence, and spread false alarms'.<sup>28</sup> James Chalmers advised his readers that Paine was 'an incendiary, whose sole aim is to goad and plunge society into despondency and anarchy'.<sup>29</sup> All these authors claimed that Paine's statistics on the growth of the National Debt were false and that his understanding of the ratio between paper bank notes and gold and silver specie was deeply flawed. They also insisted that the recent efforts by America and France to issue paper money that would not rapidly

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Broome, *Observations on Mr. Paine's pamphlet, entitled The Decline and fall of the English system of finance; in a letter to a friend, June 4, 1796* (London, [1796]); Lieutenant-Colonel [James] Chalmers, *Strictures on a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine, on the English system of finance: to which are added some remarks on the war, and other national concerns* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, 1796); Simeon Pope, *A letter to the Right Hon. William Curtis, Lord Mayor of the City of London, on the national debt and resources of Great Britain; interspersed with observations financial, commercial, and political: and in reply to Paine's 'Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance'* (London, 1796); Joseph Smith, *An examination of Mr. Paine's Decline & fall of the English system of finance, in a letter to a friend* (London, 1796); and Daniel Wakefield, *A letter to Thomas Paine, in reply to his Decline and fall of the English system of finance* (London, 1796).

<sup>28</sup> Pope, *A letter to the Right Hon. William Curtis*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Chalmers, *Strictures on a pamphlet written by Thomas Paine*, 3.

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depreciate in value had failed because they were based on a very different system of public credit to that established in Britain. The British credit system rested on consent not compulsion, owed much to the wisdom of Prime Minister Pitt and the expertise of the directors of the Bank of England, and secured the confidence of the people because the government always raised taxes through parliamentary legislation to ensure that the interest would always be paid on all money borrowed. Britain's funding system would last as long as the political system survived and hence the people should oppose any radical political changes. Simeon Pope, in particular, made much of the excellent state of the British economy that provided the revenues to fund the National Debt. While acknowledging that the cost of wars had steadily increased since the Glorious Revolution of 1688, he repeatedly stressed that all aspects of the country's economy were growing at an even faster rate than the National Debt. The fact that Britain could fund such a massive national debt was clear proof of Britain's increasing wealth and expanding resources.<sup>30</sup>

The last of Paine's works to elicit pamphlet responses in Britain was his *Letter to General Washington* (1796). This attack on the American President, provoked by Paine's belief that Washington had not done enough to get him released from his French prison, angered many Americans and also encouraged two British responses.<sup>31</sup> Cobbett first published his pamphlet while in the United States, but reprinted it in London and Glasgow a year later. He accused Paine of criticizing Washington's abilities as a soldier and of attacking the Federal Constitution, when previously he had expressed his admiration for both. Paine was not justified in expecting Washington to treat him as an American citizen when he had accepted French citizenship and election to the French Convention. According to Cobbett, Paine's real motive in

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<sup>30</sup> Pope, *A letter to the Right Hon. William Curtis*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> [William Cobbett,] *A letter to the infamous Tom Paine, in answer to his Letter to General Washington* (Philadelphia, 1796); and Patrick Kennedy, *An answer to Paine's Letter to General Washington* (Philadelphia and London, 1797). Both these pamphlets have been printed in *Thomas Paine and America, 1776-1809*, ed. Kenneth W Burchell (6 vols., London, 2009), 6: 31-72 and 83-100.

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this pamphlet was to undermine the recent commercial treaty between the United States and Britain, to the advantage of France. Paine was a 'revolutionary ruffian', whose pamphlet had the opposite effect to that intended: it crowned Washington's honour and betrayed Paine's own infamy. Patrick Kennedy, an Irishman who also published his response to Paine in both America and Britain, condemned Paine for his cowardly attack on his one-time friend and benefactor and linked Paine's attack on Washington with his repeated efforts to overturn religion, morality and all stable governments in order to further the interests of France. Like Cobbett, Kennedy supported the recent commercial treaty between Britain and the United States. He heaped praise on Washington's abilities as a general, his wisdom as a statesman, and his integrity as an admirable human being.

As we have seen, some of the contemporary British responses to Paine's writings can be regarded as serious contributions to major ideological debates. Sometimes they were treated fairly, if critically, but, in most cases, however, his British critics preferred to heap abuse upon his arguments, his objectives, his prose style, and his personal morality. Afraid that sober arguments might persuade readers that there was at least some merit in Paine's works, they turned to abuse and vilification in order to persuade readers there was much to fear and nothing to praise in these writings. One of the most surprising and most abusive attacks on Paine was launched by Gilbert Wakefield. He was a Unitarian minister, who was a critic of William Pitt's government and an early admirer of the French Revolution. He initially showed some sympathy for Paine's political views and he had maintained that critics of the *Rights of man* should try to respond to Paine's arguments and not seek to vilify his character.<sup>32</sup> Even when he came to respond to the first part of Paine's *The age of reason*, which began to alarm him, he stated at the outset: 'That the former writings of Thomas Paine abound with indications of original conception and profound thought, of comprehension and sagacity, far beyond the vigour of ordinary minds, no man, I presume, of established character for intelligence and integrity, will venture to deny.'<sup>33</sup> He also

<sup>32</sup> Gilbert Wakefield, *Evidences of Christianity* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, 1793), 79-80 note.

<sup>33</sup> Gilbert Wakefield, *An examination of the Age of reason, by Thomas Paine* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, 1794), 1.

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acknowledged that Paine's criticism of the British constitution and system of government 'has raised him so many adversaries, and such a swarm of unprincipled hirelings have settled upon him, exerting themselves to blacken his character and misrepresent all the transactions of his life'.<sup>34</sup> This did not prevent Wakefield going on to complain that Paine's religious arguments were confused, impertinent, bewildered and puerile. By the time that Wakefield came to respond to the second part of *The Age of reason*, his tone was completely different. Clearly, Paine's religious views were now too alarming to be treated with any respect. Wakefield accused Paine of 'the most astonishing, unprincipled, and unparalleled arrogance' and of being 'a silly blockhead, blind with ignorance, and besotted with conceit, foaming out his own shame upon subjects infinitely beyond his acquirements, in a spirit of most audacious dogmatism'.<sup>35</sup> Wakefield's harsh criticisms of Paine were then very widely distributed, especially in America and they were even welcomed by the British government.<sup>36</sup>

Most British critics of Paine, however, were quicker and even less restrained than Wakefield in denouncing Paine's political works in an *ad hominem* fashion. The *Rights of man* produced much hostile criticism. Many critics condemned him for deliberately encouraging the poor to engage in political activities and to demand impractical reforms. Paine was accused of hating Britain, of having urged the Americans to rebel in the past and the French to revolt in the present, and of promoting revolution everywhere. He was denounced as a dangerous incendiary, who could suggest ways of pulling down existing constitutions and systems of government, but who could offer no stable alternatives that would protect private property and preserve social order. Caricaturists of the day portrayed him as a conspirator plotting violence, an incendiarist hoping to burn down parliament, an international revolutionary

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>35</sup> Gilbert Wakefield, *A reply to Thomas Paine's second part of the Age of reason* (London, 1795), v-vi.

<sup>36</sup> This did not prevent Wakefield falling foul of the government in 1799 when he indicated that the British government was so unpopular that the British people might even welcome a French invasion. He was imprisoned for this. See F K Prochaska, 'English State Trials in the 1790s: A Case Study', *Journal of British Studies*, 13 (1973), 63-82.

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encouraging popular revolts everywhere, a radical asleep, dreaming of revolutionary change, but facing violent retribution, and a fool trying to educate simple people (depicted as monkeys) about their rights.<sup>37</sup> The two most famous caricatures of him, by James Gillray, show him as a man of low status, unrealistic ambitions and ill disposition, seeking in vain to assess the value of monarchy and to improve the British constitution.<sup>38</sup> According to that staunch loyalist, John Bowles, Paine was an ‘envious and malignant Fiend’, who sought ‘to excite disaffection towards the Government, to stimulate the people to sedition and rebellion, and to involve this free and happy country in scenes of confusion and anarchy’.<sup>39</sup> What particularly caused alarm was the belief that Paine was deliberately seeking to raise utopian aspirations among the poor with the suggestion that economic equality was attainable.<sup>40</sup> After all, ‘Schemes of unattainable equality cannot fail to be grateful to those who have but a very small portion of the goods of fortune, who are easily led to believe that the disparity which is inseparable from the nature of Society, is an evil and an injustice to which they ought not to submit.’<sup>41</sup> If Paine’s views prevailed, ‘all orders will be levelled – all distinctions effaced – the rights of property (formerly held sacred) annulled – and security and tranquillity

<sup>37</sup> See, respectively, Isaac Cruikshank, *The Friends of the People* (15 Nov. 1792); Isaac Cruikshank, *Mad Tom’s first practical essay on the Rights of man* (14 May 1792), Isaac Cruikshank, *Wha wants me?* (26 Dec. 1792); James Gillray, *Tom Paine’s nightly pest* (26 Nov. 1792); and a rare print in the British Library showing Paine preaching the *Rights of man* to monkeys (1792?)

<sup>38</sup> James Gillray, *The Rights of man; or Tommy Paine the little American Taylor taking the measure of the crown for a new pair of revolution breeches* (23 May 1792); and James Gillray, *Fashion before ease or a good constitution sacrificed, for a fantastick form* (2 Jan. 1793).

<sup>39</sup> [John Bowles], *A protest against T. Paine’s ‘Rights of Man’* (London, 1792) in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 6: 42-43. This work went through at least five London editions and was also printed in Edinburgh and circulated by the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers. For Bowles’s staunch loyalism, see Emma Vincent, “‘The real grounds of the present war’: John Bowles and the French revolutionary wars, 1792-1802”, *History*, 78 (1993), 393-420.

<sup>40</sup> Bowles, *A protest*, in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 6: 44.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

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made to depend on the capricious will of an unrestrained multitude'.<sup>42</sup> John Gifford, another staunch loyalist, poured scorn on the 'gross folly and absurdity'<sup>43</sup> of *Rights of man* and denounced Paine's political objectives: 'His crime is no less than an attempt to excite a mutiny of our troops; an insurrection of our workmen; and a tumult among the poor; to dethrone our sovereign and disinherit his family; to subvert our laws, and overturn our constitution.'<sup>44</sup> In similar vein, Alexander Peter denounced Paine's 'malignant design of destroying harmony, promoting discord, exciting rebellious principles, totally inconsistent with the welfare and due subordination of society'.<sup>45</sup> Yet another critic denounced Paine's promotion of 'such wild principles, so subversive of all subordination and government, and as inimical to liberty'.<sup>46</sup> Hannah More linked Paine's infidelity to his republicanism, and warned the common people of Britain to reject both or risk everything they held most dear.<sup>47</sup>

What particularly attracted the ire of Paine's fiercest critics was the amazing success that *Rights of man* had in reaching a mass readership. John Gifford claimed that Paine's *Rights of man* would have been confined to oblivion, 'but for the uncommon pains which, for the most diabolical purposes, have been taken to promote its circulation'.<sup>48</sup> *The Times* newspaper published a letter to the bishops of the Church of

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 6: 60.

<sup>43</sup> John Gifford, *A plain address to the common sense of the people of England* (London, 1792), 27. Annexed to this was 'An abstract of Thomas Paine's life and writings'. Gifford wrote a history of the French Revolution, produced a *Short address to members of Loyal Associations* (1798) that is said to have sold 100,000 copies and, from the same year, began editing *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* that ran for many years. There is a short entry on him in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB).

<sup>44</sup> Gifford, *A plain address*, 45 (it is wrongly printed as p. 22).

<sup>45</sup> Alexander Peter, *Strictures on the character and principles of Thomas Paine* (Portsmouth, 1792) in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 6: 142. The government paid W Mowbray, printer to the Duke of Clarence, £175 to produce 22,000 copies of this pamphlet to distribute it more cheaply and more widely. See Arthur Aspinall, *Politics and the press, c.1780-1850* (London, 1949), 143.

<sup>46</sup> [David Rivers,] *Cursory remarks on Paine's Rights of man* (London, 1792) in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 6: 131.

<sup>47</sup> Hannah More, *A country carpenter's confession of faith: with a few plain remarks on The age of reason* (London, 1794), 21.

<sup>48</sup> Gifford, *A plain address*, 27.

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England, shortly after the publication of part one of *The age of reason*, warning against its ability to reach a mass readership:

The book is written in a stile that all ranks of life can understand, in the most seductive language, and contains a poison of the most virulent kind. ... You will consider that thousands of reflecting minds have been tainted with the work alluded to, that it has gone through several editions, and its contents disseminated with indefatigable zeal by the disaffected parts of the community.<sup>49</sup>

Another commentator insisted that Paine's success owed much to the fact that radical societies were distributing free copies and that many cheap editions were being sold to the poor.<sup>50</sup> One Anglican clergyman noted with alarm the spread of cheap editions of the *Rights of man* among working people:

As the cheapness of Mr Paine's books has put it in the power of the poorest man to purchase them, there are, I believe, many of them now in circulation amongst such people, who with great industry communicate those dangerous yet fascinating opinions of equality amongst their companions. ... [T]he conversation of many of them has a strong tendency of levelling and republicanism.<sup>51</sup>

Many of Paine's critics poured scorn on Paine's prose style, but recognized, sometimes unwittingly, that Paine's style helped him to reach a wide readership. Sir Brooke Boothby protested that Paine 'writes in defiance of grammar, as if syntax were an aristocratical invention, and with a disregard of decency',<sup>52</sup> but he admitted, almost as an aside, that the pamphlet was 'written in a kind of specious jargon well enough

<sup>49</sup> *The Times*, 21 August 1794.

<sup>50</sup> [George Mason,] *A British freeholder's address to his countrymen, on Thomas Paine's Rights of man* (London, 1791) in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 5: 308.

<sup>51</sup> British Library, Reeves Papers, Add. Ms. 16927, f. 47. Rev. R. Wilson to J. Moore, Dec. 10, 1792. Quoted in Nicholas Rogers, 'Burning Tom Paine: Loyalism and Counter-Revolution in Britain, 1792-1793', *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 32 (1999), 143-44.

<sup>52</sup> *Observations on the Appeal from the new to the old Whigs, and on Mr Paine's Rights of man. In two parts* in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 6: 217 note.

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calculated to impose upon the vulgar'.<sup>53</sup> Another critic maintained that Paine's facile arguments and weak logic would only incite laughter, 'but his specious language and sophistry impose upon such readers as are not at the trouble to examine him'.<sup>54</sup> Yet another critic believed that many of the arguments advanced by Paine were beneath serious criticism, but he feared that Paine was deliberately seeking to reach the 'inflammable children of discontent' found in coal pits, workshops, alehouses and even prisons, where 'his coarse sophistry, so flattering to the lower orders of mankind, has had an alarming effect on their sentiments'.<sup>55</sup>

**Malicious Contemporary Biographies of Paine**

Those who most hated Paine's writings were not content to attack his motives, arguments, objectives and style. They set about vilifying his character in an effort to show that no one should be persuaded by the political views expressed by a man without honour, education, religion, morality or common decency. The result was vicious personal attacks produced in biographical studies produced to satisfy the political aims of the British government and the vengeful anger of Paine's political enemies.

The first biography of Paine appeared in London in 1791.<sup>56</sup> It went through at least ten editions within a few years and several editions were

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 6: 288.

<sup>54</sup> *Defence of the Rights of man, being a discussion of the conclusions drawn from their rights by Mr Paine* (London, 1791), p. 16.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Harrington Elliot, *The republican refuted; in a series of biographical, critical and political strictures on Thomas Paine's Rights of man* (London, 1791) in *Political writings of the 1790s*, ed. Claeys, 5: 316, 317, 318. Daniel Isaac Eaton, a radical admirer of Paine, recognized that Paine was especially feared because he told poor men that they could read works without the permission of magistrates or parsons, and that, however poor and ignorant they were, they still possessed equal rights with other men. See Daniel Isaac Eaton, *The pernicious principles of Tom Paine, exposed in an address to labourers and mechanics* (6<sup>th</sup> edn., London, 1795). This short pamphlet is heavily ironic in tone.

<sup>56</sup> *The life of Thomas Paine, the author of Rights of men, with a defence of his writings*. This citation is accurate; the title page does print *Pain and men*. This work retailed at two shillings and sixpence.

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also produced of an abridged and cheaper version in 1793.<sup>57</sup> The title pages of both versions claimed that Francis Oldys, A.M. of the University of Pennsylvania, wrote them. This was a pseudonym for George Chalmers (1742-1825).<sup>58</sup> He was a Scotsman, who had migrated to Maryland, but had returned to Britain at the outbreak of the American War of Independence because of his loyalist convictions. In 1786 he was appointed chief clerk to the committee of the Privy Council dealing with matters of commerce and he held this post until his death. An active researcher and prolific author, he was paid £500 by the British government to produce a hostile biography of Paine. Chalmers listed many of the grammatical flaws in Paine's prose.<sup>59</sup> More significantly, he was the first to research assiduously into Paine's early life and some of his findings have influenced all subsequent biographical accounts of Paine, despite the deep antipathy that he betrayed towards his subject. Chalmers highlighted Paine's humble origins, lack of formal education and inability to hold down any job for very long. He emphasized that both the British Treasury and the American Congress had dismissed him from official positions because he could not be trusted to fulfil his official duties properly. He accused Paine (or Pain as he insisted on calling him) of a whole range of dishonest practices: falsely claiming he was a bachelor on his second marriage, engaging in smuggling while serving as an excise officer, selling furniture that he had never paid for, failing to pay the printer of his first pamphlet, and being arrested for debt in 1789. More personally damaging failings included neglecting his aged and impoverished parents, physically ill-treating and separating from both his wives, quite possibly committing bigamy, and never consummating his marriage to his second wife. These scurrilous details were undoubtedly published in order to blacken Paine's character in the eyes of many of his potential readers, so that they would more readily reject his arguments.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *The abridged life of Thomas Pain, the author of the seditious writings, entitled Rights of man. The eighth, corrected, edition* (London, 1793) was priced at one shilling or two guineas per hundred. The title page of this edition has a print showing Paine holding up a copy of the *Rights of man* to a group of monkeys.

<sup>58</sup> There is a short account of him in the *ODNB*.

<sup>59</sup> *The life of Thomas Pain*, 98-101.

<sup>60</sup> Corinna Wagner, 'Loyalist Propaganda and the Scandalous Life of Thomas Paine: "Hypocritical Monster!"', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28 (2005), 97-115.

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Paine, however, made no attempt to counter them. Even when one of Paine's admirers attacked this biography by Chalmers, no effort was made to counter any of these particularly damaging charges.<sup>61</sup>

In 1793 a short biography, *The life of Paine*, also relying heavily on the earlier work by Chalmers, was published in Edinburgh. It repeated all the more personal attacks on Paine's character, especially his treatment of his wives and parents, and the stories of his dishonesty. This short life appears to have been written by Henry Mackenzie (1745-1831).<sup>62</sup> Mackenzie was a fierce opponent of the French Revolution and he wrote in defence of the government's policies at the behest of Henry Dundas.<sup>63</sup> Four years later another hostile biography of Paine was published in Philadelphia and then reprinted in London, without the first few pages that had initially introduced the work to American readers. Entitled *The life of Thomas Paine, interspersed with remarks and reflections*, the title page of the Philadelphia version gives the author's name as Peter Porcupine, while the London version is attributed to William Cobbett. They are, of course the same man. Cobbett was not a radical at this stage and he was certainly a critic of Paine. His biography slavishly adopted all the scurrilous charges levelled in Chalmers' account of Paine's early life. It even added further suggestions of inappropriate sexual activity by Paine, claiming that he left America in 1786 after having 'seduced a young woman of a reputable family'.<sup>64</sup> Cobbett also bitterly attacked the views that Paine had expressed in part two of *Rights of man* and in *The age of reason*, works that had appeared after the publication of Chalmers' biography. A year later, when John Adolphus, a prolific historian, produced his *Biographical memoirs of the French Revolution* in London, he included a substantial biography of Paine that he admitted was largely based on the work of Francis Oldys (whom he correctly identified as George Chalmers) and on what he called 'the abridgement' by William Cobbett.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Impartial memoirs of the life of Thomas Paine* (London, 1793). This short work relied heavily on the biography by Oldys/Chalmers. It sold for sixpence.

<sup>62</sup> This claim is made on the title page of the copy published online by *Eighteenth Century Collections Online [ECCO]*.

<sup>63</sup> There is a short account of Mackenzie in the *ODNB*.

<sup>64</sup> *The life of Thomas Paine, interspersed with remarks and reflections*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> John Adolphus, *Biographical memoirs of the French Revolution* (2 vols., London, 1798), 2: 278-327.

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He also pointed out that Paine had made no attempt to respond to any of the damaging charges levelled against him by Chalmers.

Within months of Paine's death in 1809 one of his political opponents in America, James Cheetham, produced another highly critical and influential biography of him. Cheetham had been a Manchester radical before migrating to America in 1798 and becoming editor of the *American Citizen*. Paine contributed some essays to this periodical, but, early in 1807, he began offering his political essays to the rival *Public Advertiser* instead. This was, in part, because Cheetham had annoyed him by amending and then publishing one of his essays, without seeking his permission, and, in part, because the two of them increasingly disagreed over America's diplomatic relations with France. Paine was highly critical of Cheetham's anti-French attitude and accused him of being ready to sacrifice America's commercial interests to the advantage of Britain.<sup>66</sup> Cheetham gained his revenge within weeks of Paine's death. In his biography of Paine,<sup>67</sup> he repeated much of the scurrilous material first produced by George Chalmers, but he was even more critical of Paine's character and more slighting of his achievements. He was highly critical of Paine's past treatment of women, but he could now imply that Paine had seduced Madame de Bonneville from her husband, was probably the father of her youngest son, and treated her shabbily after persuading her to come to America.<sup>68</sup> A great many pages at the end of Cheetham's biography are taken up with details of Paine sponging on poor acquaintances, drinking enormous quantities of brandy, being almost constantly inebriated, hardly ever washing, and frequently soiling his bed. He made no allowance for Paine's age or his severe ill health, and did everything to make him appear disgusting:

Paine had no good qualities. Incapable of friendship, he was vain, envious, malignant; ... In his private dealings he was unjust. ... He was guilty of the worst species of seduction; the

<sup>66</sup> On this dispute, see Alfred Owen Aldridge, *Man of reason: the life of Thomas Paine* (London, 1960), 308-12.

<sup>67</sup> James Cheetham, *The life of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1809).

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 226-67, 236-42, 244, 248-50, and 296-99. Madame de Bonneville successfully sued Cheetham for libel. See Harvey J Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the promise of America* (New York, 2005), 123.

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alienation of a wife and children from a husband and father. Filthy and drunken, he was a compound of all the vices.<sup>69</sup>

In commenting on Paine's writings, Cheetham denied that Paine had anything significant or original to contribute to public debates. All his writings were poorly written and motivated by vanity, malice, sedition, and a desire for pecuniary reward. On the *Rights of man*, he commented: 'Part first, is full of sedition; part second openly and fearlessly calls on the people to revolt, and unequivocally advocates a subversion of the government. Never before had the freedom, and the hospitality of the nation, or of any other nation, been so daringly and outrageously abused.'<sup>70</sup> There was nothing of value in Paine's *The age of reason* either: 'while conspiring to subvert all government, he meditated the overthrow of all religion. Whilst planning devastation and blood on earth, he was hatching rebellion against heaven.'<sup>71</sup> Cheetham, like others, had hoped to learn that Paine had recanted his former views on religion and had finally come to acknowledge Christ as his saviour in his last days, but he had to admit that this was not the case, though he claimed this might have been because Paine's arrogance would not let him admit he had ever held mistaken views.<sup>72</sup> Although Cheetham's biography is in many ways a diatribe against Paine by a personal and political enemy, it claimed to be based on accurate knowledge of Paine's last years. These hostile attacks have been repeated without serious scrutiny in many later biographies of Paine, even by those writers generally sympathetic to

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<sup>69</sup> Cheetham, *Life of Thomas Paine*, 313-14.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 276-77, 297-98, 305-8. One American pamphleteer had already implied that Paine had wished he had never written *The age of reason*. See *The recantation; being an anticipated valedictory address, of Thomas Paine, to the French Directory* (New York, 1797). As late as 17 August 1816, *The Times* newspaper printed a report claiming that Paine had confessed to a young woman shortly before his death that he wished he had never written *The age of reason* and that he had been 'the agent of the devil' when he did so.

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Paine.<sup>73</sup> When William Cobbett, having turned radical himself, sought to resurrect Paine's reputation a decade or so after the latter's death, his efforts foundered on the widespread dislike of Paine's personal character as well as his personal principles.<sup>74</sup> It took many more decades for both to recover.

### Legal efforts to punish Paine and his printers

It was the appearance of part two of *Rights of man*, which proved so attractive to the lower orders, that did much to provoke the British government into preventing the circulation of such dangerously radical publications. Already alarmed by the revolutionary events in France and the growth of a radical movement at home, the government determined to use all legal means to prevent Paine's ideas circulating freely across the country.<sup>75</sup> On 21 May 1792 a Royal Proclamation was issued against wicked and seditious writings and, on the same day, Paine was summoned to appear in court in June to answer a charge of seditious libel. On 18 June, Paine was accused of being 'a wicked, malicious, and ill-disposed person, and being greatly disaffected to our ... King, and to the happy constitution and government of this kingdom' as a result of publishing part two of the *Rights of man*.<sup>76</sup> His trial was set for 18 December. In September, Paine escaped to France, narrowly avoiding capture, and leaving behind a printed justification of his actions. In his

<sup>73</sup> The personal and political reasons for attacks on Paine made in his last years and the unreliability of Cheetham's account has, however, been made the subject of a recent article published in France. See Marc Belissa, 'La Légende grise des dernières années de Thomas Paine en Amérique, 1802-1809', *Annales Historiques de la Révolution Française*, 2 (2010), 133-72.

<sup>74</sup> Ian Dyck, 'Debts and Liabilities: William Cobbett and Thomas Paine', in *Citizen of the world: essays on Thomas Paine*, ed. Ian Dyck (New York, 1988), 86-103.

<sup>75</sup> On the government's use of the courts to silence radical critics, see John Barrell, *Imagining the King's death: figurative treason, fantasies of regicide 1793-1796* (Oxford, 2000); Clive Emsley, 'Repression, "Terror" and the Rule of Law in England during the decade of the French Revolution', *English Historical Review*, 100 (1985), 801-25; and Michael Lobban, 'Treason, Sedition and the Radical Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', *Liverpool Law Review*, 22 (2000), 205-34.

<sup>76</sup> Moncure D Conway, *The life of Thomas Paine* (2 vols., 1892, new edn., New York, 1983), 1: 342.

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absence his trial went ahead before a special jury selected for its likely political reliability. The prosecutor, the Attorney General, Sir Archibald Macdonald, advised the jury that cheap editions of part two of *Rights of man* had been ‘thrust into the hands of all persons, of all ages, sexes, and conditions: they were even wrapped up with sweetmeats for children’. He went on to claim that this work ‘was written with a view to vilify, degrade, and to bring into abhorrence and contempt all the establishments of this country in all the departments of state’.<sup>77</sup> Paine was defended by Thomas Erskine, the most distinguished and liberal defence lawyer of the day.<sup>78</sup> Although his task was hopeless, given the political climate and the composition of the jury, Erskine mounted a brilliant defence. He legitimately complained that the prosecution had deliberately brought before the jury a letter supposedly by Paine, but not proved to be so and not part of the official indictment, that was dismissive of the prosecution, highly critical of the king, and supportive of developments in France. He insisted on the great importance of the freedom of the press and maintained that Paine should not be convicted for his political opinions, but only if the prosecution could prove that his book had promoted insurrection. Paine, in Erskine’s opinion, had criticized what he regarded as bad laws and corrupt institutions, but he had not urged or inspired any violent resistance to them.<sup>79</sup> Modern readers are likely to be impressed by the quality of Erskine’s speech, but, at the time, when the Attorney General rose to reply to him, the foreman of the jury rose to state that there was no need for him to do so because the jury was satisfied as to Paine’s guilt. The jury did not spend any time at all discussing their verdict. Paine was convicted and declared an outlaw. Erskine was cheered by a large crowd outside the court and his carriage was dragged through the streets as if in triumph.

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<sup>77</sup> *The trial at large of Thomas Paine, for a libel, in the second part of Rights of man* (London, 1792), 4. The trial can also be found in *A complete collection of state trials*, ed. William Cobbett, T B Howell and T J Howell (33 vols., London, 1809-1826), 22: 357-472. Hereafter, *State trials*.

<sup>78</sup> On Erskine’s role in this trial, see Lloyd Paul Stryker, *For the defense: a life of Thomas Erskine, the most celebrated advocate and the most enlightened liberal of his times, 1750-1823* (Garden City, NY, 1947), 210-26.

<sup>79</sup> Erskine’s speech was published as a separate pamphlet: *The celebrated speech of the Hon. T. Erskine, in support of the liberty of the press* (Edinburgh, 1793).

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The British authorities could do nothing to inflict actual punishment on Paine, since he never again returned to Britain, but determined efforts were made to punish those radicals who were brave enough to sell or distribute Paine's works. Several printers in the provinces, whose trial records have not survived, were convicted and imprisoned.<sup>80</sup> On 10 December 1792, Thomas Spence a leading radical author and bookseller, was arrested at the instigation of John Reeves, the founder of a nationwide loyalist movement, for selling the second part of *Rights of man*, before that publication had been condemned in a court of law. Spence was imprisoned, threatened, and ill treated, but then released without being brought to trial or convicted of any offence. He informed the public of the injustice of these proceedings.<sup>81</sup> This did not prevent him being arrested and acquitted twice more in 1793. Another leading radical author, printer, and bookseller, Daniel Isaac Eaton,<sup>82</sup> underwent a dramatic trial before a special jury at the Old Bailey in London on 3 June 1793 on a charge of publishing the second part of Paine's *Rights of man*.<sup>83</sup> The prosecution accused him of being a wicked, malicious, seditious, and ill-disposed person greatly disaffected to the king, the constitution and government as shown by the fact that he had sold a cheap edition of *Rights of man* that insulted the king and encouraged popular insurrection. Eaton's counsel, Felix Vaughan, a radical himself, but new to the law, mounted a brilliant defence. He was assisted by the fact that Eaton had excised from his publication of *Rights of man* those sections specifically condemned in Paine's trial. He himself stressed the importance of the freedom of the press as the great bulwark of British liberty and insisted that Paine's *Rights of man* was a speculative work of philosophical enquiry that criticized absolute but not any constitutional

<sup>80</sup> See Lloyd Paul Stryker, *For the defense*, 228.

<sup>81</sup> *The case of Thomas Spence ... who was committed to Clerkenwell Prison, ... for selling the second part of Paine's Rights of man* (London, 1793).

<sup>82</sup> On Eaton, see Michael T Davies, 'Daniel Isaac Eaton' in *British reform writers, 1789-1832*, ed. Gary Kelly and E Applegate, which is volume 158 of the *Dictionary of literary biography* (Detroit, 1996), 94-102.

<sup>83</sup> Eaton later published his own account of this trial: *The proceedings on the trial of Daniel Isaac Eaton, upon an indictment for selling a supposed libel, 'the second part of the Rights of Man, combining principle and practice' by Thomas Paine* (London, 1793?). The trial can also be found in *State trials*, 22: 753-84.

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monarchy. With great daring, he went on to assert that there was no evidence that Paine's work had incited any insurrection, whereas loyalists, who were supposed to be supporters of the constitution, had engaged in major riots in Manchester and Birmingham. The judge, in his summing up, advised the jury that the freedom of the press did not extend to works that positively and decidedly injured mankind and that they should consider whether *Rights of man* was aimed at the lowest orders of people, who lacked the education required to appreciate that it was a speculative work and might hence be misled by it to demand radical changes. Despite this strong lead, the jury brought in a verdict of 'guilty of publishing, but not with criminal intention'.<sup>84</sup> The judge was nonplussed by this verdict and tried to press the jury to bring in a verdict of guilty or not guilty. The jury persisted in its decision and Felix Vaughan pressed for the immediate release of his client. The judge eventually released Eaton on bail the next day, but insisted that the decision of the jury should be put to the twelve judges of appeal during the next law term.

Less than two weeks later, on 10 July 1793, Eaton was again prosecuted before another special jury at the court of King's Bench for having sold a copy of Paine's *A letter addressed to the addressers on the late proclamation* to an informer sent by the loyalist lord mayor of London deliberately to entrap him. This work, which Paine had left to be printed when he fled to France, attacked those loyalists who sought to make the Royal Proclamation against seditious pamphlets effective by instituting criminal proceedings against radical authors, printers, and booksellers. In even blunter terms, Paine insisted that the British constitution benefited that small number of Britons who were courtiers, placemen, pensioners, borough-mongers, and leaders of political parties, but did not serve the interests of the other ninety-nine per cent of the British people. Fortunately, in his view, the mass of the people was becoming increasingly aware of the expensive and corrupt abuses of the British political system. He now urged them to follow the example of the Americans and the French and produce a proper written constitution

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<sup>84</sup> *The proceedings on the trial of Daniel Isaac Eaton*, 42.

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and a reformed system of government. The new Attorney General, John Scott, charged Eaton once more with being a wicked, malicious, seditious and ill-disposed person who sold Paine's *Letter* in order to stir up popular discontent and to alienate the affections of the king's subjects.<sup>85</sup> In his address to the jury, Scott made several references to Paine's *Rights of man*, which was not a part of the indictment against Eaton, but, as a condemned publication, it might be used to prejudice the jury against him. Felix Vaughan, who again defended Eaton, not only defended the liberty of the press in general terms, but also took the brave and potentially dangerous decision to defend the main arguments advanced in Paine's *Rights of man* and his *Letter*. He maintained that the present political system did indeed benefit the few at the expense of the many, that the electoral system was grossly flawed with few men having the right to vote, and that the people had summoned a national convention in 1688 to secure the Glorious Revolution, an action that was now widely applauded. Despite all that could be said in justification of Paine's works, Vaughan argued, the government was repeatedly prosecuting those who sold his publications and continually used his name to oppress the poor who were firmly attached to their rights and the cause of liberty. In a part of his address to the jury that must have shocked all loyalists, he maintained that the French were justified in overthrowing their former political system. Of Paine, he robustly declared:

I am persuaded that there must exist, in the hearts of many people, a lurking affection for this man, arising from the reaction of the prosecution, which his name has undergone. Is it then wise, to be eternally prosecuting this book, and every one, who happens, in an unguarded moment, to sell it. ... Good God! Is everything with the name of Thomas Paine to be libellous and criminal? When he tells you, that our country, should be the world, and our religion to do good, I should be glad to know whether that and other opinions of the same kind are criminal.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> For this trial, see *State trials*, 22: 785-822; and Eaton's own publication, *The trial of Daniel Isaac Eaton, before Lloyd Lord Kenyon and a special jury, ... for selling a supposed libel, A letter addressed to the addressers by Thomas Paine* (London, 1793).

<sup>86</sup> *State trials*, 22: 807-8; and *The trial of Daniel Isaac Eaton*, 39-40.

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Vaughan's risky strategy proved effective. To the surprise of the judge, yet another special jury refused to pronounce a clear verdict of guilty or not guilty in a case involving Eaton. The jury withdrew for two hours and twenty minutes, an unusual length of time, and then produced a verdict of guilty of publishing only.<sup>87</sup> Judge Kenyon insisted that this was not a proper verdict and urged the jury to re-consider. The jury retired for another forty minutes, but brought in the same inconclusive verdict, which the judge reluctantly recorded.

The courts now had two unsatisfactory verdicts in cases against Eaton for publishing the works of Paine. For some time it looked as if these cases would go to appeal, but the government thought better of it. Eaton remained on bail for the rest of his life. He continued to publish radical works, including books by Paine, was driven in 1797 into exile in America for some years, and continually risked prosecution and imprisonment. As late as 1812 he was prosecuted for publishing Paine's *The age of reason: part the third*, 'a most blasphemous and impious libel' that had not appeared in Paine's lifetime. Eaton was convicted and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment in Newgate prison and to stand for two hours in the pillory. He again published an account of his own trial.<sup>88</sup> When he stood in the pillory, he was cheered by thousands of spectators. The government had the power to punish him severely, but the public was no longer so alarmed by radical ideas.<sup>89</sup>

On 30 August 1793 the Scottish radical, Thomas Muir, was prosecuted in Edinburgh for making seditious speeches and encouraging several people to buy various seditious works, especially Paine's *Rights of man*.<sup>90</sup> The main burden of the prosecution was to prove that Muir had wickedly and feloniously exhorted people to buy and peruse *Rights of man*, which was described as 'a most wicked and seditious publication calculated to vilify the Constitution of this country, to produce a spirit of insurrection

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<sup>87</sup> *State trials*, 22: 822; and *The trial of Daniel Isaac Eaton*, 65.

<sup>88</sup> *Trial of Mr. Daniel Isaac Eaton, for publishing the third and last part of Paine's Age of reason* (London, 1812).

<sup>89</sup> Michael T Davies, 'Daniel Isaac Eaton' in *British reform writers, 1789-1832*, ed. Kelly and Applegate, 94-102.

<sup>90</sup> For this trial, see *An account of the trial of Thomas Muir* (Edinburgh, 1793); and Christina Bewley, *Muir of Huntershill* (Oxford, 1981), 68-84.

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among the people, and to stir them up to acts of outrage and opposition to the Established Government'.<sup>91</sup> Much was made by the prosecution of the fact that Muir had encouraged humble men, such as a weaver and a hairdresser, to read Paine and he had even sent out a female domestic servant to purchase copies and she herself had read some of the text. Speaking in his own defence, Muir correctly argued that Paine's *Rights of man* had never been condemned in a court of law in Scotland and that Scotland still maintained a different legal system from that of England.<sup>92</sup> The prosecution brushed this aside.<sup>93</sup> Muir, facing hostile judges and a jury selected from prominent loyalists in the city, was found guilty and was given the very harsh sentence of fourteen years transportation to Botany Bay.

The British government prosecuted about a dozen men for trying to sell copies of the second part of Paine's *Rights of man*. The authorities also endeavoured to prevent the distribution of the second part of Paine's *The age of reason*. On 28 June 1797, Thomas Williams, who had been a publisher for the radical London Corresponding Society, was prosecuted on a charge of blasphemy at the court of King's Bench in London for publishing Paine's *The age of reason*. What made the trial particularly noteworthy was that the prosecution was led by Thomas Erskine, the celebrated lawyer who had previously won so much credit for defending Thomas Paine in December 1792 as well as several of the leading radicals charged with treason in 1794. Erskine's charge to the jury showed that he was somewhat embarrassed to be prosecuting when he had so often argued in defence of the liberty of the press, but he tried to argue that the case was different when there was a threat to the religious beliefs and morals of the people.<sup>94</sup> He informed the jury that he had read *The age of reason* 'with astonishment and disgust' and he had concluded that it:

presents no arguments to the wise and enlightened. On the

<sup>91</sup> *An Account of the trial of Thomas Muir*, 6.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>94</sup> For the trial, see *The speeches of the Hon. Thomas Erskine, ... on the Trial of the King versus Thomas Williams, for publishing The age of reason, written by Thomas Paine* (London, 1797); and Lloyd Paul Stryker, *For the defense*, 356-68.

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contrary, it treats the faith and opinions of the wisest with the most shocking contempt, and stirs up men, without the advantages of learning, or sober thinking, to a total disbelief of everything hitherto held sacred; and consequently to a rejection of all the laws and ordinances of the state, which stands only upon the assumption of their truth.<sup>95</sup>

Stewart Kyd, who had been a co-defendant in the treason trials of 1794, led for the defence.<sup>96</sup> He attempted to read passages from the Bible and passages from *The age of reason* in order to demonstrate that some of Paine's conclusions in the latter were supported by evidence taken from the former. The judge, alarmed at the jury listening to such passages, asked the select jury whether it wished to hear such evidence that might appear blasphemous. The jury decided that it did not wish to hear this evidence and the defence counsel was effectively hamstrung by this decision. In summing up, moreover, the judge criticized the defence for claiming that the prosecution was 'scandalous' and praised the society of clergymen and laymen that had encouraged this prosecution because it feared that the country might be overrun with 'profligacy and wickedness' and with a 'torrent of vice and immorality'.<sup>97</sup> He concluded by observing of Paine's nefarious publication: 'Unless it was for the most malignant purposes, I cannot conceive how it was published. It is however for you to judge of it, and to do justice between the public and the defendant.'<sup>98</sup> The jury did not even bother to retire to consider the case, but instantly declared Williams guilty.

<sup>95</sup> *The speeches of the Hon. Thomas Erskine*, 4, 17.

<sup>96</sup> Kyd had been an active member of the Society for Constitutional Information. He was arrested on a charge of treason and imprisoned in the Tower in 1794, but the government decided not to proceed with his prosecution after Thomas Hardy and John Horne Tooke had been found not guilty. See Alan Wharam, *The treason trials, 1794* (London and Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992).

<sup>97</sup> The prosecution was provoked by protests from members of the Proclamation Society, which had been established in 1787 in response to a Royal Proclamation of 1 June of that year against the spread of vice and immorality. It was subsequently absorbed into the Society for the Suppression of Vice in 1803. See M J D Roberts, *Making English morals: voluntary association and moral reform in England, 1787-1886* (Cambridge, 2004), 53-4.

<sup>98</sup> *The speeches of the Hon. Thomas Erskine*, 21.

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This travesty of a trial produced a storm of protest. Thomas Paine himself immediately published in Paris, at his own expense, *A letter to the Honourable Thomas Erskine on the prosecution of Thomas Williams, for publishing The age of reason*. He expressed surprise that Erskine had agreed to act for the prosecution in a case so clearly involving the freedom of the press and he attacked the conduct of the judge. He also repeated his view that there was no proof that the Bible was the Word of God and he protested that ‘of all the tyrannies that afflict mankind tyranny in religion is the worst’.<sup>99</sup> More effective still was the blistering attack launched on Erskine by John Martin, the solicitor for the defence. He accused Erskine of acting inconsistently and hypocritically in previously defending Paine and the liberty of the press and now supporting an unjust trial in this case. By not allowing the reading of passages in the Bible alongside the arguments advanced in *The age of reason*, the judge, with Erskine’s agreement, had not allowed the defence to demonstrate that Paine’s work had reached reasonable conclusions based on the contents of the Bible. He went on to protest at the role of the judge: ‘A hot tempered impetuous and negligent judge is a greater curse to a country than a corrupt judge.’<sup>100</sup> Williams was convicted, but was not sentenced for nearly seven months, although he was imprisoned while he waited for his sentence. Meanwhile, to his great credit, Erskine had become increasingly embarrassed by his role in the trial. He offered an extenuating speech pressing for a lenient sentence. When those who had employed him to prosecute the case refused to support his plea for mercy, Erskine returned his fee and refused to represent them any further. This was to no avail as far as Williams was concerned. He was eventually sentenced on 5 February 1798 to hard labour for a year and he was then

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<sup>99</sup> Paine, *A letter to the Honourable Thomas Erskine*, 5. A brief rejoinder to Paine that concentrated on his deistical views was produced by John Marsom, *Falshood detected: being animadversions on Mr Paine’s letter to the Honourable Thomas Erskine, on the trial of Thomas Williams, for publishing ‘The Age of Reason’* (London, 1798).

<sup>100</sup> *A letter to the Hon. Thomas Erskine, with a postscript to the Right Hon. Lord Kenyon, upon their conduct at the trial of Thomas Williams for publishing Paine’s Age of reason* (London, 1797), 36.

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required to give security, in his own recognizance of the sum of one thousand pounds, for his good behaviour for the rest of his life.<sup>101</sup>

**The Paine Burnings of 1792-93**

The British government and its numerous loyalist allies sought to punish those who printed, sold, and distributed Paine's works, but Paine himself had escaped their clutches. Renewed efforts were therefore made to vilify Paine's character so that he might be publicly humiliated and ritually punished as if he had remained in the power of his enemies in Britain. One method of treating those widely held to be traitors, but beyond the reach of legal punishment, was to burn them in effigy in elaborate ceremonies that engaged all social classes from the governing elite to the propertyless poor. This had been done in the past with Guy Fawkes, and various Popes and Jacobites. In the winter of 1792-93 effigies of Thomas Paine were ritually humiliated and burned in several hundred towns and villages (perhaps in more than five hundred in all) across the whole country. This was an unprecedented display of popular hatred for an individual and it may have involved about half a million people.<sup>102</sup> In many of these ceremonies an elaborate effigy was constructed, identified by materials linking Paine to his former occupations as a staymaker and an excise officer. The effigy often wore a cap of liberty on its head and carried stays in one hand and a copy of *Rights of man* in the other.<sup>103</sup> At Felton, in County Durham, a notice was pinned to the effigy's breast stating: 'Tom Paine, a sower of sedition, and libeller of our happy and envied constitution – Britons beware of his democratic principles, and avoid his merited fate.' No opportunity was lost to humiliate and ridicule this effigy as it was paraded around the town or village, often accompanied by hundreds and sometimes by thousands of spectators. Guns were often fired, church bells rung, and

<sup>101</sup> Lloyd Paul Stryker, *For the defense*, 366-68.

<sup>102</sup> There are two excellent studies of the Paine burnings: Nicholas Rogers, 'Burning Tom Paine: Loyalism and Counter-Revolution in Britain, 1792-1793', *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 32 (1999), 139-71; and Frank O'Gorman, 'The Paine Burnings of 1792-1793', *Past and Present*, 193 (2006), 111-55.

<sup>103</sup> *Newcastle Advertiser*, no. 221, 5 January 1793.

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fireworks set off. Often bands played such tunes as *God Save the King* and *Rule Britannia*, the crowds sang, and much liquor was consumed. The effigy of Paine was often subjected to a parody of a trial, was convicted and sentenced, and was allowed to make a last dying speech confessing itself guilty of republicanism, atheism, treason, immorality, criminality, etc. It was then often hanged from a high scaffold, so that the entire crowd could witness the death sentence being carried out. It was sometimes put on a bonfire and its remains dragged or kicked about the streets.<sup>104</sup>

There seems no doubt that these activities were officially sponsored by the local authorities and they seem often to have been planned by loyalist associations then at their greatest strength. Every effort was made to give the appearance of official sanction to the Paine burnings and to involve both the elite and more humble people. Food, drink, music, and materials for the trial and execution of the effigy, were usually provided by men of property, whose efforts were undoubtedly made in order to enlist mass participation. The burnings were used to demonstrate popular loyalty to the king, constitution, and government, and also to intimidate any local radicals. In some places a few radicals expressed opposition to these proceedings, but there seems little doubt that very large numbers of people freely joined in these ritual executions of Paine. Although Paine's works had been widely distributed across the country, in many small towns and villages the inhabitants would only have known what they were told about him and his writings. Loyalist magistrates, parsons, landlords, and employers had repeatedly informed them, that Paine was a traitor, a violent revolutionary and a threat to church and state. Since he had proved himself a coward by fleeing from justice and had gone to

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<sup>104</sup> There is a detailed account of the burning of Paine's effigy at Waltham Abbey, Essex, in *The Times* for 13 December 1792. Accounts of other Paine burnings can also be read in *The Times* for 8 and 12 December 1792 and 2 and 5 January 1793. *The Times* is available on-line. There is a print in the British Library, *The end of Pain* (Jan. 1793?) showing an effigy of Paine hanging from a scaffold, and a rare print, *Tom Pains effegy [sic] or the rights of a seditious poltroon* (Jan. 1793), showing Paine being boiled in a cauldron, while Edmund Burke, William Pitt and Henry Dundas dance around the fire.

*Thomas Paine and his British Critics*

revolutionary France, a country that was at war with Britain from February 1793, it was widely accepted that Paine's effigy at least deserved to be subjected to ritual humiliation and punishment. The Paine burnings were seen as a justified demonstration of hostility to a man who threatened political stability and social order and who was now associated closely with the French Revolution. The participants were demonstrating their loyalty to the British monarch, constitution, and government when they all seemed under serious threat from French revolutionaries abroad and political radicals at home. Paine was seen as the embodiment and epitome of these threats.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although this article has examined the ideas and actions of Paine's enemies who greatly disapproved of his publications, it should have become clear that this opposition actually tells us a great deal about his achievements and about the success of his publications. This powerful reaction against him would never have developed if his writings had not advanced arguments that really frightened the defenders of the old regimes in church and state. If his arguments had not been seen as really dangerous threats to the elite and to their property, authority, and status, and their political, judicial, and religious institutions, then these quite vicious attempts to counter Paine not so much by rational arguments as by unbalanced rejoinders, malicious biographies, unfair legal proceedings, and public humiliations would not have been necessary or so strongly endorsed. The unpleasant reaction of Paine's enemies also offers support for the argument that his writings were not only very widely distributed, but that they had a powerful impact on many ordinary citizens. His ideas did open the eyes of many among the lower orders to the weaknesses and abuses of the prevailing social and political order and to the threats to their own lives and liberties. Despite their frequent comments about Paine's faulty logic and poor grammar, his enemies were actually all too aware that these supposed flaws did not undermine Paine's case, but often strengthened it. Paine clearly was writing in a style that reached a mass readership better than any of his opponents. An examination of the attacks on Paine, particularly in Britain in the 1790s,

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is also supporting evidence for the extent to which British politics and British society was polarized by what has been called the Burke-Paine debate. The decision of the authorities to prosecute those who tried to disseminate Paine's ideas showed the limits to British liberties in a revolutionary age. These trials show the government abusing its legal powers, but they also show how brave radicals and some honest jurymen could occasionally prevent the government going too far in attempting to restrict the freedom of the press. The trials of Paine and of those who printed, disseminated, or sold his works may have frightened many radicals, but they also proved counter-productive to some extent in that they made Paine's works even better known and they alienated the more courageous reformers from the government. Finally, despite everything that could be thrown at Paine and his supporters, his arguments lived on, his works remained in print, and he was seen as a martyr for the cause of liberty who would inspire future generations of reformers.

We have already seen that Daniel Isaac Eaton was still ready to risk imprisonment in 1812 for publishing Part Three of *The age of reason*, a work that Paine had failed to publish in his lifetime. Richard Carlile, a brave radical and notorious freethinker in the early nineteenth century, named his son after Paine and began a serious study of Paine's works from 1817. He began republishing Paine's works in both serial form and as cheap pamphlets. He was prosecuted for his efforts in 1819, but showed his contempt for his prosecutors by reading *The age of reason* to the jury during his trial. Sentenced to six years in prison, he still dared to publish a favourable *Life of Thomas Paine* in 1820. The year before William Thomas Sherwin, who had already begun re-publishing Paine's works, and Thomas 'Clio' Rickman had both produced sympathetic lives of Paine. William Cobbett, a fierce critic of Paine in the 1790s, later became an admirer. He went over to New York in 1817, dug up Paine's bones, and brought them back to Britain in 1819, with the idea of erecting a suitable memorial to him. He did not succeed and Paine's bones were subsequently lost, but Paine's reputation gradually recovered over the nineteenth century. It was long after his death, however, before his writings and his activities were commemorated with busts, statues and societies erected in his honour and with a vast number of admiring and

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sympathetic studies of his life and his publications. His British critics certainly failed to silence him, even in the 1790s, despite their most determined efforts, but they had severely damaged his reputation for many decades. In the United States, his life and ideas were celebrated by small groups of radicals throughout much of the nineteenth century, although his religious opinions continued to receive widespread hostile criticism.<sup>105</sup> Moncure Conway did much to restore his reputation in America when he published a major sympathetic and admiring biography of Paine in 1892, but it was not until the twentieth century that Paine received favourable scholarly treatment in Britain.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Harvey J Kaye, *Thomas Paine and the promise of America*, 123-80.

<sup>106</sup> Edward Royle, 'The Reception of Thomas Paine', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 52 (1987), 14-20.

## ILLUSTRATIONS

These illustrations are reproduced as the result of a generous grant awarded to Professor Harry Dickinson by The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland and following the permission of the owners of the original prints as noted below.

*The repeal of the Test Act: A vision*, by James Sayers, 16 Feb. 1790. This is the first satirical print showing Paine as an important figure. It is a very complicated design that satirizes the supporters of the campaign to repeal the Test Act in 1790. The pulpit is occupied by Joseph Priestley, Richard Price and Theophilus Lindsey, who are all propagating radical political and religious views. In the centre, Price is repeating some of the pro-French Revolution arguments of his famous recently published sermon, *On the Love of our Country*. Among the congregation are Charles James Fox, Abraham Rees, Andrew Kippis, Margaret Nicholson, Lord Stanhope, and a bishop (possibly Richard Watson), a soldier and a protesting ruffian. The central figure, standing at floor level below the pulpit and dressed as an excise officer (with an inkwell in his lapel), is Tom Paine. BM Satires 7628. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

*Contrasted opinions of Paine's pamphlet*, 26 May 1791, attributed to Frederick George Byron. It depicts eight figures in two rows reading the first volume of Paine's *Rights of man*. Each gestures dramatically, either praising or denouncing Paine's work. The eight figures, from top left to bottom right are Edmund Burke, Charles James Fox, George III, Charles Jenkinson, Queen Charlotte, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Pitt, and Richard Sheridan. Each figure quotes directly from Paine's text and makes a personal observation on this quotation as follows: Burke, 'If ever I read such an infernal book damn me! Here's an insolent fellow for you'; Fox, 'This is an appeal to common sense, not prose run mad, like Burke's rhapsodical Reflections!'; George III, 'I say, Jenky, this Paine's book is all abuse! All abuse! flights of madness! flights of madness!'; Jenkinson, 'This is something like reason! This comes home to Men's business and bosoms!'; Queen Charlotte, 'This is the greatest lie that ever was told; indeed the whole book is a compound of falshoods'; Wollstonecraft, 'These are something like true touches of genius!'; Pitt, 'Here's a damn'd, murderous Republican for you! Treats my titles as he would childrens toys!'; and Sheridan, 'This is the true language of a friend to the liberties of mankind.' This print appeared before many pamphlet responses to Paine's pamphlet had been published. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

### Illustrations

*The Rights of Man, or Tommy Paine the little American Taylor taking the measure of the crown for a pair of Revolution Breeches*, by James Gillray, 23 May 1791. Paine is depicted as a ragged tailor proving himself too ambitious in measuring the crown. He had once been apprenticed as a stays or corset maker. The print is dedicated to the Jacobin clubs of France and England. Paine has a tricolour rosette in his hat. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

*Mad Tom or the Man of Rights*, by ‘Hannibal Scratch’, published by W. Locke, 1 September 1791. Paine sits at a writing desk, pen in hand, his right arm and left leg raised in excitement as he pens another radical tract. He sits on a paper inscribed ‘Rights of Man’. The paper on his desk refers to ‘Riots treasons Plots conspiracies civil war -Burk’. At his feet is a crown and a broken sceptre, and a paper inscribed ‘Price Priest[ley] Tow[ers]’. BM Satires 7900. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

*A Democrat*, a rare anonymous print published on 2 September by Samuel W. Fores of Piccadilly (who was Isaac Cruikshank’s publisher/print seller) that is not held by or listed in the catalogues of the major holders of satirical prints. It depicts a fashionably dressed man wearing a striped outfit, with an angry or bewildered expression. The large papers sticking out of his left pocket are labelled ‘Paine’ and ‘Rights of Man’. He has a large tricolour rosette in his hat and in the background are a human head and a noose on a lantern, which also appears to have a bonnet rouge as a cover. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

*Mad Tom’s first political essay on the Rights of Man*, by Isaac Cruikshank, 14 May 1792. Paine, as a bare-legged sansculotte, is shown leading Richard Sheridan and Samuel Whitbread in planning to set fire to the House of Commons, rather as Guy Fawkes had planned to do in 1605. A burning pair of breeches almost caused such a fire accidentally on 9 May 1792. Paine declares, ‘Now for a Deed that shall outdo my Pen’. Sheridan exclaims, ‘Ca ira, Ca ira, Ca ira, that’s your sort’. Whitbread, with an expression of terror, says, ‘I am Cursedly afraid, we shall kindle such a flame as will bury us in ruins’. BM Satires 8087. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

“*Hear and improve*”, he *pertly* cries; “*I come to make all nations wise*”. In this anonymous print (c.1792) Paine, mocked here as a citizen of the world, is shown trying to educate monkeys (the common people) about their political rights. He is ragged and carries a pair of stays or corsets under his left arm. This was produced by W Grainger and may have been used on a title-page of a pamphlet. BM Satires 8295. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

### Illustrations

*Constitutional Danger, or, a sure way to stop the progress of Pain*, Anon., 1792. This print shows Pitt using a royal cannon (a reference to the Royal Proclamation against seditious writings of 21 May 1792) to decapitate Paine and other radicals and narrowly miss Charles James Fox. George III is depicted as the cannon, with wheels depicting Charles I and James II, symbols of excessive and arbitrary royal power. Pitt's match is in the form of the Prince of Wales's feathers. Gillray may be ambivalent in this print about the use or misuse of the royal prerogative to silence political critics. Is the constitution in danger from Pitt and the king or from Fox, Paine and other radicals? This print is not listed in the printed catalogue of the BM's Political and Social Satires, but it is on the BM's website. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

*Tom Paine's Nightly Pest*, by James Gillray, 10 December 1792 (this is a more detailed and reversed version of a very similar print by Gillray that appeared on 26 November). In this later print Paine, wearing a French cap of liberty labelled 'Libertas', is having a nightmare at the prospect of condign punishment for his seditious writings. He lies on a straw bed in a garret, the profiles of Fox and Priestley (his guardian angels) are painted on his bedhead. He has been reading a book entitled, *The rights of farthing candles* and a copy of *Common sense* is in his coat pocket. Three judges, without faces, are reading out the long lists of punishments facing Paine, the charges against him, and his own pleas. A speech bubble above the middle judge declares, 'Know villain, when such paltry slaves presume to mix in treason, if the plot succeeds they're thrown, neglected by – but if it fails they're sure to die like dogs! as you shall do. Above the judges are instruments of punishment and the scales of justice. A scroll above these states, 'The Scourge inexorable, and the tort'ring hour awaits thee!'. An agent of the devil is escaping through the open window, dropping a fiddle and the music of *Ca ira*, the French revolutionary song. A rat on a bedside table sits on a paper on 'The Golden Age or The Age of Equalizing the Property of Princes & Pikemen'. The blue curtains of the bedroom are decorated with the French fleurs de lys. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

*Sedition, levelling and Plundering*, by Isaac Cruikshank, 18 Dec. 1792. This print was also published as *The Friends of the People*. Paine on the right, Priestley on the left, with an agent of the devil between them, are shown, surrounded by weapons and gunpowder, plotting violent insurrection. BM Satires 8131A. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

*Loyalty against Levelling*, by James Sayers, 15 December 1792. Paine assists a group of English rioters to pull down an inn, *The King's Arms*, but, in doing so, he risks his own neck in personally trying to saw off the inn sign, while being threatened by armed loyalists standing below. He is encouraged by the example of French revolutionaries on

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the right, who have already pulled down a similar inn sign as well as having executed a nobleman and a monk. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

*Wha wants me*, by Isaac Cruikshank, 26 December 1792. A smirking Paine, dressed as an excise officer (his former profession), urges the use of violence in the service of liberty and equality. His face suggests that he is already being accused of being a heavy drinker. BM Satires 8146A. © The Trustees of the British Museum

*Fashion before Ease, or a good constitution sacrificed for a Fantastick Form*, by James Gillray, 2 Jan. 1793. Paine, again as a tailor or corset maker, tries to force a buxom Britannia (representing Britain and the British constitution) into an unsuitable shape. Paine wears a French *bonnet rouge* with a tricolour rosette. His facial features imply that he is a heavy drinker. Courtesy of The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University.

*Tom Paine's Effegy or the Rights of a Seditious Poltroon*, a rare anonymous print, dated 16 January 1793, possibly by John Nixon. Burke, Pitt and Dundas (who is dressed as a Highlander) dance around a burning effigy of Paine; a reference to the hundreds of Paine burnings across Britain in late 1792–early 1793. Paine has his *Rights of man* in one hand and a dagger in the other. He has a pair of stays or corsets under his right arm, tailor's scissors in a band labelled 'Justice' around his chest, and an excise officer's pen and ink well on his left lapel. The ground is strewn with papers indicating the radical aims of Paine that have caused such justified alarm. © The Board of Trinity College, Dublin.

*The End of Pain*, January 1793, an anonymous print portraying Paine being hanged in effigy, as was occurring on many occasions across the country at this time. Reproduced courtesy of the Library of Congress.

*The Death of Pain and P[riestle]y, both executed for high treason and murder*, a rare print, published in Birmingham, almost certainly in 1793, showing Paine and Priestley already on the scaffold and the Devil about to be hanged along with them. Reproduced by permission of Birmingham Archives & Heritage, Timmins Collection, Central Library.

*A Sure Cure for all Paines*, another rare print showing Paine being hanged in 1793. Courtesy of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

Paine is depicted as old, decrepit and a heavy drinker, in an engraving by James Godby published in London in 1805, from an American drawing of 1803. NPG D5455. © The National Portrait Gallery, London.

*The Age of Reason or the World turned topsy-turvy exemplified in Tom Paines works!!* ,

### *Illustrations*

by George Cruikshank, 16 October 1819. Richard Carlile (who published Paine's *Age of reason* and who named his son after Paine, helped by radicals wearing bonnets rouges, burns emblems of Church and State. In the centre is a tall crucifix which supports a placard declaring 'No Christianity!!!-No Religion!!!-No King!!!- No Lords!-No Commons!-No Laws! Nothing but Tom Paine & Universal Suffrage!!!' A radical on the right burns symbols of church and state, while infidels on the right are encouraged by a grinning devil. Other radicals encourage the violence. A large gibbet, across the centre of the design, is supported by two guillotines, one of which is surmounted by a crown and the other by the Prince of Wales's feathers and motto. Ministers and clergy dangle from the gibbet, which is itself flanked by a burning church on the left and a burning throne on the right. BM Satires 13274. © The trustees of the British Museum.

*The Political Champion turned Resurrection Man*, by Isaac Robert Cruikshank, December 1819. William Cobbett, a radical admirer of Paine, is satirised here for bringing Paine's skeleton back from America to be greeted ecstatically by a new generation of radicals in Britain. Paine's skeleton later went missing. BM Satires 13283. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

*Thomas Paine's Recantation*. This broadsheet, with a woodcut illustration, purports to prove that, shortly before he died, Paine regretted and withdrew the attacks he launched on Christianity in his *Age of Reason*. The illustration shows an aged, dying Paine sitting in a chair, attended by a nurse (Mary Roscoe) and receiving three well-dressed gentlemen (ministers of different Christian denominations). The narrative claims Paine recanted before these visitors and that this account was based on the later evidence of Mary Roscoe and Benedict Joseph Fenwick, Catholic Bishop of Boston, who was young Jesuit priest when he attended Paine in 1809. James Cheetham, who wrote his virulently hostile biography just after Paine's death, stated categorically that Paine refused to offer his recantation or to discuss his religious views with any minister of religion, In the later nineteenth century, Robert G Ingersoll, an American admirer of Paine, offered a substantial reward to anyone who could prove that Paine had recanted as claimed in this broadsheet. No one could and no serious biographer has accepted that he did recant. The claim made in this broadsheet lacks any reliable evidence to substantiate it. The Library of Congress dates this broadsheet in its catalogue at 1809, but it was certainly printed several decades later. It is reproduced by courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Illustrations

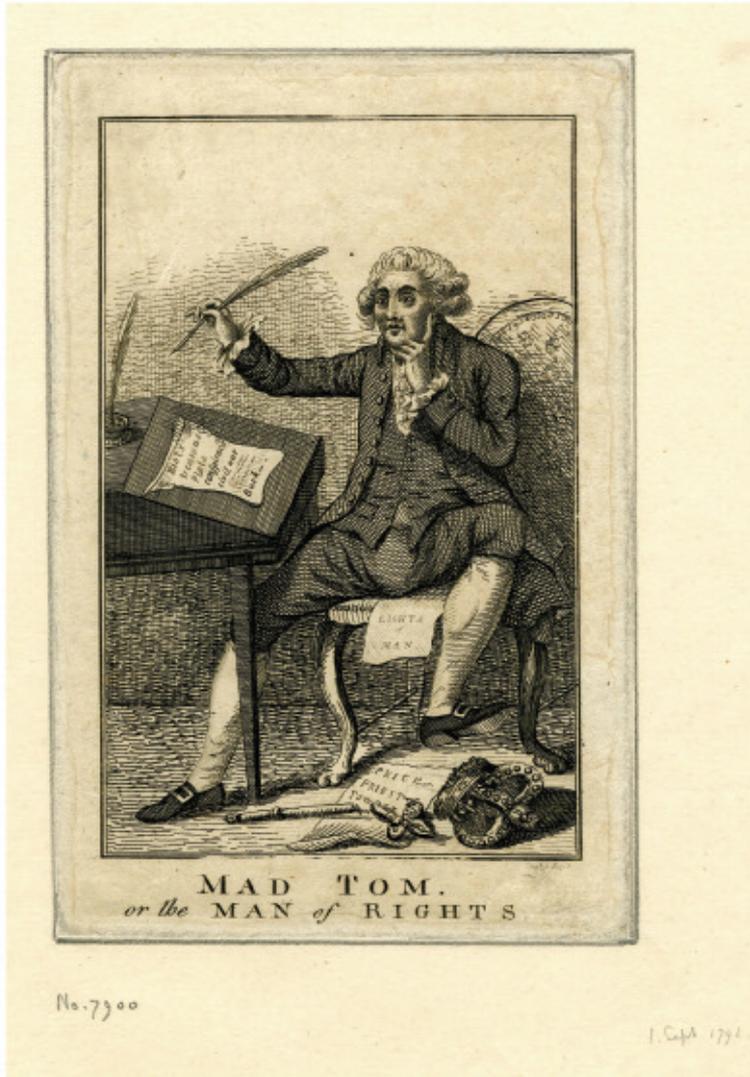


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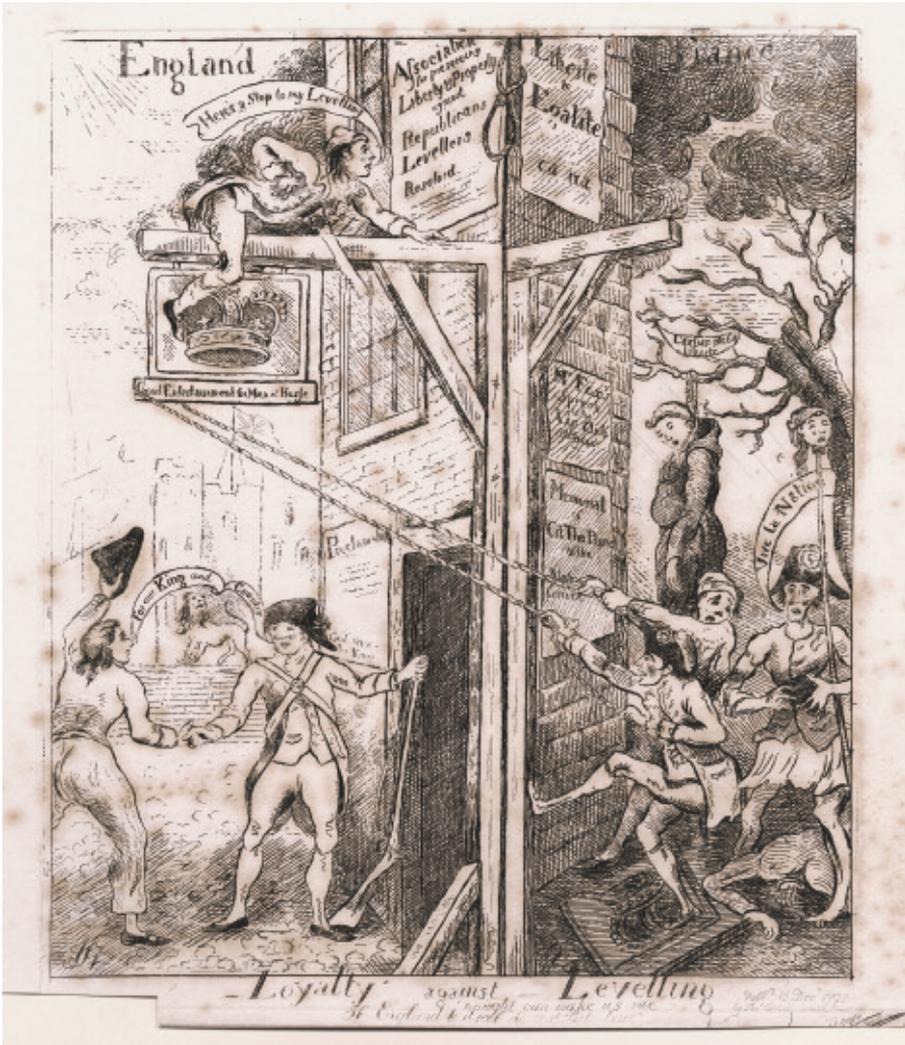
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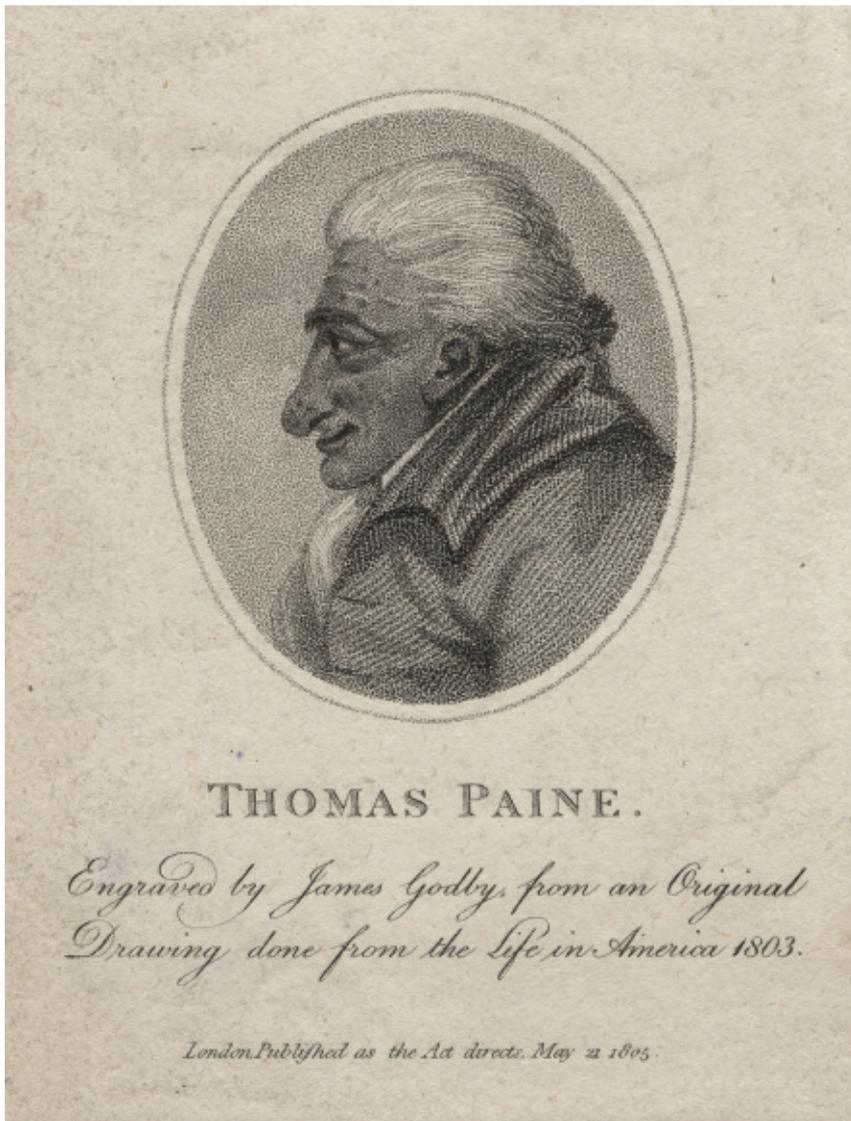




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## THIRTEEN UNCOLLECTED LETTERS OF RICHARD PRICE

*Rémy Duthille*

Students of Richard Price's thought are much indebted to the three-volume *Correspondence of Richard Price*, edited by D O Thomas and W Bernard Peach,<sup>1</sup> who have collected hundreds of letters hitherto scattered in many repositories across Europe and the United States. This article presents thirteen uncollected letters that I discovered in the course of my research. Those letters fill some gaps in the published correspondence and, with the notable exception of theology, they illustrate the variety of Price's interests, ranging from science and social reform to politics, with comments on the American constitution and parliamentary reform in Scotland and Ireland. More importantly, the letters shed new light on Price's international contacts and also reveal unknown aspects of his biography, especially his involvement with Irish and Scottish reformers in the early 1780s, his relationships with the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt and other correspondents in France, and the activities of the Revolution Society in the early stages of the French Revolution.

Six of the letters printed below are reproduced from manuscripts, one from the printed minutes of a committee of the French National Assembly, and the others were published in periodicals in the United States during Price's lifetime and in the early nineteenth century. Crucial to the discovery of letters in the American press was access to online databases of eighteenth-century sources. The full-text search engine across the *Early American Newspapers Series I* collection (Readex/NewsBank) has made it possible to locate new material in sources that would not normally come to mind. The wealth of results yielded by that database also suggests the

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<sup>1</sup> W Bernard Peach & D O Thomas ed., *The correspondence of Richard Price* (3 vols., Durham, NC & Cardiff, 1983-1994). I would like to thank all those who have helped me in the various stages of writing this article: Profs. H T Dickinson, Suzy Halimi, Moya Jones, Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, Andrew Varney, Dr. Will Slaughter and Jean-Baptiste Goyard, and the staff at Dartmouth College Library (Hanover, NH) and the City Archives of Mantes la Jolie (France), two institutions that have kindly allowed publication from their manuscript collections. My thanks also go to the editors of *Enlightenment and Dissent* for their most careful work and helpful comments.

*Thirteen Uncollected Letters of Richard Price*

extent to which Price's writings circulated in America, and more generally in the Atlantic world. For example, Price's letter to an Irish patriot in Dublin was published in a paper in Philadelphia, then reprinted by seven periodicals in South Carolina, New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts. Where the articles contain an introduction to the letter, those have been retained, because they testify to Price's celebrity in America, and indicate that his letters were used for political purposes in several states, in the course of debates on federal and state constitutions in the mid-1780s.

The most significant letters collected here may be conveniently divided into three sets, which will be presented in turn: letters to Irish and Scottish patriots (no. 3 and 5), letters to American correspondents (no. 2, 4, 7, 8), and correspondence with the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt (no. 9 to 13).

**Letters to Irish and Scottish patriots:**

The two letters to, respectively, the secretary of the Committee of Citizens of Edinburgh (no. 3), and the printer of the Dublin *Volunteer's Journal* (no.5), give evidence of Price's involvement in the movements for parliamentary reform in Scotland and Ireland. That Price corresponded with the Scottish burgh reformers was known to specialists of Scotland,<sup>2</sup> but not, to the best of my knowledge, to Price scholars. This may be explained by the historiography of Scottish reformism, which has essentially focused on the indigenous origins of the movement, or on links with Ireland, to the detriment of connections between Scottish and English reformers. The importance of Anglo-Scottish relations, however, both before and during the French Revolution, has been reassessed in recent years,<sup>3</sup> suggesting that the reform movements of the 1780s and 1790s may be best understood in a British, as opposed to merely English, or Scottish, context.

Price's letter to the secretary of the Committee of Citizens of Edinburgh, dated 27 January 1784, reveals that the Scottish reformers

<sup>2</sup> A short extract of Price's letter is quoted in H W Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (Glasgow, 1912), 14.

<sup>3</sup> See especially Bob Harris, *The Scottish people and the French Revolution* (London, 2008), and 'Scottish-English connections in British radicalism in the 1790s', *Anglo-Scottish relations from 1603 to 1900*, ed. T C Smout (Oxford, 2005), 195-212.

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had given him an ‘account [...] of their proceedings’.<sup>4</sup> The Scottish reform movement started in 1782, when Thomas McGrugar published a series of letters under the pseudonym of ‘Zeno’ in the Edinburgh press, denouncing corruption and demanding the franchise for the ‘resident burgesses’ (the middling orders, excluding the ignorant and the poor).<sup>5</sup> This prompted the creation of a committee composed of gentlemen of landed and commercial property and members of the professions; McGrugar was elected secretary. Other committees sprang up in a number of Scottish burghs, demanding the reform of both the internal administration of burghs (then run by local oligarchies) and parliamentary representation.<sup>6</sup>

By the time Price wrote to McGrugar, in January 1784, the Scottish reformers had already met in convention (in February 1783) and were preparing a second one (which was to gather representatives of 35 burghs in Edinburgh in March 1784). Contacts between English and Scottish reformers had started as early as November 1782, when Christopher Wyvill had sent a circular letter to Scottish burghs in an effort to rally them to his county association movement.<sup>7</sup> McGrugar then sent accounts of the burgh reform movement to Price, Wyvill and the Duke of Richmond. In March 1784 the Committee was very proud to state that ‘[their] correspondence on the subject of reform, had been very extensive; that they had received letters from some of the first characters in both Houses of Parliament, approving of their measures, and giving the most positive assurances of support; and that they had likewise been honoured with the approbation of men of the first rank and abilities in the republic

<sup>4</sup> See *infra*, Letter 3.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Zeno’s letters’, *Caledonian Mercury*, December 1782 – February 1783; John D Brims, ‘The Scottish democratic movement in the age of the French Revolution’, PhD., Edinburgh University, 1983. Very little is known of McGrugar, whom Brims describes simply as a wealthy merchant of Edinburgh (46).

<sup>6</sup> On the Scottish reform movement, see Brims’s PhD thesis, Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, and Archibald Fletcher, *A memoir concerning the origin and progress of the reform proposed in the internal government of the Royal Burghs of Scotland; which was first brought under discussion in 1782...* (Edinburgh, 1819).

<sup>7</sup> For Wyvill’s relations with Scottish reformers, see Christopher Wyvill, *Political papers* (York; London, 1794-1802), vol.2, 18-23, 34-36, 82-85, 94, 319; vol.3, 17-20; vol.4, 197-200, 215-216, 252-253.

*Thirteen Uncollected Letters of Richard Price*

of letters.’<sup>8</sup> Price is certainly one of the eminent members of ‘the republic of letters’ mentioned here (and, given the paucity of sources, the only person south of the Tweed to whom that appellation could apply).

Price’s letter does not reveal much about the information provided by McGrugar: ‘From the accounts you have sent me, I learn, that in *Scotland*, the state of the representation is *worse* than in *England*; and that the body of the people, particularly in the *Royal Burghs*, do not enjoy the *shadow* of *Liberty*.’ This sentence suggests that Price was ignorant of the state of the representation in Scotland before his correspondence with the Edinburgh reformers, which is somewhat surprising since he had been a close friend of the Scot James Burgh and had used his *Political disquisitions* on the English electoral system. Price’s strictures on Scottish representation probably bear on the very narrow franchise in Scotland and on the complexity of the electoral system, which ensured the dominance of powerful aristocratic interests.<sup>9</sup> The sentence reflects the Scottish reformers’, as well as Price’s own opinion, and may therefore be a personal comment or a paraphrase of his correspondent’s letter, since the pamphlets published by McGrugar and the burgh reformers contain much similar language. McGrugar might have enclosed newspaper cuttings or pamphlets in his letter.<sup>10</sup> The Scottish reformers had indeed started to document the abuses in the internal government of the burghs and the influence of aristocratic patronage; the figures they collected showed that the franchise was even more restricted in Scotland than in England, which explains Price’s comment on the respective situation of the two countries.

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<sup>8</sup> *Scots Magazine*, 46 (March 1784), 166. Richmond’s and Wyvill’s answers were published in the *Scots Magazine*, 46 (December 1784), 696.

<sup>9</sup> A mere 2662 votes were registered for county elections in 1788; the representatives of the 66 Royal Burghs were elected by about 1300 persons. On Scottish parliamentary politics and elections in the late eighteenth century, see W Ferguson, ‘The electoral system in the Scottish counties before 1832’, in David Sellar ed., *Miscellany two* (Edinburgh, 1984), 261-94; David J Brown, ‘Henry Dundas and the government of Scotland’, Phd., Edinburgh University, 1989, 6-13.

<sup>10</sup> *An address to the burgesses and heritors of the Royal Burghs of Scotland, on the present imperfect and arbitrary systems of election established in the burghs ...* (Edinburgh, 1783); *A collection of letters on patronage and popular election: some of which have appeared in the public prints, and are now illustrated with notes; others never before published...* (Edinburgh, 1783).

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Price's contacts with Irish patriots at the same period are better documented, probably because Price commented on parliamentary reform in Ireland in a letter to Colonel Sharman, printed along with those of four other English reformers.<sup>11</sup> The Irish Volunteer movement started as early as 1775, when Protestants had formed themselves into companies to defend the island against a French invasion. The volunteer army, headed by men of property, held large annual meetings and, in March 1783, started to move in favour of parliamentary reform. A meeting of delegates at Lisburn appointed a committee of correspondence; it was then that the circular letter with queries about parliamentary reform was sent to English reformers, including Price, and the answers were published in London in 1783.<sup>12</sup>

The letter reprinted below (no. 5), dated March 5, 1785, shows that Price's interest in Irish reform politics did not wane. Price expressed sanguine hopes that a reform of the Irish House of Commons would pass, and was confident that Pitt would offer a solid support for the measure. Ironically, however, the letter was written when the Irish reform movement was in decline; the delegates had been sitting intermittently in convention since October 1784, and the last meeting seems to have taken place in late April, 1785, amid general frustration and disagreements over the precise plan of reform to adopt (several were drafted, and controversial issues such as the enfranchisement of Catholics remained unresolved).

Price's letter was published in the Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*; or, *The North-American Intelligencer* and was addressed to 'the printer of the *Volunteer's Journal*', an opposition paper that was established in October 1781. *The Volunteer's Journal, or Irish Herald* was financed by Christopher Carey for his sons Mathew and the younger Thomas. Mathew was virulently hostile to Britain and was prepared to consider the

<sup>11</sup> *A collection of the letters which have been addressed to the Volunteers of Ireland, on the subject of a parliamentary reform, by the Earl of Effingham, Doctor Price, Major Cartwright, Doctor Jebb, and the Rev. Mr. Wyvill* (London, 1783).

<sup>12</sup> R B McDowell, *Irish public opinion, 1750-1800* (London, 1944), 51-117; Edward Smith, 'Carey, Mathew (1760-1839)', rev. Jason Edwards, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4655> [hereafter *ODNB*].

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legitimacy of severing ties with the metropolis. His paper voiced pro-American sentiment and staunchly supported the parliamentary reform movement of the Volunteers. At the time of Price's letter, the printer was James Dowling, whose name is known only in relation to the *Volunteer's Journal*. By then, the ownership of the paper had become a matter of contention, because Mathew Carey, who had been prosecuted for publishing a caricature of the Prime Minister in 1784, had sailed for Philadelphia in September 1784 and sold his paper to James Dowling, in order to avoid prosecution. In January 1785, a new owner was registered, while Dowling continued as printer, and the paper was embroiled in a legal battle against the administration. To add to the confusion, from January to April 1785, Christopher Carey ran a rival journal, *The Volunteer Journal, or Irish Advertiser*, to attack Dowling, who had charged his sons with treason.

Technically, Price's correspondent was James Dowling. More generally, Mathew Carey was the leading influence on the *Volunteer's Journal*, which had become the organ of the Volunteer movement. Carey's activities suggest that Price's letter circulated in a transatlantic network, which might explain why Price's letter came to be published in Philadelphia. Carey's *Volunteer's Journal*, indeed, declared its intention of publishing writings by the Society for Constitutional Information and called for the various Irish societies and the SCI to correspond with one another. Moreover, Carey's interest in Price's thought is well-attested. At the convention of Volunteers in November 1783, for instance, he quoted Price (and Wyvill) to defend the view that all proprietors and leaseholders should be given the vote.<sup>13</sup> It is quite natural, then, that Price should correspond with the 'printer' of the *Volunteer's Journal*, or others involved in the paper.

Once in Philadelphia, Carey was able to set up in business thanks to a generous loan by the marquis de La Fayette (1757-1834) who had commanded the French forces during the American War. In 1785, it was Carey who published Price's *Observations on the importance of the*

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<sup>13</sup> McDowell, *Irish public opinion*, 99; Edward C Carter, 'Mathew Carey in Ireland, 1760-1784', *Catholic Historical Review*, 51 (1966), 517-8.

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*American Revolution* in Philadelphia. It seems reasonable to infer that Carey was instrumental in the publication of Price's letter to the printer of the *Volunteer's Journal*, either because it was addressed to him or because he obtained it from his relations in Ireland.

While preparing this article it has, unfortunately, not been possible to search the collections of the *Volunteer's Journal* to check if this Richard Price letter was published there; such a task would be worthwhile and might reveal fresh material related to Price. We are left to wonder how, a mere two months after Price wrote his letter, it came to be published, or republished, in the Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*; or, *The North-American Intelligencer*.

The letters to the secretary of the Scottish burgh reformers and that to the printer of the Irish patriot paper have much in common. Price voices the same optimism about the feasibility of reform in both countries, based on his confidence in Pitt's sincere commitment to that cause. This 'auspicious moment', as Price called it at the end of his letter to McGrugar, was of short duration, however, since reform bills concerning Ireland, Scotland, but also England and Wales, were voted down by both the Dublin House of Commons and the Westminster parliament in 1784-1785.

Price drew parallels between the situations in England, Scotland and Ireland, and considered that the fate of parliamentary reform and, ultimately, the spread of liberty, were intimately bound with the success of the American Revolution. The letter to McGrugar, in particular, expresses Price's sanguine hope that a worldwide (or at least European-wide) revolution was approaching in imitation of the American example. This letter represents a superb testimony of Price's political principles. The two letters read, in part, like lectures in political philosophy drawn from his statement of the value of self-determination in *Observations on the nature of civil liberty* (1776). They also express Price's optimism about the providential nature of the American Revolution, that paved the way to the progress of mankind and the spread of liberty to other countries. In that sense, the letters bear strong affinities with *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution*, which dates from the same period. Price also expressed the wish that absolute monarchs would stop

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maintaining their peoples in ‘ignorance’ and ‘abjection’, would yield to their demand for ‘reformation’ (as opposed to ‘innovation’), in order to avoid violent revolution. Those ideas are couched in a strident tone that foreshadows the peroration of *A discourse on the love of our country*, thus revealing the fundamental unity of Price’s political thinking and confirming that, in his mind, the American Revolution represented a ‘new aera in future annals, and a new opening in human affairs’<sup>14</sup> that was to be perfected by the French Revolution.

**Letters to American correspondents:**

Price’s letters to Samuel Cooper, Joseph Willard, Ezra Stiles,<sup>15</sup> and an unnamed Philadelphia correspondent were all published in the American press in the 1780s. They testify to Price’s interest in scientific matters and his readiness to communicate information to his American friends. The letters to Willard and Stiles, Presidents of Harvard and Yale Colleges respectively, complement those already published in D O Thomas and W Bernard Peach’s edition of Price’s correspondence, and confirm that Price kept them abreast of the latest astronomical discoveries. They also reveal that Price was the author of five articles on actuarial science in the expanded new edition of Ephraim Chamber’s *Cyclopaedia* (1786).

Price’s letters also contain interesting comments on American politics. In September 1783, he wrote to Cooper that the states should give ‘more strength and energy to the decisions of the confederation’ to avoid internal quarrels and a break-up of the union. A few months earlier, he had already voiced his concern that despite the quiet condition of America, the issue of ‘the federal union’ remained to be settled.<sup>16</sup> He consistently advocated the establishment of a strong executive power

<sup>14</sup> General introduction, ‘Two tracts on civil liberty’ (1778), in D O Thomas ed., *Price: political writings* (Cambridge, 1991), 19.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Cooper (1725-1783), minister at the Brattle Street Church in Boston and chaplain of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Joseph Willard (1738-1804), Congregational minister of the First Church of Beverly, Massachusetts, vice-president of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and President of Harvard College from December 1781. Ezra Stiles (1727-1795), minister of the Second Congregational Church at Newport, RI, started teaching at Yale College in 1765. In 1778 he became Professor of Ecclesiastical History and president of the college.

<sup>16</sup> Price to Benjamin Rush, 1 January 1783 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 162).

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throughout his correspondence with his American contacts and in *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* (1784). In letter 8 of this collection (June 1788), he told his Philadelphian correspondent that he ‘rejoiced in the probability ... of the establishment ... of an energetic federal government.’ He clearly sided with the federalists in the heated debates surrounding the ratification of the federal constitution by the various states in 1787-1790. Price acknowledged the influence of John Adams’s argument, but beside his intellectual adhesion to federalism he was also actuated by his concern with the news of civil unrest that reached him during the 1780s and his wish to secure the accomplishments of the Revolution by sealing the union by a strong federal power.

The October 1784 letter to Joseph Willard (no. 4) provides interesting detail about the method Price chose to distribute his *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* among the American élites. He sent Willard copies for him to distribute around, and explained he preferred to have his work disseminated by choice friends rather than directly sent to members of Congress. Price voiced misgivings about the reception of his pamphlets in America but felt confident that the letter by the late French minister Turgot appended to it would be highly acceptable. Ironically, quite the reverse happened, as the *Observations* were very well received, except in the South where his strictures on slavery caused offence, but Turgot’s letter proved controversial, prompting John Adams to write *A defence of the constitutions of government of the United States* to refute Turgot’s charge that the American constitution was too slavishly inspired from Britain<sup>17</sup>.

Letter 8 also deserves further commentary. It was sent to an unnamed ‘gentleman in Philadelphia’ on 16 June 1788. Besides a political comment on the desirability of an ‘energetic federal government’, Price commented on the trial of Warren Hastings and on the slave trade. Given the emphasis on politics and anti-slavery, it seems reasonable to surmise that Price’s correspondent was Dr. Benjamin Rush (1745-1813). In 1787-1788 Rush

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<sup>17</sup> On the reception of the *Observations* and Turgot’s letter, see D O Thomas, *The honest mind: the thought and work of Richard Price* (Oxford, 1977), 170-8.

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was keeping Price informed of the proceedings of the convention of Delegates in Pennsylvania, and Price thanked him for sending him ‘the Address to the States in the Pennsylvania Papers’<sup>18</sup>. The editors of Price’s correspondence suggest this document might be Franklin’s 26 June 1787 ‘Proposals for Consideration in the Convention for Forming the Constitution of the United States’. This hypothesis is reinforced by Price’s profession of admiration for Franklin’s conduct in the constitutional debate in letter 8.

In this letter, Price also commented on slavery, ‘another subject which engages much of the public attention’, uttering his detestation of the slave trade in terms reminiscent of the *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution*,<sup>19</sup> and commented on Thomas Clarkson’s abolitionist pamphlet *An essay on the impolicy of the slave trade* (London, 1787). This is in keeping with Price’s relations with Rush, a committed abolitionist since at least 1773, who was by 1787 a secretary of the Pennsylvania Abolitionist Society (PAS). Price became a corresponding member of the PAS, and in September 1787, he informed Rush of the foundation of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, adding that he had refused to sit on the committee.<sup>20</sup>

In September 1788, the PAS launched a subscription for the publication of Clarkson’s pamphlet, and the announcement of the

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<sup>18</sup> Letter by Price to Benjamin Rush, 24 September 1787, Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 146. Franklin’s proposals are summed up in a note by the editors.

<sup>19</sup> In that pamphlet, Price had called the slave trade ‘shocking to humanity, cruel, wicked, and diabolical’ (*Price: political writings*, 150).

<sup>20</sup> Letter by Franklin to Price, 9 June 1787, Price to Benjamin Rush, 24 September 1787, Price to Franklin, 26 September 1787, Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 134, 147-8. Franklin sent Price copies of the constitution of the PAS; Price acknowledged the honour of the nomination but answered he had very little time to devote to the abolitionist cause. The full name of the PAS was: Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race.

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subscription in the press quoted a sentence from Price's letter.<sup>21</sup> This does not imply that Rush, or his society, received Clarkson's pamphlet through Price, for they could have procured it through other abolitionist channels.<sup>22</sup> What the announcement in the press does suggest, however, is that Price's reputation was strong enough for the Pennsylvania abolitionists to avail themselves of his name. Thus, Price did play a role, at least by lending his name (possibly without his knowledge) in the spread of abolitionist ideas in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

### **Correspondence with the duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt:**

The last five letters of the collection improve our knowledge of Price's relationships with the duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, a scion of one of France's noblest families. A representative of the liberal nobility at the Estates General in 1789, he sat on the *Assemblée Nationale* during the early stages of the French Revolution and presided it briefly in July-August 1789.<sup>24</sup> La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt and Price had been

<sup>21</sup> 'The work now proposed for public view, was first printed in London in June last, and is in the hands of very few in America. Those who have perused it esteem it a most excellent Treatise. The celebrated Dr. Price, of London, in a letter to his friend in this city, speaks of it in the following terms —“A book is just published by Mr. Clarkson, entitled, *The Impolicy of the Slave Trade*, which I have read with emotions of horror; and which if duly attended to, must give the finishing blow to this diabolical traffic.”' (*Freeman's Journal*, 24 September 1788).

<sup>22</sup> Clarkson himself sent a copy of his pamphlet to the New York Manumission Society, which decided to print several dozen copies in September 1788. It was finally printed as *An essay on the impolicy of the slave trade : in two parts ; to which is added, an oration upon the necessity of establishing at Paris a society to promote the abolition of the trade and slavery of the negroes, by Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville* (Philadelphia : Francis Bailey, 1788). (Personal information by Prof. Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, extracted from chapter 4, forthcoming book on the first antislavery movement in the United States 1754-1830).

<sup>23</sup> On Price's limited involvement in abolitionism, see Anthony Page, “‘A Species of Slavery’: Richard Price's Rational Dissent and Antislavery”, *Slavery & Abolition*, 32 (2011), 53-73.

<sup>24</sup> The editors of Price's correspondence mistakenly identify Price's correspondent as Louis Alexandre, duc d'Enville (1743-1792). Price corresponded with one of d'Enville's cousin, François Alexandre Frédéric de La Rochefoucauld, duc de Liancourt, (duc de La Rochefoucauld in 1792, on his elder brother's death), 1747-1827. A proponent of a constitutional monarchy, he was elected representative of nobility of the the *bailliage* of Clermont-en-Beauvaisis (Picardy) at the Estates General in March 1789 (E Hindie Lemay, 'La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, François-Alexandre Frédéric, duc de', *Dictionnaire des Constituants, 1789-1791* (Paris, 1991), vol.2, 534-537).

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corresponding since at least August 1789, but their correspondence really started on the occasion of the celebrations of the anniversary of the Glorious Revolution by the Revolution Society on November 4, 1789. In the course of the dinner, the society sent a congratulatory address to the *Assemblée Nationale*. It is well known that that address was signed by the Earl of Stanhope, and sent by Price to La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who read it to the *Assemblée* on November 25.<sup>25</sup>

Letters 9 and 10 are extracted from an article from the *Massachusetts Centinel* (12 May 1790) which covered the activities of the Revolution Society<sup>26</sup> in that period. Letter 9 is the letter Price joined to the congratulation address. Its general tenor was already known thanks to a paraphrase in the *Correspondence* published by the Revolution Society: the *Congratulatory Address* was conveyed to the Duke of la Rochefoucauld at PARIS, with a Letter, requesting him to present it to the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, and at the same time intimating, that the Society considered the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY as acting for the WORLD as well as for the great Kingdom it represented, and therefore hoped that their Address was not an improper intrusion; or, if it was, that it would be excused as an effusion of zeal in the cause of general liberty and human happiness, which no considerations of impropriety had been able to suppress.<sup>27</sup>

The paraphrase is very close to the version published in the *Massachusetts Centinel*.

Letter 10 is La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt's answer to Price (2 December 1789), in which the duke informs Price of the enthusiastic

<sup>25</sup> *Le Moniteur*, vol.2, 238 (26 November 1789); *An abstract of the history and proceedings of the Revolution Society, in London* (London, 1789), 50-51 (text of the congratulatory address), 57-61 (accounts of its reception by the *Assemblée Nationale*); Martin Fitzpatrick, 'Richard Price and the London Revolution Society', *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 10 (1991), 35-50.

<sup>26</sup> On Price and the Revolution Society, see Fitzpatrick, 'Richard Price and the London Revolution Society', loc. cit., and R Duthille, 'London Revolution Society (act. 1788-1793)', *ODNB*.

<sup>27</sup> *The correspondence of the Revolution Society in London, with the National Assembly, and with various societies of the friends of liberty in France and England* (London, 1792), 4.

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reception of the Revolution Society letter by the *Assemblée Nationale*. Part of the letter, in French and in English translation, was published in 1790 in the appendix to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Price's *A discourse on the love of our country*.<sup>28</sup> The text reprinted from the *Massachusetts Centinel* is another translation of the original letter in French, which has unfortunately been lost. It provides a different ending for the second paragraph, and adds two paragraphs, in which the duke requests a copy of Price's *Discourse* and remarks that 'the principles of their common friend, Mr. TURGOT', are propagating 'for the happiness of France, and of the human race.'

The existence of two translations suggests that the duke's letter circulated in the original French. We are left to wonder by what means it came to be published in an American newspaper. Strangely enough, the letters do not seem to have appeared in any British paper (at least none of those of the Burney Collection digitized by Gale). This difference may be indicative of Price's popularity and of sympathy for Revolution Society in America, where the activities of the society were well-covered.

The next two letters (numbered 11 and 12), addressed by Price to La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt on 6 July and 14 October 1790 respectively, are reproduced from the autograph originals held in the city archives of Mantes-la-Jolie, a town 30 miles west of Paris on the river Seine (possibly because one of the La Rochefoucauld family's main estates and Liancourt's birthplace, the castle of La Roche-Guyon, is located within the jurisdiction of Mantes). Fragments of both letters have already been published. As early as September 1790, extracts from the 6 July letter appeared in the *Journal de la Société de 1789*, edited by a society of reformers whose luminary was Condorcet and which counted La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt among its members. As for the 14 October 1790, part of its contents was known thanks to an autograph draft held in the American Philosophical Society.<sup>29</sup>

The original letters printed below contain significant additions and changes compared with the published excerpts. In particular, they provide

<sup>28</sup> It is reprinted in Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 259-60.

<sup>29</sup> See below, notes 93 and 124.

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practical details on Price's intellectual exchanges with La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt and other Frenchmen, throw light on his appreciation of the Revolution Society and on the London celebration of the 14 July 1790. At this period, La Rochefoucauld was almost certainly a member of the *Société de 1789*, a club founded by Condorcet and his friends on 13 May 1790. It served as a forum for 'enlightened' men to discuss the principles of the 'social art' and try to apply them the framing of a new constitution. Though the membership of the club is not fully known (it may have had up to 450 members in August 1790), the presence of Condorcet and the abbé Siéyès is well-known, and, in addition to La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, La Fayette and Dupont de Nemours probably counted among its members. This small, but brilliant, intellectual phalanx published analyses on a range of topics that were of interest to Price, from constitutional theory to finances and social legislation, and Condorcet had even projected an extensive correspondence between the *Société de 1789* and foreign scientists.<sup>30</sup> It is therefore natural that La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt should have sent Price issues of the society's *Journal* and publications by its most eminent members. The correspondence suggests that Price's opinion on *assignats* was influenced by tracts sent by La Rochefoucauld. Those exchanges were reciprocal. If Price thus benefited from the duke's contacts with Condorcet and his circle, he also tried to satisfy his correspondent's curiosity with whatever information he could gather on Turgot and Adam Smith, who had recently died, and on English hospitals (in letter 13).

Price also gave the duke information about the Revolution Society and the London celebrations of the 14 July, thus providing details supplied that are precious for the historian. Price's frank presentation of society's membership and its difficulties in mustering a delegation to travel to Paris is the only judgment that he has left on the society. His mention of 'only

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<sup>30</sup> For Keith Michael Baker, the significance of the *Société de 1789* lies in the attempt to apply the principles of social sciences to legislation in the early stages of the French Revolution. The society's short-lived existence, spanning just a year from May 1790 to the spring of 1791, is indicative of the failure of that project (K M Baker, 'Politics and social science in eighteenth-century France: the Société de 1789', *French government and society, 1500-1800. Essays in memory of Alfred Cobban*, ed. J F Boshier (London, 1973), 208-230.

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of about 150 persons in middle life but honest, and worthy and devoutly attached to the cause of civil and religious liberty' confirms that the society's members were drawn from the middling orders of the capital.

The Revolution Society and the Society for Constitutional Information jointly celebrated the fall of the Bastille by a dinner held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern on the Strand. It was the English friends of the French Revolution's participation to the *Fête de la Fédération* that was held across France on the same day. The 6 July 1790 letter reveals Price's anxiety that the Festival of the Federation should not be marred by violence, and the Revolution Society's project to send delegates to the Festival. Although the idea resurfaced later,<sup>31</sup> the society was never able to put it in practice, neither in 1790, as Price acknowledged, nor the next year, let alone in 1792 when the Revolution Society was in a state of disarray. It is significant that the editor of the *Journal de la Société de 1789* should have left out Price's misgivings about violence and the inability of the Revolution Society to send a 'respectable' deputation to the Festival for lack of 'men of rank' among its members. The *Société de 1789* was anxious to eliminate any statement that could be construed as a criticism of the French Revolution; nor did they want to downplay the importance of its London correspondents, probably to counteract rumours then spreading in France about the low extraction of the membership of the London Revolution Society.<sup>32</sup> Price was all too aware that the reputation of the Revolution Society suffered from the absence of noblemen and the aloofness of some whig leaders (including Fox). The problem of social respectability was to dog the society until its final demise in 1793, and was one of the weak points relentlessly exploited by

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<sup>31</sup> In November 1790, Antoine Français, a member of the Jacobin club of Nantes, then on a visit in London, suggested the Revolution Society should send delegates (*députés*) to France on 14 July 1791 (*Journal de la Correspondance de Nantes*, no.27 [October 1790], 29).

<sup>32</sup> On 18 March 1790, a club in Lille had written to the Revolution Society: 'La Société de la Révolution de Londres n'est pas, comme la calomnie des Aristocrates et des ennemis de la Liberté et de l'humanité a voulu le faire croire à Paris et dans diverses Provinces de Frances, cette Société n'est pas composée d'un ramas de gens de la lie du peuple'. The Lille club went on to list the noble and eminent members of the Revolution Society, including Price, Stanhope, the Duke of Portland and the Marquess of Carmarthen (*Correspondence of the Revolution Society* [1792], 38).

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its critics, including Burke in *Reflections on the revolution in France* in November 1790.

Also reproduced below are two complementary documents in Price's handwriting that throw further light on the London celebration of 14 July 1790: 'Introduction to a toast proposed by Dr Price at the feast in London for celebrating the first Anniversary of the Revolution in France', and a list of 'Toasts agreed upon by the Stewards of the feast for celebrating the first Anniversary of the Revolution in France, but not drunk'. Those documents must have accompanied another letter to La Rochefoucauld, written on the day after the dinner, 15 July. In this letter, Price mentioned he had sent an 'enclosed paper [informing the duke] of many of the particulars. My address introductory to one of the toasts I have given on the next page nearly as it was delivered. There were two other toasts to which I was intended to speak but the interruption occasioned by Mr *Horn Took* and mentioned in the enclosed papers produced a clamour that left me no opportunity for it. This interruption also prevented the drinking of several toasts that had been previously proposed and agreed upon by the stewards. Some of these I have transcribed.'<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately, the 'enclosed papers' providing details about the dinner are lost, but the list of toasts has survived. Lists of toasts were routinely published in the press and circulated in Britain (and across the Atlantic); this is an exceptional instance of a list of toasts that have *not* been drunk. Price's list is a precious addition to the accounts of the dinner that were published in the press. Those sources suggest, however, that actually two of the toasts on Price's list were drunk.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Price to La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, 15 July 1790, in Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 308. The *Correspondence* reproduces a shorthand draft; neither the original nor the 'enclosed paper' giving information on the 14 July dinner, have survived. See the editors' note for details on Horne Tooke's 'interruption': he provoked the anger of the assembly by an attempt to introduce a distinction between the French, who had to tear down the absolute monarchy, and the English, who had to improve their existing constitution.

<sup>34</sup> Accounts in the British press include *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 15 July 1790; *London Chronicle*, 15 July 1790, *Oracle*, 15 July 1790; *Public Advertiser*, 16 July 1790. In the French press see Camille Desmoulins's *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, vol.3, 525-29; *Les Révolutions de Paris*, n° 55, 24-31 July 1790, and *Le Moniteur*, n° 211, 30 July 1790 (vol.5, 250). On the toasts that appear to have been drunk, see below note 121.

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Taken together, letters 9 to 12 enrich our knowledge of the Revolution Society by filling gaps in the correspondence, revealing Price's judgment on the internal difficulties of the society, and providing firsthand information on the celebrations of 14 July 1790. They also improve our knowledge of Price's contacts with France, with details on the channels of communication – several individuals are identified as letter bearers – and on the books, pamphlets and papers that were exchanged, firmly placing Price within a network of exchange between British and French economists and public-minded reformers.

The last letter of this collection adds a further dimension to this exchange of ideas, that of the practical application of social sciences, in keeping with the ambitions of the *Société de 1789*, the intellectual and social milieu which contributed so much to shape La Rochefoucauld's thought and action. On 1 November 1790, the duke asked Price for information on the treatment of the insane and foundlings in Britain, on behalf of the *Comité de Mendicité*. The duke was then a leading member of that committee, which had been created by the *Assemblée Nationale* after a debate on 21 January 1790. Initially set up to oversee the distribution of money apportioned for poor relief, the *Comité de Mendicité* soon 'emerged with wide-ranging powers of investigation and recommendation and with a responsibility to report to the Assembly its views' on the means of destroying pauperism.<sup>35</sup> La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt's letter to Price is taken from the minutes of the *Comité de Mendicité* held in the *Archives Nationales* in Paris (the original register of correspondence of the *Comité* was lost).

The duke was eager for information on all aspects of social policies. His interest in the practices in use in Britain is apparent in the numerous references to British pamphlets to be found in the reports he drafted for the committee. His queries to Price reflect his desire to import successful practices into France, in keeping with his anglophilia, his practical turn of mind and his enlightened philanthropy (he was also an improving farmer and corresponded with Arthur Young). La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt was especially curious about the methods used by Dr Alexander Hunter at the York Lunatic Asylum. The hospital opened in 1777 thanks to a private

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<sup>35</sup> Alan Forrest, *The French Revolution and the poor* (Oxford, 1981), 23.

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subscription; one of the first institutions in England to be reserved to the mentally insane, to the exclusion of those suffering from physical ailments, it exerted a considerable influence in Britain.<sup>36</sup> La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt held Hunter in high esteem and extolled him in a report to the *Assemblée Nationale*, contrasting the gruesome treatment of madwomen at the hospital of La Salpêtrière in Paris with the humane, enlightened methods allegedly used at the York hospital.<sup>37</sup> The duke's idealized view of Hunter was probably a long way off the mark, as Hunter appears to have been contemptuous of the poor and, by the early 1790s, his methods had already provoked a controversy, which was to lead to a national investigation in 1813-1815. Especially contentious were allegations of maltreatment of pauper patients, Hunter's financial mismanagement and the introduction of fees, a deviation from the hospital's original charitable purpose.<sup>38</sup>

On January 5, 1790, Price answered the duke's queries by sending him a 'letter and papers from Dr Hunter', and promised further information, asserting, however, that the treatment of 'illegitimate and deserted children' by the parishes was 'so neglected' that British practices could not provide a worthwhile example.<sup>39</sup>

Albeit limited, Price's contribution to the work of the *Assemblée Nationale* is significant, suggesting that, in the early stages of the French

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<sup>36</sup> Alexander Hunter (1729?-1809) was born in Edinburgh. He moved to York, where he practiced medicine as one of the physicians to the York County Hospital and to the York Dispensary as soon as it was founded in 1788. He had wide medical interests but became known principally as a mad-doctor.

<sup>37</sup> The report was published in 1790 and reprinted Camille Bloch and Alexandre Tuetey ed. *Procès-verbaux et rapports du Comité de Mendicité de la Constituante, 1790-1791* (Paris, 1911), see p.625 for eulogy of Hunter. It is unclear whether La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt wrote it before or after Price sent information on Hunter.

<sup>38</sup> Leonard Smith, *Lunatic hospitals in Georgian England, 1750-1830* (Oxford, New York, 2007), 30, 124; Anne Digby, *From York Lunatic Asylum to Bootham Park Hospital* (York, 1986); idem, 'Hunter, Alexander (1729?-1809)', *ODNB*.

<sup>39</sup> Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 262. The editors could not identify Price's correspondent: this can be no other than La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt. The identification is corroborated by the mention of the Marquis du Châtelet in both letter 10 and La Rochefoucauld's letter to Price dated 13 January 1790, which, however, does not acknowledge receipt of Hunter's papers.

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Revolution, the ideal of enlightened ‘benevolence’ and the wish of a Franco-British reconciliation central in *A discourse on the love of our country* and in the celebrations of the Revolution Society were being translated into concrete beneficence and international collaboration.

La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt’s letter also reveals that Price, who had already advised Shelburne and Pitt on financial matters, and who had received an offer from the American Congress for similar services, was also contacted by the French revolutionary legislature for advice on public policies.<sup>40</sup> Such an offer was quite fitting, in La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt’s own words, for a devoted ‘friend of mankind’ engaged ‘in the cause of suffering humanity’.

Université Bordeaux 3  
– Michel de Montaigne

### 1. Letter from Richard Price to Alexander Chisholm, 3 September 1772.

Source: Ticknor Autograph Collection, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

Courtesy of Dartmouth College Library.

Newington Green Sept 3d 1772.

Dear Sir

I am obliged to you for sending me Dr Priestley’s letter. I have inclosed another which I received from him last week, in which he informs me of his determination to accept Ld Shelburne’s proposal.<sup>41</sup> He

<sup>40</sup> See Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 29-30, 34-35; Thomas, *Honest mind*, 234-259.

<sup>41</sup> On Price’s recommendation, Lord Shelburne had offered Priestley the position of librarian in his estate of Bowood. The annual salary of £250, together with a house for his increasing family, unlimited access to the library and scientific apparatus and other advantages, was appealing for Priestley, then a none too rich minister in Leeds. But Priestley wavered, fearing that his independence might be curtailed because of Shelburne’s political role. In the letter mentioned by Price, written on August 25, Priestley declared himself ‘much disposed to comply with’ Shelburne’s offer (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.1, 135) but he could not make up his mind, and on 31 October Price wrote to Shelburne: ‘What his final determination will be, I don’t yet know.’

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will, therefore, probably enter upon a new Sphere of life at Christmas, and I heartily wish he may prove the means of increasing his happiness. Be so good as to preserve his letter to me. I am, Dear Sir, with great regard your obliged humble Servant

Richd Price

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## **2. Letter from Richard Price to Samuel Cooper, 4 September 1783.**

Source: *Pennsylvania Packet*, 30 September 1786. Based on information from Readex: America's Historical Newspapers. Readex. <http://infoweb.newsbank.com>, hereafter [AHN].

Reprinted in *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 6 October 1786.

The following letter, dated Sept.4, 1783, from the celebrated Dr. Price to the deceased Dr. Cooper<sup>42</sup> of this town, shows that penetration and foresight he had of the bad effects that would arise from the dissentions, extravagance and vice, which so generally prevailed in the States, as well as from the with-holding such powers to Congress, as were necessary to support the credit, and maintain the honour of the Federal Government; and melancholy it is to find his prognosticks so nearly accomplished.<sup>43</sup>

Dear Sir,

I return to you my best thanks for your letter and for the masterly and excellent discourse which accompanied it, on the commencement of your

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(Price, *Correspondence*, vol.1, 145). Priestley finally accepted and moved to Calne, near Bowood, with his family, in June 1773.

<sup>42</sup> On Samuel Cooper (1725-1783), see note 15 above. He died on 29 December 1783.

<sup>43</sup> The journalist's introduction to Price's letter is indicative of the mood that pervaded the American states in the autumn of 1786: 'By 1786-1787 the reconstruction of the central government had become the focal point of most of the reform sentiment that had earlier been concentrated on the states... The move for a stronger national government thus became something more than a response to the obvious weakness of the Articles of Confederation': what was at stake was the way to remedy the weaknesses of state governments and to ensure the survival of republicanism Gordon S Wood, *The creation of the American Republic* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 466-467). Thus, the republication of Price's letter three years after it was written served a definite political purpose in the context of late 1786.

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new constitution.<sup>44</sup> I have seldom read a discourse with so much pleasure and satisfaction. The occasion was animating, and must have contributed much to your eloquence. The *Massachusetts* constitution does indeed great honour to the persons who have been concerned in framing and establishing it.<sup>45</sup> How shocking would have been the calamity, had the success of Britain, in the late war, involved in ruin a constitution so favourable to liberty and justice? I cannot express to you the pleasure which the revolution, in which the war has terminated, has given me. God grant that this revolution may be duly improved by the United States.

I hear, with concern, of *dissentions* among them, and of the *irreligion*, *extravagance* and *vice*, which prevail in some of them. This checks my hopes, and makes me sometimes doubt, whether this revolution will in event produce all the good I expected from it. Why do not the States consider, that having no common enemy to fight, they are in peculiar danger of quarrelling with one another; the consequence of which must be that they will lose the blessings they have so nobly earned, and that their independence may become a curse instead of a benefit to them! Why don't they take immediate and speedy care to provide against the great danger, by giving more strength and energy to the decisions of the confederation?

Why have any of the States been reluctant in consenting to the necessary measures of maintaining their virgin credit, and doing justice

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<sup>44</sup> *A sermon preached before His Excellency John Hancock, Esq; Governour, the Honourable the Senate, and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, October 25, 1780 : being the day of the commencement of the Constitution, and inauguration of the new government. By Samuel Cooper, D.D.* (Boston, 1780).

<sup>45</sup> John Adams played a major role in drafting the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It was finally adopted in June 1780 after much delay, the first project having been voted down by the towns. The Governor was elected directly by the people and entrusted with wide powers, including a right of veto; the legislature was 'balanced between a House of Representatives embodying the people and a Senate' reflecting the distribution of property. This document, preceded by a substantial Bill of Rights, was widely praised for retaining the balance of the British constitution and became of model for subsequent state constitutions (Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 339-41, 434, quotation at 434).

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to their creditors? But, perhaps, I am misinformed, and that principle of virtue, which alone can support republics, is not likely to lose its influence among them.

Accept, dear sir, &c.

### 3. Letter from Richard Price to Thomas McGrugar, 27 January 1784.

Source: *Scots Magazine, and Edinburgh Literary Miscellany*, 46 (April 1784) 179-80.

Letter from the Rev. Dr. Richard Price, to the Secretary of the Committee of Citizens of Edinburgh.

Sir,

I have received, with particular pleasure, the letter which you have directed to me by the order of the Committee of Citizens of Edinburgh. They have done me great honour, by communicating to me the account contained in your letter of their proceedings, and by reckoning me among the friends to the important cause in which they were engaged.

My power is little; but such as it is, I am always glad to employ it as far as it can go in promoting the best interests of mankind. Among these interests I reckon *civil liberty*. Without this, civil government is, in my opinion, an usurpation and a curse; and men are creatures little better than a herd of beasts. With such sentiments, it is impossible for me not to be ardent in my wishes, that every attempt to recover this inestimable blessing may succeed; or not to rejoice in that spirit of resistance to oppression which has lately manifested itself in the world. God grant that this spirit may increase till it has abolished all despotic governments, and exterminated that slavery which debases mankind! This spirit first rose in America – it soon reached Ireland – it has diffused itself into some foreign countries;<sup>46</sup> and your letter informs me, that it is now animating Scotland.

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<sup>46</sup> Probably an allusion to the patriot opposition to the stadtholder in Holland. From 1777 to 1779 Price corresponded with one leading figure of that movement, Joan Derk van Capellen tot den Poll (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.1, 261-8; vol.2, 37-39, 42-44, 55-56). On Ireland, see introduction above, and letter 5.

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There seems, indeed, to be an important revolution approaching. The ideas of men are changing fast. Their minds are growing more enlightened; and a general conviction is like to take place, that 'all legitimate government ... is the dominion of men over *themselves*; and not in the dominion of communities over communities, or of any men over other men.'<sup>47</sup> When this happens, all slavish governments must fall, and a general reformation will take place in human affairs.

There is amongst the statesmen of the present times a want of foresight and an infatuation which may end fatally for them. Were they wise, they could see this rising spirit, and, by yielding to it, make themselves great and happy. But instead of this, they are endeavouring to crush it, and making themselves enemies to the improvement of the world. *Reformation* they term *innovation*; and a struggle to recover long *lost rights* they term *sedition* and *rebellion*. But their opposition is likely to prove the means of its own defeat. It provokes to a more narrow inquiry into the rights of men, extends their views, and produces a greater disdain of slavery, a warmer zeal for the principles of liberty, and a more general and firm determination to support them. And the consequence must be such a contest between the abettors of liberty and tyranny as will produce convulsions, and terminate in the destruction of the latter, and a brighter triumph of the former.

Such of late has been the issue of that infatuation of statesmen which produced the American war; and such possibly may be its issue in Britain, should our rulers continue much longer to maintain abuses, which are become so flagrant as to strike the attention, and excite the indignation of all impartial and considerate men.

The danger of producing confusion, and of setting government afloat, is often urged as a reason against attempts to reform. But this is an

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<sup>47</sup> Price was to reuse this quotation, which he ascribed to Montesquieu, in *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution...* (Price: *political writings*, 119). This suggests that Price had started composing this pamphlet, on which he was working by April, and which he completed in July 1784 (D O Thomas, John Stephens and P A L Jones, *A bibliography of the works of Richard Price* (Aldershot, 1993), 117). Price had defined his ideal of liberty as self-government earlier in similar words, e.g. in *A discourse addressed to a congregation at Hackney, on February 21, 1781...*, in Price: *political writings*, 106).

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argument that proves too much. Ought it to influence in France, Spain, Turkey, &c. were the people there duly sensible of their rights, and of the evil of arbitrary governments? If so, all the vile tyrannies of the world must be suffered to continue as they are. No effort must be ever made to overthrow them; and ignorance, darkness, slavery, and misery, must be for ever perpetuated amongst mankind. But in truth, no such danger, as that now supposed, would exist, were it not for the folly of the rulers of states. Were they prudent enough to fall in with public conviction, and to a gradual correction of abuses, when it is called for, the great work of reformation would go on quietly, and they would secure to themselves a power of an infinitely more honourable and solid nature than they now possess.

In this country, we boast of our liberty; and it is true that our constitution of government is in *theory* excellent. But we enjoy only the *forms* of it. Luxury and corruption, and changes produced by time, have destroyed the *spirit* of it, and converted it into a name and a mockery. It supposes a fair representation of the body of the people; and this is essential to constitutional liberty in every state. Where this is wanting, the people are governed by laws to which they do not give their consent, and by masters, in chusing whom they have no voice, and over whom they have no controul; and this is one of the properest definitions that can be given of *political slavery*. A people in this condition may possess many privileges: but they can have no constitutional *security* for them. They must owe them to the forbearance and clemency of their masters; and for this reason they can no more be termed free, than a negro can be termed *free*, who has no other security for just treatment than the good nature of the discretion of his proprietor.<sup>48</sup>

Laws in a free state are nothing but the will of the community, and governors are its *servants*. Let any one apply this observation to our own country. – The *majority* of that assembly which has the command of our

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<sup>48</sup> On the notion that Britain, under its ‘degenerate’ parliamentary representation, enjoyed only the ‘form of liberty’ but not its substance, see *Observations on the nature of civil liberty...* (1776), in *Price: political writings*, 25-26. On ‘seemingly free’ constitutions and on the criterion for defining the governments that give ‘security’ to the citizens, see respectively *Observations...*, in *Price: political writings*, 31, and *Additional observations* (1777)..., *ibid.*, 82.

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lives and fortunes, is chosen by about *six thousand* of the meanest persons, who sell their votes; and a general *election* is little more than a general *auction* for disposing of venal and rotten burghs<sup>49</sup>. Is an assembly *so* created, a representation of the kingdom? Are the laws made by it the will of the community? Can it be justly said, that a people so governed are *free*?

From the accounts you have sent me, I learn, that in *Scotland*, the state of the representation is *worse* than in *England*; and that the body of the people, particularly in the *Royal Burghs*, do not enjoy the *shadow* of *Liberty*. But they are awakened to a sense of their rights; and the exertions they are making to emancipate themselves, must be admired by all that desire to see mankind free and happy. Nothing can be better adapted to inform and animate them in their exertions, than the circulation of such tracts as those you have sent me. May their zeal increase, and may the number of those men diminish who are for keeping mankind in abjection and servility! Should the burghesses in the royal burghs be unanimous in claiming their rights, they must be regarded. Amidst the prevailing degeneracy, there are in the House of Commons many virtuous members who will plead their cause.

The late daring attempts of a junto<sup>50</sup> to establish their own power have shewn, in a striking light, the necessity of a parliamentary reform. These attempts have been happily defeated by the resolution of our Sovereign; and he is now receiving the thanks of the kingdom. He sees without doubt

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<sup>49</sup> In a footnote in *Observations on the nature of civil liberty...* (1776), Price gives the number of 5,723 electors. This information, based on James Burgh's *Political disquisitions* (1774-1775) is potentially misleading, as D O Thomas comments: 'What Burgh's computation established was not that half the members of the House of Commons, but half the greatest number known to have been present at a debate at any one time, *could* have been elected by 5,723 votes' (*Price: political writings*, 25-6, n.2).

<sup>50</sup> This is an allusion to the Fox-North Coalition that was negotiated in 1783. The Whigs imposed a choice of ministers on the king, thus trampling on the royal prerogative of appointing members of the government. In January 1784, George III was 'receiving the thanks of the kingdom' for appointing the Younger Pitt as First lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Price repeatedly voiced his indignation at the coalition. In early 1783 he denounced it as 'detestable', as 'a struggle of ambitious and disappointed men to get into power' and 'one of the most scandalous events that ever happen'd', in letters to Shelburne and Franklin (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 175, 177; see also *The state of the public debts* (1783)).

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that the best security of his throne is the love of his people; and that he can in no way be so great and happy as by throwing himself upon them, and promoting all their endeavours to gain a House of Commons that shall *really* represent them, and speak their voice. Some of his present ministers also have distinguished themselves as advocates for a parliamentary reform;<sup>51</sup> and all applications or petitions which have this object in view, must meet with their approbation and concurrence. This then is the auspicious moment for such exertions as the burghs in Scotland are now making.<sup>52</sup> – May they go on and prosper!

I request the favour of you, Sir, to convey these sentiments to your committee. I rely on their candour, and hope they will excuse me, should they think that any improper expressions have escaped me.

I am, Sir, with great respect and the best wishes, their and your very obedient and humble servant,

RICH. PRICE.

*Newington Green, near London,*

*Jan. 27. 1784*

*Mr Thomas M'Grugar, [sic] Sec. &c.*

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<sup>51</sup> In the early 1780s, Pitt was favourable to economic and moderate parliamentary reform such as that proposed by Wyvill's Yorkshire Association, and introduced motions to that effect in 1782 and 1783. After he became Prime Minister (First Lord of the Treasury) in December 1783, he renewed his efforts with a modest bill on 17 April 1785, proposing to disfranchise 36 rotten boroughs and redistribute the seats to large cities. The motion was defeated and henceforward Pitt renounced any new attempt and concentrated on economic reform. Price may also allude to the Duke of Richmond (1735-1806), who introduced a parliamentary reform bill including universal male suffrage in 1780 and joined Pitt's cabinet as Master-General of the Ordnance.

<sup>52</sup> Price's optimism proved mistaken. In April 1785, the Convention of burghs decided to lay aside parliamentary reform and concentrated on the bill relative to the internal government of burghs. After their failure to obtain the support of Charles James Fox and of Scottish whig MPs, it was Richard Brinsley Sheridan who finally introduced a bill in the Commons in 1787. After repeated unsuccessful motions, the reformers gave in in 1792, vanquished by the opposition of Henry Dundas and powerful Scottish vested interests. See Fletcher, *A memoir concerning the origin and progress of the reform...*, 29-129; W L Mathieson, *The awakening of Scotland. A history from 1747 to 1797* (Glasgow, 1910), 94-97, 106-107.

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#### 4. Letter from Richard Price to Joseph Willard, 7 October 1784.

Source: *The Literary Miscellany, Including Dissertations and Essays on Subjects of Literature, Science, and Morals; Biographical and Historical Sketches; Critical Remarks on Language; With Occasional Reviews* (1805-1806), vol.2, 358-61.<sup>53</sup> [hereafter AHN].

Newington Green, Oct. 7, 1784.

Dear Sir,

I am ashamed, when I reflect on the trouble, which I am likely to give you by this letter. One of the parcels,<sup>54</sup> which you will receive with it, contains copies of a pamphlet, which I have just printed,<sup>55</sup> and which I take the liberty to request you to convey to the persons, to whom they are directed. I am afraid I am too presumptuous in directing part of this parcel to Congress. Will you be so good, as to consult Dr. Chauncey<sup>56</sup> and Mr. Gorham<sup>57</sup> on this subject, or any persons, whom you think to be proper judges? Should you and they see no impropriety in presenting these copies to Congress, I shall be much obliged to you for doing it at whatever

<sup>53</sup> In the same volume (115-7), the magazine also printed Price's 21 June 1781 letter to Willard. Spelling and capitalization apart, the magazine's version is very faithful to the manuscript original published in Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 104-6.

<sup>54</sup> Price had sent two 'parcel[s] of pamphlets consigned to the care of Mr Willard', one for Ezra Stiles and the other 'for his Excellency Governor [Jonathan] Trumbull' (Price to Ezra Stiles, 15 October 1784, Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 235).

<sup>55</sup> *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution*. On 23 July Price had written Willard that the pamphlet was 'almost printed' and that he would 'send the copies to America in a few weeks' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 222).

<sup>56</sup> Charles Chauncy (1705-1787), minister of the First Church in Boston. Price and Chauncy debated on political and theological matters (Charles H Lippy, 'Trans-Atlantic dissent and the Revolution: Richard Price and Charles Chauncy', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 4 (1977), 31-7).

<sup>57</sup> Nathaniel Gorham (1738-1796), merchant and revolutionary politician, had been sitting in the Massachusetts house of representatives since 1771 and was elected to the Congress in 1782, where he sat intermittently. He went on to serve as President of Congress for a few months in 1786 and becoming a member of the federal convention in 1787. On 26 December 1785, Gorham thanked Price for 'your very valuable Books [he] received and took care to disperse ... in a manner likely to answer the best purpose' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 328).

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time and in whatever manner, you may think best. Not meaning to publish this pamphlet in this country, I have printed only such a small number of copies, as may be sufficient for the purpose of making it known in America; leaving my friends there to reprint it, if they please.<sup>58</sup> The offer which I now make of it to the attention of the United States, I find to be necessary to satisfy my own judgment; and, having done this, I shall be perfectly easy, whatever its fate may prove. My mind is deeply impressed with a conviction of the sentiments, it contains; but I am afraid some of them will not be approved.<sup>59</sup> Should this be the case, I hope I shall at least have credit given me with respect to the uprightness of my intentions. It is certainly impossible, that in the advice, I have given, I should have any indirect views; and this, I hope, will dispose those, who may not like it, to treat it with candor. One part however of this pamphlet cannot but be acceptable; I mean the letter at the end from Mr. Turgot, the prime minister of France at the beginning of the American war.<sup>60</sup> I am glad I have it in my power to convey such a letter to the United States; and the reflexion on the service, I may do by this, has a tendency to relieve me under the apprehensions of the defects and faults, that will be found in the other parts of the pamphlet.

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<sup>58</sup> Price sent the pamphlet to a few British political allies, such as Major Cartwright and Shelburne (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 230, 258), and finally had this pamphlet ('originally intended only for America') published in London to counter 'the danger of a spurious edition' as he claimed in the Advertisement to the English edition (*Price: political writings*, 116).

<sup>59</sup> Price feared his strictures on slavery would cause offence in the South and this happened indeed in South Carolina (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 290).

<sup>60</sup> Price voiced similar sentiments in a letter to Benjamin Rush a week later (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 234). The economist Anne Robert Jacques Turgot (1727-1781) was Minister and *Contrôleur Général des Finances* in France from 1774 to 1776. On 22 March 1778, he wrote a letter to Price criticizing the constitutions of the American states (especially the absence of complete religious and commercial freedom, and the imitation of British practices such as bicameral legislatures and the balance of power) and urging Price and other enlightened lovers of mankind to join in an effort to draft legislation for America (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 1-19).

## Rémy Duthille

I have a grateful sense of that kind partiality, which has led you and the college, of which you are president, to wish to be possessed of a collection of my works. I now send it you; and hope it will be accepted, as a testimony of my respect and good wishes.<sup>61</sup> I have written the articles on annuities, assurances, life annuities, funds, and survivorships in the new edition of Chambers' Universal Dictionary,<sup>62</sup> with the modern improvements by Dr. Rees.<sup>63</sup> I have also made some communications to the Royal Society, particularly those in volumes lxiv, lxix, lix, liv, and liii, of the philosophical transactions. The three first of these communications have been republished, and the second much corrected and enlarged, in the fourth edition of my treatise on reversionary payments.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Price's wish was fulfilled. On 3 March 1785, Willard sent Price a letter in the name of the Fellows of Harvard College to thank him 'for his highly acceptable present, to this University, of a collection of his learned and valuable Works' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol. 2, 265).

<sup>62</sup> *Cyclopaedia: or, an universal dictionary of arts and sciences*, originally by Ephraim Chambers (1728), was republished with a new supplement by Dr Abraham Rees (London, 1786). In the preface to the new edition, Rees gratefully acknowledged Price's contribution, mentioning his authorship of the five articles mentioned in this letter, and of that on 'bills of mortality' (*Cyclopaedia*..., vol.1, iv). Apart from Rees's preface, the five volumes are unpaginated. Price's articles, based on his *Observations on reversionary payments*... (1772), are substantial, running over several columns and are accompanied with charts using the most recent figures Price could gather; thus the life expectancy table joined to the article on life annuities is based on the register of mortality of Northampton from 1735 to 1780.

<sup>63</sup> Dr Abraham Rees (1743-96) had been appointed minister at the Old Jewry in 1783, a position which he retained until his death. Price mentions discussing with Rees his new edition of Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* in a letter to Shelburne in July 1779 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 49).

<sup>64</sup> The communications are: 'Observations on the state of population in Manchester, and other adjacent places. By Dr. Percival. Communicated by the Rev. Dr. Price'; 'Farther proofs of the insalubrity of marshy situations. In a letter from the Rev. Dr. Price to the Rev. Dr. Horsley', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society [Phil. Trans.]*, 64 (1774), 54-66, 96-8; 'Observations on the expectations of lives, the increase of mankind, the influence of great towns on population, and particularly the state of London with respect to healthfulness and number of inhabitants. In a Letter from Mr. Richard Price, F.R.S. to Benjamin Franklin, Esq; LL.D. and F.R.S.', *Phil. Trans.*, 59 (1769), 89-125; 'A demonstration of the second rule in the essay towards the solution of a problem in the doctrine of chances, published in the Philosophical Transactions,

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Mr. Herschel is going on with his observations on the heavens.<sup>65</sup> I expect to hear a good deal of them at the meetings of the Royal Society during the approaching winter. I believe that no one, besides himself, has yet tried to make such large reflecting telescopes, as those, which he makes; nor do I know, that any one has the same quickness and skill in observing.

I return you many thanks for your letter by Mr. Tracy,<sup>66</sup> and for transmitting to me the vote of thanks for Hoadly's works, with which you and the Fellows of Harvard College have honored me.<sup>67</sup> I wish it was in my power to give the University more substantial proofs of my respect and good wishes.

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Vol. LIII. Communicated by the Rev. Mr. Richard Price, in a letter to Mr. John Canton, M. A. F. R. S., *Phil. Trans.*, 54 (1764), 296-325; 'An essay towards solving a problem in the doctrine of chances. By the Late Rev. Mr. Bayes, F. R. S. Communicated by Mr. Price, in a letter to John Canton, A. M. F. R. S.', *Phil. Trans.*, 53 (1763), 370-418.

<sup>65</sup> The astronomer William Herschel (1738-1822) discovered the 'Georgian planet' (Uranus) on 13 March 1781 and presented his findings in several papers read to the Royal Society ('A letter from William Herschel, F.R.S.', *Phil. Trans.*, 73 [1783], 1-3; 'On the diameter and magnitude of the Georgium Sidus', *Phil. Trans.*, 73 [1783], 4-14). On 21 July 1781 and 6 October 1783, Price had already written to Willard two letters giving details on Herschel's discovery based on those papers (*Correspondence*, vol.2, 105; vol.3, 196-7). See *infra*, Letter 7.

<sup>66</sup> Possibly Nathaniel Tracy (1751-1796), merchant and revolutionary privateer from Newbury, Massachusetts. A graduate of Harvard, he fitted out several privateers for the Continental Congress between 1775 and 1783, and held various official positions in Massachusetts, rising to the state senate in 1783. In 1784, he 'sailed for Europe, where he spent two years unsuccessfully trying to straighten out his affairs and collect and pay debts' (William Pencak, 'Tracy, Nathaniel', American National Biography Online, at <http://www.anb.org/articles/01/01-00894.html>).

<sup>67</sup> Taking the opportunity of Andrew Eliot's departure for Boston, Price had offered the University a three-volume set of the works (1773 ed.) of Bishop Benjamin Hoadly (1711-1776). The vote of thanks passed by the Fellows of Harvard on 24 June 1784 is reprinted in Price, *Correspondence* (Price to Andrew Eliot, 8 March 1784, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 212). Price often praised Hoadly for his views on religious tolerance and his role in the 'cause of civil and religious liberty' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 163), and quoted him as one of the men who most contributed to enlightening the world in *A discourse on the love of our country* (in *Price: political writings*, 25, 134, 174, 182).

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The inclosed letters, which I have just received from Dr. Jebb,<sup>68</sup> with the five pamphlets, which I convey to you by his desire, with his respects and good wishes to you and Dr. Waterhouse,<sup>69</sup> contain the only answer, I am at present able to give to your inquiries about our Universities.

The supernumerary copies of my pamphlet, which I have sent to you, Mr. Gorham, and Dr. Chauncey, I wish to be given away to any persons, to whom you and they may think proper to present them.

Mrs. Price was last week attacked a fourth time with the palsy, and she lies now in a state of depression and helplessness, which is very threatening, and almost overpowers my weak spirits.<sup>70</sup> With great regard and every possible good wish I am, dear sir, your most obedient and

Humble servant,

RICHARD PRICE.

*P.S.* When I wrote the above, I intended to send a copy of my pamphlet to each member of Congress; but I now think there would be more parade in this, than the pamphlet deserves, and therefore I have contented myself with offering twenty five copies to the acceptance of the president of Congress.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Unlocated.

<sup>69</sup> Benjamin Waterhouse (1754-1846), physician and scientist born in Newport, RI. After medical studies at Leyden, he was installed as Harvard's first professor of medicine in October 1783.

<sup>70</sup> Sarah Price, née Blundell (1728-1786) was afflicted with palsy. At that time, Price repeatedly mentioned his wife's failing health in his correspondence. In October 1784, he described her condition to the Earl of Shelburne in terms very similar to those employed here, adding more details, and voicing his 'dismal apprehension of losing a companion, partner and friend to whom for 27 years the happiness of my life has been in great measure owing' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 230).

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania (1744-1800).

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I should have been glad to have accompanied Mr. Turgot's letter with an English translation of it; but I expect, that a better translation of it, than I can furnish, will soon be sent to the United States by the Count of Mirabeau, in a piece on hereditary nobility.<sup>72</sup> I wish this to be made as public as possible. The Count de Mirabeau is the son of the Marquis de Mirabeau, author of *L'Ami des Hommes*.<sup>73</sup> He is himself an excellent writer; and this piece, intended particularly for America, is, I am informed, much admired by the best judges, who have seen it.

I shall wait for your farther orders with respect to the subject of Dr. Jebb's letters.

Two gentlemen of my acquaintance are going for Paris, and I shall take care to convey by them your letter to Monsieur Jeurat.<sup>74</sup>

I want to convey parcels of my pamphlet to several friends in Philadelphia, New York, &c. but I have given you too much trouble, and I shall wait, till I can hear of some ships, that sail for these places.

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<sup>72</sup> Price intended to include an English translation of Turgot's letter but his publisher Thomas Cadell failed to provide a satisfactory one (Thomas, Stephens and Jones, *A bibliography of the works of Richard Price*, 117). Turgot's letter was translated by Honoré Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), who was to become a brilliant orator in revolutionary France. Mirabeau frequented Price when he visited England in 1784-1785. The 'piece on hereditary nobility' mentioned by Price is Mirabeau's lengthy *Considérations sur l'ordre de Cincinnatus* (1785), an adaptation of a pamphlet by Ædanus Burke that attacked the newly-founded Order of the Cincinnati as a hereditary aristocracy that would fatally undermine the United States' republican virtue; the appendices included a translation of Price's *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* and of Turgot's letter. Price announced Mirabeau's translation to other correspondents, including Benjamin Rush (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 234).

<sup>73</sup> In 1784, Mirabeau was still seen as the rakish son of his much better-known father, Victor Riquetti, Marquis de Mirabeau (1715-1789) and author of *L'ami des hommes, ou traité sur la population* (1756). It is also as 'the Son to the Marquis de Mirabeau, Author of *L'Ami des Hommes*' that Franklin introduced Mirabeau in the letter of recommendation he wrote to Price on 7 September 1784 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 226).

<sup>74</sup> Probably Edme Jeurat (1725-1803), French astronomer and member of the *Académie des Sciences de Paris*. On 19 January 1778, a paper by Jeurat on 'an iconantipidic telescope' was read to the Royal Society (*Phil. Trans.*, 69 [1779], 130-8).

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## 5. Letter from Richard Price to the Printer of the *Volunteer's Journal*, 5 March 1785.

Source: *Freeman's Journal*; or, *The North-American Intelligencer*, 11 May 1785 (Philadelphia) [AHN].

Also published in: *Columbian Herald* (Charleston, SC), 19 May 1785; *New-Jersey Gazette* (Burlington, NY), 6 June 1785; *Loudon's New-York Packet* (New York), 9 June 1785; *South-Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser* (Charleston, SC), 21 June 1785; *Essex Journal* (Newburyport, MA), 22 June 1785; *Salem Gazette* (Salem, MA), 28 June 1785; *Plymouth Journal*, and the *Massachusetts Advertiser* (Plymouth, MA), 7 July 1785.

Extract of a Letter from Dr. Price to the Printer of the *Volunteer's Journal*, &c.

“All civil authority being derived from the people, and forfeited as soon as it is exercised in any other way than as a trust from them, it is trifling to say they have a right to petition for the correction of abuses. Without all doubt, they (that is a fair majority of them) have a right not only to petition, but to claim. And possessing this right, they must also have a right to assemble, for the purpose of exercising it, and to appoint delegates and conventions for collecting and concentrating their sentiments. I have, therefore, been surprised to find, that the delegation for the purpose in Ireland should have been called illegal and unconstitutional.<sup>75</sup> If, indeed, this is true, it proves that the laws in Ireland

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<sup>75</sup> This may be an allusion to the debates that took place at the opening of the second session of the House of Commons of Ireland on 20 and 21 January 1785. The Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ‘lamented the lawless outrages and unconstitutional proceedings which had taken place’ lately, alluding to the meetings of the Volunteers. A member proposed an address to the king to denounce ‘certain popular disturbances’ and ‘declare our abhorrence of such lawless and unconstitutional proceedings’. On the next day, Henry Flood and others defended the constitutionality of the proceedings of the Volunteers of Ireland, against those who called the national congress formed by the Volunteers ‘an unlawful assembly, unknown to the constitution of this country ... a mock representation’ that ‘usurped the authority of parliament’. The address was adopted (*The Parliamentary register: or, history of the proceedings and debates of the House of Commons of Ireland, the second session of the fourth Parliament in the reign of his present Majesty; which met at Dublin on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, and ended the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, 1785* [Dublin, 1785], 1-44, quotations at 2, 31, 36-7; for Flood’s and Grattan’s speeches, see especially, 21, 37, 41-2).

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establish slavery, and that the constitution (in consequence of an accumulation of abuses) has deviated so far from its original principles, as to render a reformation absolutely necessary, and the efforts of the people for accomplishing it, their indispensable duty. Such efforts, if conducted with temper and firmness, must in the end succeed; for it is impossible that the aristocratical despots, who have an interest in maintaining abuses, and who would keep mankind forever in ignorance and abjectness, by giving the name of innovation to reformation,<sup>76</sup> should be able always to stand their ground against the general voice and requisitions of an enlightened people, I hope therefore, notwithstanding repeated disappointments, The People of Ireland will Persevere. They have just now an encouragement of a very particular nature. Several of the friends of that parliamentary reform, for which they are struggling, are now in power. A late event has shewn our sovereign that he would be much greater and happier at the head of a real representation of his people. Our prime minister has assured us, that he will exert all his abilities to obtain the object.<sup>77</sup> The principal leader of the opposition, (Mr. Fox) concurs in this with the minister; and lord North himself, since his coalition with the Whigs, may be expected to become a less violent enemy.

These are circumstances which render the present moment peculiarly favorable; and ought to be anxiously improved. A liberal and virtuous people, contending earnestly and yet decently, and without tumult and riot, for the blessings of legitimate government, is one of the noblest spectacles that can be seen on this earth; may Britain and Ireland exhibit such a spectacle, and never relax their zeal, till they have recovered their rights.

I am, with all good wishes,  
Your most obedient and humble servant,  
RICHARD PRICE.”

<sup>76</sup> This passage seems to anticipate the peroration of *A discourse on the love of our country* (1789): ‘Tremble ye oppressors of the world! Take warning all ye supporters of slavish governments and slavish hierarchies! Call no more (absurdly and wickedly) reformation, innovation.’ (*Price: political writings*, 196).

<sup>77</sup> On the Fox-North Coalition and Pitt’s attempts at parliamentary reform, see *supra*, notes 50 and 51.

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Newington Green, March 5, 1785.

**6. Letter from Richard Price to Mr Eliot<sup>78</sup>, 27 May 1786.**

Source: Ticknor Autograph Collection, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College.

Courtesy of Dartmouth College Library.

This letter is enclosed in that to Alexander Chisholm (number 1).

Dr Price presents his best respects to Mr Eliot, and returns him many thanks for a letter wch he has just received from him by Dr Gordon.<sup>79</sup> Mr Eliot's civility and favourable opinion make indeed a deep impression upon Dr Price; and he ardently wishes him every valuable enjoymt and blessing.

Newington Green May 27<sup>th</sup> 1786.

**7. Letter from Richard Price to Ezra Stiles,<sup>80</sup> 16 June 1788.**

Source: *New Haven Gazette*, 4 September 1788. [AHN].

<sup>78</sup> Samuel Eliot (d.1820), 'a wealthy Boston merchant, benefactor of Harvard, and great-grandfather of Charles Eliot who was one of the most well-known presidents of Harvard'. Price is answering Eliot's letter, dated Boston, 9 April 1786 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 16). An ardent patriot and a member of the Sons of Liberty, he subscribed to non-importation agreements in 1768 and 1774 (John W Tyler, *Smugglers and patriots: Boston merchants and the advent of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1986), 262-3).

<sup>79</sup> William Gordon (1727/8-1807) was a Dissenting minister at Ipswich (1752), then at Gravel Lane Church in Southwark (1764). A correspondent of Price (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.1, 207, vol.2, 269-70), he was also in contact with colonial leaders and sympathized with the patriots. He emigrated to America in 1770 and was ordained as pastor of the Third Congregational Church at Roxbury, MA, two years later. He served as chaplain in the army and in 1776 started collecting materials for a history of the American Revolution, which was finally published in 1788 (Alexander Gordon, 'Gordon, William (1727/8-1807)', rev. Troy O Bickham, *ODNB*).

<sup>80</sup> On Ezra Stiles (1727-1795), see *supra*, note 15. Price had been corresponding with Stiles since at least 1772, and kept him informed of scientific discoveries and political developments in Britain.

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Also published in: *Weekly Monitor* (Lichfield, CT), 8 September 1788; *Daily Advertiser* (New York), 9 September 1788; *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia), 10 September 1788; *New-Hampshire Spy* (Portsmouth, NH), 16 September 1788. The *Lichfield Weekly Monitor* gives the date of 16 June 1788.

*Extract of a letter from the Reverend Dr. Price, of London, to the Reverend President Stiles.*

Hackney, June 1788.

There was lately read to our Royal Society, a paper of Dr Herschel's, in which he gives an account of the elements of the new planet and its two satellites.<sup>81</sup> These satellites revolve, one of them in about nine, and the other in about thirteen and an half days.<sup>82</sup> The planet moves at about double the distance of Saturn. The quantity of matter is seventeen times greater than the quantity of matter in the earth, its magnitude about eighty times greater, its density above four times less, and the power of gravity on its surface makes a heavy body fall 18 feet in a second. The grand reflecting telescope, by which Dr. Herschel hopes to make many more discoveries in the Heavens, is not yet finished: It is forty feet long, and its diameter such that it is easy to walk through it.

With great regard I am,  
dear Sir, your's,  
RICHARD PRICE.

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<sup>81</sup> On Herschel, see *supra*, note 65. The paper referred to in the present letter was read on 22 May 1788 ('On the Georgian Planet and its satellites', *Phil. Trans.*, 78 [1788], 364-78); it was also published in pamphlet form (W Herschel, *An account of the discovery of two satellites revolving around the Georgian Planet* ([London, 1788]). Price kept Stiles informed of the progress of Herschel's discoveries (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 201).

<sup>82</sup> On 17 February 1787, Price wrote to William Adams: 'On thursday last an account was read to the Royal Society of Dr Herschel's having just discover'd that the new planet to which he has given the name of the *Georgium Sidus* has two satellites one of which revolves in nine and the other in thirteen days.' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 125).

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## 8. Letter from Price to a correspondent in Philadelphia [Benjamin Rush?], 16 June 1788.

Source: *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia, PA), 3 September 1788. [AHN].

Also published in: *New Jersey Journal* (Elizabethtown, NJ), 10 September 1788; *Newport Herald* (Newport, NJ), 11 September 1788; *Columbian Herald or the Independent Courier of North-America* (Charleston, SC), 22 September 1788; *Weekly Monitor* (Lichfield, CT), 22 September 1788; *Salem Mercury* (Salem, MA), 23 September 1788; *New-Hampshire Recorder* (Kenne, NH), 23 September 1788; *Vermont Gazette* (Bennington, VT), 29 September 1788.

Extract from a letter from Dr. Price, to a gentleman in Philadelphia, dated Hackney, near London, June 16.

I rejoice in the probability there is of the establishment among them of an energetic federal<sup>83</sup> government, and I hope that by this time the new constitution has been adopted by a majority that will be sufficient to bear down opposition, and to engage the *acquiescence* of all the most wise and virtuous part of the states. No society can prosper, if, after a fair discussion, the minority will not submit to the decisions of the majority. The wise and virtuous must see this, and be guided by it. I admire in this instance Dr. Franklin's conduct – It has been worthy of himself<sup>84</sup> – The conduct, likewise, of the minority in the state of Massachusetts seems to

<sup>83</sup> The word 'federal' is omitted in the *New York Morning Post* of 5 September 1788.

<sup>84</sup> Benjamin Franklin was elected a member of the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention in March, 1787. The Convention sat between November 20 and December 15, 1787, and finally ratified the federal constitution by a vote of 46 to 23. Both 'Constitutionalists' (antifederalists who wanted to cling to the Articles of Confederation) and 'Republicans' (federalists) claimed Franklin as their leader. Refusing to take sides, Franklin spoke very little during the convention but 'delivered a conciliatory address at the close of the Convention which was widely published by the Federalists late 1787 and early 1788' (Merrill Jensen ed., *The documentary history of the ratification of the Constitution* (23 vols., Madison, WI, 1976–), vol.2, 28-35, 645, quotation at 728). Rush, a federalist, voted in favour of the Constitution and delivered a speech calling for the end of differences and a unanimous vote of ratification (ibid., 592-6).

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have done them great credit.<sup>85</sup> In *Pennsylvania* the minority have acted upon a different principle; but I hope they will see the unreasonableness of their conduct, and not endeavour to disturb the public peace.<sup>86</sup> I think with Mr. Adams pretty much on the subject of government, and cannot but approve of the new Constitution as fundamentally right.<sup>87</sup>

The trial of Mr. Hastings<sup>88</sup> agitates us exceedingly. It is now put off to next winter, and there is no possibility of knowing when it will be over. For my own part, I am scarcely able to bear my feelings, when I think of the rapacity, treachery, and cruelty which have been practiced by a<sup>89</sup> country in the East Indies.

The abolition of the slave trade is another subject which engages much of the public attention. A book is just published by Mr. Clarkson,

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<sup>85</sup> The Massachusetts Convention ratified the Constitution by a vote of 187 to 168 on February 6, 1788. After the vote, several members of the minority spoke, saying 'that they had been treated fairly; that they would support the Constitution; and that they would encourage their constituents to support [it] ... Federalists heaped praise both privately and publicly on the conciliating Antifederalists' and circulated a letter by Washington extolling the minority's 'candid and conciliatory behaviour' ('The acquiescence of the Massachusetts minority, 6 February – 24 May [1788]', *Documentary history*, vol.17, 1645-57, quotation at 1645).

<sup>86</sup> In Pennsylvania, the conflict between Constitutionlists and Republicans was bitter and protracted. The antifederalist minority refused to sit on the Assembly to prevent a quorum and called for a popular convention. After the federal constitution was ratified, the debate intensified with slurs and charges of corruption flying around. The minority continued to campaign for amendments and presented petitions from the Western counties; antifederalist agitation erupted into riot at Carlyle in December 1787. See 'The aftermath of ratification in Pennsylvania', *Documentary history*, vol.2, 642-707.

<sup>87</sup> Price was convinced by the argument developed by John Adams in *A defence of the constitutions of government of the United States of America* (1787) in favour of the separation of powers and the establishment of several chambers rather than one, as he acknowledged in letters to Arthur Lee and William Bingham in early 1787 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 120, 135) and in *A future period of improvement in the state of mankind...*, in *Price: political writings*, 25, 164).

<sup>88</sup> Warren Hastings (1732–1818), governor-general of Bengal until 1785, was formally impeached on May 10, 1787, on charges of corruption in his dealings with the raja of Benares. Edmund Burke relentlessly denounced Hastings, and the trial became a public event, drawing large crowds at the time Price wrote this letter. Hastings was finally acquitted by the Lords in 1795.

<sup>89</sup> The *New York Morning Post* has 'this country'.

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entitled, *The Impolicy of the Slave Trade*, which I have read with emotions of horror; and which if duly attended to, must give the finishing blow to this diabolical traffic.<sup>90</sup>

### 9. Letter from Price to the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, 9 November 1789.

Source: *Massachusetts Centinel* (Boston, MA), 12 May 1790. [AHN]. Also published in total or in part in: *Gazette of the United States* (New York), 19 May 1790; *Worcester Magazine* (Worcester, MA), 20 May 1790; *Pennsylvania Packet* (Philadelphia), 25 May 1790; *Freeman's Journal; or, The North-American Intelligencer* (Philadelphia), 26 May 1790; *Hampshire Chronicle* (Springfield, MA), 26 May 1790.

Extract of a letter from Dr. PRICE, to the Duke of ROCHEFOUCAULT.  
Hackney, near London, Nov. 9, 1789.

The Address to the National Assembly, which is annexed to this, having been proposed by Dr. Price, he hopes that the Duke of Rochefoucault will not be displeas'd to learn, that it was received with an ardour difficult to be described, by an Assembly composed of the Earl of STANHOPE, of the Lord Mayor of London, of many Members of the Parliament of England, and of more than three hundred persons of distinction<sup>91</sup> assembled upon the occasion of the Anniversary of the English Revolution, in order to celebrate that event. If the expressions of their admiration, if the wishes of prosperity, which they request the Duke of Rochefoucault to present, should appear temerity on their part, they hope the National Assembly of France will yet excuse it, as the effect of an effusion of zeal, in the general cause of publick liberty, that no apprehensions of inconvenience could restrain. The Representatives of

<sup>90</sup> On this paragraph, see *supra*, Introduction.

<sup>91</sup> The dinner held on 4 November 1789 was attended by the Lord Mayor of London, William Pickett, several lords (Earls of Effingham and Stanhope, Lord William Russell), and at least five members of the Commons (Henry Beaufoy, Sir Watkin Lewes, William Middleton, John Sawbridge, William Smith – two other MPs, Joshua Grigby and John Sawbridge, who were members of the society may have attended too). See *An abstract of the history and proceedings of the Revolution Society, in London* (London, 1789), 52–54.

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the French Nation labour for the Universe as well as for France, the whole world is interested in their success.

**10. Letter from Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt to Price, 2 December 1789.**

Source: *Massachusetts Centinel* (Boston, MA), 12 May 1790. [AHN].

Paris, *Wednesday, Dec.2, 1789.*

It truly belonged to the illustrious apostle of liberty, Dr. PRICE, to propose a motion tending to offer up to that liberty the most distinguished homage – *that of national prejudices*. The address of felicitations, which the Earl of Stanhope has done the Duke of Rochefoucault the honour of transmitting to him, was received by the National Assembly with the liveliest applause. The Assembly perceived in it the dawn of that beautiful day, when two nations, which, in spite of their political divisions, and the diversity of their governments, have always esteemed each other, will form a close and intimate connection, founded on the similitude of their opinions, and supported by their common enthusiasm for liberty. – The Assembly has accordingly charged their President to write to the Earl of Stanhope.

The Duke of Rochefoucault, happy to have been selected for this honourable commission, has, with zeal, gave [*sic*] an account of it to the National Assembly, and has made known to it the title, which a society, whose object is so noble and patriotick, has to the esteem of the French nation.

He takes the liberty of requesting a copy of the Doctor's sermon; every thing that proceeds from his pen is precious. Doctor Price surely sees, with satisfaction, the principles of their common friend, Mr. TURGOT, propagated for the happiness of France, and of the human race.<sup>92</sup>

The Duke of Rochefoucault has the honour of presenting his sincere compliments to Mr. Price.

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<sup>92</sup> La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt repeatedly urged Price to send him letters from Turgot (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 290, 301, 326).

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**11. Letter from Price to the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, 6 July 1790.**<sup>93</sup>

Source: Archives municipales de Mantes la Jolie, collection Clerc de Landresse.

Courtesy of the Archives municipales de Mantes la Jolie.

Hackney July 6<sup>th</sup> 1790

Dear Sir,

I send you these lines by the hands of Jaume.<sup>94</sup> My ignorance of the French language is a continual source of mortification to me by rendering me incapable of conversing with the Frenchmen who honour me by their notice. But I have been more fortunate in Mr Jaume. He can make me understand him in English, and I have been made happy by the opportunities he has given me of conversing with him. He is to set out for Paris this week in order to be present there on the 14<sup>th</sup>. This must be (if not too tumultuous) a glorious day, and will contribute much to keep alive that patriotick spirit which has emancipated France. A design has been formed to send a deputation from our Revolution Society to attend the celebrations of this day and to shew its concurrence in the joy and triumph with which it must inspire all the friends of human liberty and happiness. But the truth is, that the Society in its present state is not capable of sending a deputation that shall be sufficiently respectable. None of our men of rank have joyned it except Earl Stanhope. The company at the annual feast on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November has indeed been always numerous and respectable, and it was particularly so on the last Anniversary of our<sup>95</sup> Revolution. But the Society itself as distinguished from the company at the feast has been but lately formed and consists only of about 150

<sup>93</sup> The *Journal de la Société de 1789* (no. 7, 17 July 1790) published a French translation of extracts from this letter. The editors of Price's correspondence have translated this extract back into English (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 306-307). See Introduction above, for a commentary of the differences between the original letter and the version published in France.

<sup>94</sup> Either François Thomas (1750-?) or Honoré-Henry (1761-?), citizens of Grasse (Var) and deputies for Toulon in the third estate (*Correspondence*, vol.3, 293, note).

<sup>95</sup> Price crossed out the word 'the' and corrected by adding 'our' – he was concerned to avoid any confusion between the celebrations of the French Revolution (on July 14) and of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (on November 4). Price refers to the Revolution Society dinner of November 4, 1789.

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persons in middle life but honest, and worthy and devoutly attached to the cause of civil and religious liberty.

Permit me, Sir, to condole with you on the death of Dr Franklin. I have been delighted with the honour done to his memory by your national Assembly.<sup>96</sup> I think a greater honour scarcely possible. I had been long happy in his friendship, and in one of his last letters to me he mentions you as the good Duke de la Rochefoucauld.<sup>97</sup> At the beginning of last winter he sent an account of his life writ with his own hand to one of his friends here with a direction that he and I should peruse and examine it. It brings his history no lower than the year 1757, and he has not been able to continue it. It will, when publish'd, shew by a striking example how talents united to prudence, industry and virtue may elevate a man from a low origin to the first consequence and dignity; from being the son of a tallow-chandler and the apprentice of a Printer to an eminence with which that of Kings ought not to be compared.<sup>98</sup>

I understand that there has been an idea entertained in your national Assembly of an alliance between Britain and France for preserving the peace of Europe, and of a proposal from the national Assembly to the British Parliamt for this purpose. This is indeed a glorious design and worthy of that union of Philosophy to Politics which now makes France an example to the world. But I distrust my own country, tho' it is certain that is can be saved from the calamities with which its public debts threaten it by no other means than such a perpetuity of peace as might be produced by such an alliance. The contrary policy is that which seems to be adopted by our governmt; and we seem to me to be taking measures for provoking war. Indeed, Sir, I am grieved when I think of this, and

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<sup>96</sup> Benjamin Franklin died on April 17, 1790. Mirabeau delivered a moving funeral eulogy to the *Assemblée Nationale* on June 11. The *Assemblée*, and many Jacobin clubs in Paris and other French cities went into mourning. See La Rochefoucauld's letter to Price, 21 June 1789, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 305.

<sup>97</sup> In a letter dated 31 May 1789, Franklin asked Price to convey volumes of the *Transactions* of the American Philosophical Society to 'the good Duke de Rochefoucauld' (*Correspondence*, vol. 3, 228).

<sup>98</sup> Price made remarks very similar to the last three sentences of this paragraph in a letter to Benjamin Rush on 19 June 1790 (*Correspondence*, vol.3, 303).

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observe the dangers we are in of being involved in another war by a foolish dispute about commerce<sup>99</sup> and the encouragement which our alliance with the King of Prussia has given to his ambition.<sup>100</sup> France will, I hope, be wiser. I am charmed with the declaration of the National Assembly, that it renounces for ever all views of conquest and all offensive wars.<sup>101</sup> Well may a great kingdom furnished so amply with the power of self-

<sup>99</sup> Price alludes to the Nootka Sound crisis, a dispute between Spain and Britain that broke out in May 1789 when the Spanish navy evicted British merchants from a trading post for furs on Vancouver Island on the western coast of Canada. On 5 July 1790, Britain formally demanded compensation from Madrid. Britain's relationships with France were strained by the Family Compact (see below note 141) and by factional struggles in France, because the French revolutionaries took the opportunity of the Nootka Sound crisis to transfer the power of making war and peace from the king to the *Assemblée Nationale*. Price and La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt feared the dispute might escalate into war. Spain finally defused the tension by granting concessions to Britain. See La Rochefoucauld's letter to Price, 6 June 1790, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 301, and the editors's note on the Nootka Sound crisis; for more detail see J Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution 1785-1795* (Edinburgh, 1997), 86-90; H V Evans, 'The Nootka Sound controversy in Anglo-French diplomacy, 1790', *The Journal of Modern History*, 46 (1974), 609-640.

<sup>100</sup> Britain signed a defensive treaty with Prussia on August 13, 1788, thus sealing the 'Triple Alliance' that also involved the United Provinces. In September 1787, Britain had remained inactive when the troops of Frederick William II of Prussia crushed the French-backed 'Patriot' revolt in the United Provinces and restored the stadtholder. Price sympathized with the Dutch Patriots and had been in contact with one of their leaders, J D Van der Capellen. In November-December 1787, he expressed his dismay at the British connivance with Prussia in the quashing of Dutch liberties. He feared that Pitt's attitude might provoke a war with France, noting that France was already drawing closer to its Russian and Spanish allies to counter the British threat ('Richard Price's journal for the period 25 March 1787 to 6 February 1791 deciphered by Beryl Thomas with an introduction and notes by D. O. Thomas', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 11 [1980], 381-82). See J Black, *The rise of the European powers, 1679-1793* (New York, London, 1990), 143-145, and Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution*, 59-62.

<sup>101</sup> On May 22, 1790, the National Assembly voted a decree that became known as the 'Déclaration de paix au monde'. Article 1 states that the right to declare war and make peace is lodged in 'the nation' (whose will is expressed by votes by the *Assemblée Nationale*). In article 4, the National Assembly 'declar[es], that the Nation renounced forever all ambition of conquest, and that it will not employ its forces against the liberties of any people' (the text of the decree is reprinted in *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860* (Paris, 1883), 1<sup>st</sup> ser., vol.15, 661-62; the English translation used here is the one provided in the *General Evening Post* on 27 May 1790).

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defence be satisfy'd with those powers and with that glory and internal happiness which it must derive from a constitution of governmt that is likely to be favourable to the improvemt and best interests of mankind.

The parcel containing Mr Turgot's letter<sup>102</sup> was delivered to one of my friends in this village to be convey'd by him with some other parcels to Paris. He has lately writ to the person at Paris to whom the parcels were sent to enquire about the reception of them and I am in hopes they are not lost. I ought to have taken a copy of M. Turgot's letter, but not suspecting the safety of the method of conveyance I omitted this.

The Earl of Wycombe<sup>103</sup> set out last week for Paris, and some others of my friends are going in order to be present there on the 14<sup>th</sup>. I can scarcely frame an Idea of a spectacle that would give me an equal pleasure to that which will be exhibited there on that day, and one of my friends has endeavoured to persuade me to accompany him, but my weak state of health and poor spirits make me incapable of bearing the hurry and fatigue.

Having been favoured some time ago with a letter from the Bishop of Autun on the subject of weights and measures, I have written to him, and committed the conveyance of my letter and of one to you to the French Ambassador.<sup>104</sup> I hope both letters have been received.

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<sup>102</sup> On January 13, 1790, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt had asked Price to send him any letter by Turgot that he might have in his possession (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 266). The duke's curiosity was aroused by Turgot's long and significant letter of 22 March, 1778, which Price had printed as an appendix to *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* in 1785. Much to his correspondent's disappointment, Price could only find one letter to send.

<sup>103</sup> John Henry Petty (1765-1809), 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Lansdowne, styled Viscount Fitzmaurice until 1784 and Earl Wycombe from 1784 until 1805 when he succeeded his father in the marquessate.

<sup>104</sup> The 10-page pamphlet *Proposition faite à l'Assemblée Nationale sur les poids et mesures par M. l'évêque d'Autun* (Paris, 1790). The bishop of Autun was Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, commonly known as Talleyrand (1754-1838). The French ambassador was Anne César, Marquis de La Luzerne (1741-1791). Price forwarded several copies of the pamphlet to Sir Joseph Banks on 17 April 1790 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 279; see the editors' notes for details on Talleyrand's desire for an Anglo-French alliance and for collaboration between the Paris *Académie des Sciences* and the Royal Society in London).

Rémy Duthille

I have lately had the pleasure of conversing with Dr Gem.<sup>105</sup> He is probably now at Paris; and when you happen to see him I shall be glad you would deliver my respects to him, and also to the Ct Chabot and M. D. Chatelet.<sup>106</sup> Much will on the 14<sup>th</sup> depend on the vigilance of the Marquiss of Fayette.<sup>107</sup> How distinguish'd is he! I remember how warm he was with zeal for American liberty when in London at the time of the American war. Little did he then think of the share he was to have in delivering not only America but his own country – But I am truly ashamed of the length of this letter, and it is high time to conclude with assuring you of the gratitude and ardent respect with which I have ever the honour to be, Dear Sr, your obliged and very humble Servt.

Richd Price

The parcel containing M. Turgot's letter was sent by the diligence to Mr Denis Rue Mazarine about two months ago.<sup>108</sup>

I am now engaged with many of my friends in making preparations for celebrating the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month by a public dinner. The inclosed Advertismt has been publish'd this morning.<sup>109</sup> Earl Stanhope is to be he chair if not hinder'd by a particular business in wch he is now engaged –

<sup>105</sup> Probably Richard Gem (1716-1800), author of *An account of the remedy for the stone...* (London, 1741). 'Educ[ated] at Cambridge, settled in Paris ; physician to the British Embassy there, 1762 ; he was steeped in French philosophy and in 1765-6 was often to be found dining at the Baron d'Holbach's house in the Rue Royale, in the company of Diderot and Helvétius ; later in life Franklin and Jefferson were his intimate friends, and he supervised the education of the statesman William Huskisson.' (E Campbell Mossner and I Simpson Ross ed., *The correspondence of Adam Smith* (Oxford, 1987), vol.1, 119, note).

<sup>106</sup> Probably Louis-Marie-Florent Châtelet-Lhomond, duc du Châtelet (1727-1793), who 'had a distinguished career in the army that led into politics' (*Correspondence*, vol.3, 262, note).

<sup>107</sup> As commander of the *Garde nationale* in Paris, La Fayette (1757-1834) was the chief supervisor of the Festival of the Federation that was held on July 14, 1790, to commemorate the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. Price is concerned with the risk of violence and hopes La Fayette will prevent any outbreak.

<sup>108</sup> On 6 August 1790, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt wrote that 'Mr Dennis has returned to him the letter of Mr. Turgot' (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 315).

<sup>109</sup> It is missing from the archives. No advertisement for the 14 July dinner was found for the date of 6 July 1790 in the newspapers digitised in the Burney Collection Online database.

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The Discourse that accompanies this letter is just publishd here, and the author is one of my friends; In P.16 to 22 it will appear how my friends here, the supporters of a new College lately established for improving the state of education among us think of the proceedings in France.<sup>110</sup>

I have directed two ladies of my acquaintance now at Paris (Mrs Allen and Miss Palmer)<sup>111</sup> to apply to the Duke de Rochefoucauld should they meet with any difficulties in getting a Passport for returning to England; but I suppose their apprehensions of meeting with any such difficulties to be entirely vain, and therefore I hope no trouble will be given to the Duke de Rochefoucauld.

I have received the Opinion sur Les Assignats-Monnaie<sup>112</sup> – Journal De la Societe de 1789 – Etat Actuel Des Travaux du Comite De L'imposition<sup>113</sup> – and Ebauche d'un nouveau plan De Societe Patriotique

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<sup>110</sup> Thomas Belsham, *The importance of truth, and the duty of making an open profession of it: represented in a discourse, delivered on Wednesday the 28th of April, 1790, at the meeting-house in the Old-Jewry, London; to the supporters of the New College at Hackney* (London, 1790). In pp.16 to 22, as Price states, Belsham denounces the divine right theories underpinning the Stuart monarchy, expounds political principles that are similar to Price's, and hails the American and French revolutions as triumphs of liberty over despotism.

<sup>111</sup> Unidentified. They may be linked to John Palmer, a Presbyterian minister at Southwark (1729-1790) whom Price mentioned approvingly in *Correspondence*, vol.1, 141, and John Allen, another Presbyterian minister in London who died in 1774.

<sup>112</sup> The issue of millions of *assignats*, paper-money secured on the sale of the nationalized estates of the clergy, was very controversial. The question was debated by the Assemblée Nationale on 25 April 1790. La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt may have sent Talleyrand's speech warning that the face value of the *assignats* should not exceed the price of the properties sold (*Opinion de M. l'évêque d'Autun sur les assignats forcés: jeudi 15 avril 1790* (Paris, 1790)). Condorcet and Dupont de Nemours were also concerned about the depreciations of *assignats* and the risk of bankruptcy. The question engaged much of the attention of the *Société de 1789* (William Huskisson, 1770-1780, delivered a speech in that forum on 29 August, 1790, published in the *Journal de la Société de 1789* on 4 September 1790 and as *Opinion sur les assignats et proposition d'un autre mode de libération. Prononcée à la Société de 1789 par un de ses membres*). A spate of tracts bearing titles similar to *Opinion sur les assignats-monnaie* were published in the autumn of 1790, after the Assemblée Nationale examined the issue in early September.

<sup>113</sup> *État actuel des travaux du comité de l'imposition ; présenté à l'Assemblée nationale, et imprimé par son ordre* (Paris, 1790).

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&c.<sup>114</sup> – My best thanks are due for these communications and presents.

Since this letter was written, a friend (Mr Smith)<sup>115</sup> who is going this night for Paris has induced me to give him a few lines of introduction to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld. I think with pain of the liberty I have taken in this and other instances, and rely on the Duke de Rochefoucauld's goodness and indulgence. Mr Smith is a Gentleman of fortune, of a worthy character and the best principles.

**Introduction to a toast proposed by Dr Price at the feast in London for celebrating the first Anniversary of the Revolution in France.**<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> E[mannuel] J[oseph] S[ieyes], *Ebauche d'un nouveau plan de société patriotique adopté par le club de mil sept cent quatre-vingt-neuf* ([Paris ?], 1789 or 1790). K M Baker suggests that this pamphlet was published in late March or early April 1789 ('Politics and social science in eighteenth-century France: the Société de 1789', in Bosher ed., *French government and society, 1500-1800*, 210). On 2 May, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt had promised to send a draft (*ébauche*) of the society's by-laws as soon as it would be finished (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 288).

<sup>115</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>116</sup> Paraphrases of this speech were published in accounts of the dinner in several British papers, including the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (15 July 1790). See the version of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant* (19 July 1790): 'Dr Price then addressed the meeting in a short speech, replete with his wonted philanthropy and good sense. He assured them, from the *best authority*, that the National Assembly of France had in contemplation to propose to his country a measure, which it was the earnest desire of every patriot in France might take effect; this was a *league between Great Britain and France, for the purpose of perpetuating Universal Peace, and of extending to every corner of the globe the blessings of civil and religious freedom*. [An interruption of loud and long acclamation testified how cordially the proposal was embraced by the sense of the meeting.] The Doctor shewed that such a league would have an *immediate* effect on the happiness of the human race; and that Holland, on one side of the globe, and the Thirteen Provinces on the other, would instantly accede to a measure that would oppose an insurmountable barrier to the bloody and perverse ambition of tyrants. He then proposed the following toast, which was drunk with heartfelt satisfaction: A league between Great Britain and France, for the purpose of perpetuating Universal Peace, and making the World happy!'. Another version of this speech was published in the appendix to Price's, *A discourse on the love of our country*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. (1790), 35-37. It is very close to that contained in his letter, but the published version expands the passage on the end of Franco-British rivalry by brotherly feelings.

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Gentlemen,

I reckon the subject of the toast I am going to propose particularly important. In consequence of the five wars<sup>117</sup> in which we have been engaged since the Revolution in 1688, this kingdom is now bending under a heavy load of incumbrances and debts; and it is certain that there is a limit beyond which in increasing our debts we cannot go without ruin. A long period of peace, therefore, in order to gain time for the reduction of our debts is absolutely necessary to our security, and perhaps even to our existence. In France there is a disposition to unite itself to us on the sacred ground of liberty for the purpose of perpetuating peace. Such an union would be an union between the two first countries in the world for the noblest of all purposes. It would be an effect worthy of that union of philosophy to politics which happily distinguished the present aera of the world. It might save Britain. It would bless the world, and crown the wishes of all the friends of human liberty and happiness. I can say from good authority that there has been a design formed in the national Assembly of France to make a proposal of such an union to this country – “O glorious men! O heavenly Philanthropists! Well do you deserve the admiration and the blessings, not only of your own country, but of all the countries in the world. You have already resolved that would renounce for ever all views of conquest and all offensive wars.”<sup>118</sup> This is an instance of Philanthropy and attention to human rights which has no example. But you will do more. You will invite Great Britain to form the same resolution and to enter into a league with you to promote peace on earth and goodwill among men”.<sup>119</sup>

This, Gentlemen, is one of the great advantages to this country that will result from the Revolution in France. We have too often fought one another. We shall now, I hope, lay aside all jealousies and rival one another only in zeal to extend the blessings of liberty and peace. The two

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<sup>117</sup> The Nine Years' War (1688-97), the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14), the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48), the Seven Years' War (1756-63), and the War of American Independence (1775-83).

<sup>118</sup> An allusion to the 22 May 1790 'Déclaration de paix au monde' (see above, note 101).

<sup>119</sup> Luke, 2:14.

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countries united are omnipotent. They will soon draw into their own vortex Holland on this side the Globe, and the united States of America on the other; and when threatenings of war appear they will be able to say Peace, and there will be peace.

I have, therefore, thought that this respectable company on this most joyous occasion cannot do better than express its wishes of success to such a proposal from the national assembly of France as I have mention'd, should it be made, by drinking the following toast:

A League between France and Great Britain for perpetuating peace and making the world happy.

**Toasts agreed upon by the Stewards of the feast for celebrating the first Anniversary of the Revolution in France, but not drunk.**

1<sup>st</sup> May all distinctions not derived from talents and virtues be held in contempt.

2<sup>d</sup> May Revolutions never cease while tyranny exists.<sup>120</sup>

3<sup>d</sup> When the rulers of nations forget that they are Servants, may the people shew themselves masters.

4<sup>th</sup> May the people never forget that all authority in a State is a delegation from them, that as citizens they are equal, and that the end of governmt is to protect liberty and not to take it away.

5<sup>th</sup> May Philosophy and reason be accelerated in their progress and soon sweep off the face of the earth slavish governmts and slavish hierarchies.

6<sup>th</sup> Equal Liberty in religion and no toleration.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Apparently the first two toasts were drunk; they appear in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> position in the account of the Crown and Anchor celebration in *The Oracle*, 15 July 1790.

<sup>121</sup> This toast is not recorded in the published lists for 1790, but on 14 July 1791, the gentlemen assembled at the Crown and Anchor Tavern drank a toast to 'Perfect Freedom, instead of Toleration, in Matters of Religion' (*Morning Chronicle*, 15 July 1791). Those toasts are echoes of the Dissenters' campaigns for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. A new campaign had started in 1787 and a fresh application was made to Parliament in April 1790 (A Goodwin, *The friends of liberty: the English democratic movement in the age of the French Revolution* (London, 1979), 65-98). By 1790, the Dissenters demanded religious liberty, as opposed to toleration. In *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* (1785), Price already wrote: 'In liberty of conscience I include much more than toleration' because the latter

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7<sup>th</sup> The memory of Lock, Milton, Sidney, Hoadly, Franklin, Turgot, and the other great writers who have enlighten'd mankind on the subject of Governmt.<sup>122</sup>

8<sup>th</sup> May the fire of liberty which was kindled in America and is now b[urning?] in France spread over the earth, and consume all the remains of oppress[ion] and despotism.

9<sup>th</sup> The hand-writing on the wall.<sup>123</sup> May the despots of the world see it and tremble.

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**12. Letter from Price to the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, 14 October 1790.**<sup>124</sup>

Source: Archives municipales de Mantes la Jolie, collection Clerc de Landresse.

Courtesy of the Archives municipales de Mantes la Jolie.

Hackney near London, Oct 14<sup>th</sup> 1790.

Dear Sir,

I should not have delay'd so long writing to you, had I not been for the last nine weeks absent on an excursion into the country on hopes of gaining a recruit of health and spirits.<sup>125</sup> I am now settled at home and glad to employ some of my first moments of leisure in making my acknowledgments to you for your last letters. I am always truly sensible of the kindness of your attention, and of the honour it does me.

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concept implied that the state had a right to impose a creed and merely refrain from persecuting others, a right which Price and the Dissenters denied (in *Price: political writings*, 25, 130).

<sup>122</sup> In *A discourse on the love of our country*, Price paid homage to Milton, Locke, Sidney, Hoadly, Montesquieu, Fénelon and Turgot (*Price: political writings*, 182).

<sup>123</sup> Daniel, 5:1-31.

<sup>124</sup> An autograph draft of this letter, held in the American Philosophical Society, was first published in the *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings* (1903), 376-78, and then in Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 325-326.

<sup>125</sup> Price returned on 2 October from two months in Wales (editors' note, Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 325).

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I shall always reflect with pleasure on the concern, I had in calling together the friends of the Revolution in France to testify their joy on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July. This meeting has, I find, been mistaken in France for a meeting of the Revolution Society. But the members of this Society made but a small part of that company; and it is probable that they will not be the major part of the company that will attend our annual feast on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November next for commemorating the British Revolution. Earl Stanhope has been the Chairman the last two years at these public dinners, and, I hope, he will be so this year;<sup>126</sup> but the Society has no fixed President. It is, however, increasing; and it will, I hope, in time become sufficiently respectable to deserve the notice with which your Society of 1789<sup>127</sup> has honoured it.

The letter from the district of Quimper in Bretagne has, you may easily believe, given me great pleasure.<sup>128</sup> I request the favour of you to convey the enclosed answer to the President. I have sent it open that you may read it.<sup>129</sup> I have received likewise a letter from a literary society at L'Orient,<sup>130</sup> but the answer to this will be convey'd by M. Français, the Gentleman who has kindly undertaken to deliver this letter to you, and

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<sup>126</sup> Stanhope did take the chair at the 14 July 1790 dinner, but hardly a month later, he struck his name off the members' list of the society registry. Price himself presided over the 4 November 1790 dinner, and papers hostile to the Revolution Society insisted on the absence of the noblemen and the leaders of the Whig party (such as Richard Brinsley Sheridan) who had attended the dinner a year before (see e.g. *World*, 5 November 1790; *Public advertiser*, 6 November 1790).

<sup>127</sup> On the *société de 1789*, see Introduction, above.

<sup>128</sup> See the letter 'from Citizens of the District of Quimper in the department of Finisterre', 4 August 1790, in Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 313-314.

<sup>129</sup> Price's letter is missing in the archives. It was published as an appendix to *A discourse on the love of our country*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn. (1790), 40-42, in the *Correspondence of the Revolution Society* (1792), 97-100, and reproduced in Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 328-329.

<sup>130</sup> As the editors of Price's correspondence remark, this may be the letter sent by a club from Lorient to the Revolution Society on 8 August 1790 (*Correspondence of the Revolution Society* (1792), 51-52); no other letter has survived.

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who is the President of a Patriotic Society at Nantz<sup>131</sup> to which the friends of liberty here are greatly obliged for the notice it has taken of them.

I am glad that you have received M. Turgot's letter.<sup>132</sup> I did not receive from him any letter more interesting except that which I have publish'd, and also one in which he gave me an account of the reasons which obliged him to withdraw from power. This last letter I despair of recovering.

Mr Vaughan will probably convey to Mr Veillard the corrections he made in reading the memoirs of Dr Franklin's life.<sup>133</sup> As they had been sent to be read by him and me I bestow'd a good deal of attention upon them, but without seeing any sufficient reason for making any corrections. I had writ to Dr Franklin in consequence of having read them by Mr Williams his Nephew, about a fortnight before I received the account of

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<sup>131</sup> Antoine Français (1756-1836), known as Français de Nantes, was the President of the Jacobin *Société des Amis de la Constitution* of Nantes. An exalted patriot since the early stages of the Revolution, he went on to become the representative of Nantes to the *Assemblée législative* in 1791-92. In August 1790, Français and the Jacobin Society had organized an Anglo-French festival in Nantes. The Nantes club sent Français and another member, Bougon, to London; they spent at least two weeks in England in September-October 1790. They were entertained by Lord Lansdowne at Bowood and by the Revolution Society, who gave a dinner in their honour on 4 October. The French press published letters by Bougon and Français commending the warm welcome they had received in England. Price, whose presence at the 4 October dinner is attested, must have taken the opportunity of Français's presence in London to give them his letter to La Rochefoucauld (Minutes of the Revolution Society, British Library Add. MSS 64814, fo.36; *Journal de la Correspondance de Nantes*, no.27 (October 1790); *Correspondence of the Revolution Society* (1792), 64-66; J Guénel, 'Antoine Français de Nantes,' *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique et Historique de Nantes et de Loire-Atlantique*, 140 (2005), 299-316).

<sup>132</sup> On Turgot's letters, see Introduction and note 72 above.

<sup>133</sup> On the circulation of the manuscript of Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, see Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 298, note 4, and vol.3, 316, note 3. In 1789 Franklin's grandson, Benjamin Franklin Bache, prepared copies of the parts of the autobiography Franklin had finished. He sent one copy to England, asking Benjamin Vaughan (1751-1835) to show it to Price, and another copy to La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt for delivery to Louis Guillaume Le Veillard (d.1794), 'mayor of Passy, and close friend to Franklin during his residence there'.

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his death.<sup>134</sup> This letter contains an account of my Sentiments concerning them and the impressions they had made upon me; and is now, I suppose, in the hands of his executors at Philadelphia. You know that he has left them to his grandson to be publish'd by him for his benefit; and I expect that he will soon come to London for this purpose and bring with him some materials for continuing the Memoirs to the conclusion of Dr Franklin's life.

There have been two other deaths this year among my acquaintance and friends by which I have been greatly affected. I mean, the deaths of Mr Howard<sup>135</sup> and Dr Smith.<sup>136</sup> The former has left an example to the world of Philanthropy and benevolence; and in this respect his character was singular and unequalled. He had been my intimate friend from early life – The latter I looked up to as a writer of the first abilities. A few weeks before his death I had writ to him in consequence of having received from him the Sixth edition of this Treatise on Morals.<sup>137</sup> This work, in the former editions of it, made but one volume. In this edition it is increased to two volumes. In the Preface he takes notice of a promise he had made to the public of a Treatise on the general principles of law and governmt. and the different revolutions they had undergone in the different ages and periods of society; and observes that he had performed this promise; as far as it concerned Police, revenue and arms, in his book on the wealth of

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<sup>134</sup> Around 30 May 1790 Price wrote Franklin that he had read the *Autobiography* 'with particular pleasure and satisfaction', that it ought to be published without any notable correction (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 298-300). The letter was conveyed by Jonathan Williams (1750-1815), the grandson of Franklin's sister Anne.

<sup>135</sup> John Howard (1726-90), philanthropist and prison reformer. He died on January 20, 1790. Price and Howard became acquainted when they were students together at Moorfields Academy; the earliest correspondence recorded between the two men dates from 13 June 1770 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.2, 92). In the late 1780s, Price had spent much time helping Howard prepare his *Account of the principal lazarettos in Europe* (1789).

<sup>136</sup> Adam Smith (born 1723) died on June 17, 1790.

<sup>137</sup> A Smith, *The theory of moral sentiments; or, an essay towards an analysis of the principles by which men naturally judge concerning the conduct and character, first of their neighbours, and afterwards of themselves. To which is added, A dissertation on the origin of languages...* The sixth edition, with considerable additions and corrections. In two volumes (London and Edinburgh, 1790).

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nations. The subject that remained was, the theory of Jurisprudence. But with respect to this he says, that tho' he had not abandoned the design, his very advanced age left him very little expectation of being able to execute so great a work to his own satisfaction<sup>138</sup> – Soon after this death put an end to all his designs and labours; and the same must soon happen to us all. Happy are those who at the close of life can reflect that they have lived to a valuable purpose by contributing as he did to enlighten mankind, and to spread the blessings of peace, liberty and virtue.<sup>139</sup> He and I thought differently on the subject of the nature and origins of our ideas of moral good and evil; but such differences will always exist among speculative men, and they do good by occasioning a more close investigation of important points and in the end a clearer development of truth. – Dr Smith had been gradually declining for more than a year; nor do I know that his malady had any particular name given it. His only publications were his Treatises on morals and the wealth of nations and I am told that he has left the world no room for expecting any posthumous works of his, except, perhaps, a few Essays. He had burnt many volumes of manuscripts to prevent the possibility of publishing them. Mr Dugald Stewart, the Professor of moral Philosophy at Edinburgh, is to give an account of his life in the Edinburgh Philosophical Transactions, and to attend it with some critical remarks on his books on morals and the wealth of nations.<sup>140</sup>

I am shocked by our preparations for war, and tremble for the danger to which it will expose my country, and also France, should France

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<sup>138</sup> Those three sentences are a very close paraphrase of a passage from Smith's introduction to the 6<sup>th</sup> edition, vi-vii; the passage underlined is a direct quotation.

<sup>139</sup> In *A discourse on the love of our country* (Price: *political writings*, 181), Price mentions truth (not peace), liberty and virtue as 'the chief blessings of human nature' and the goals that should be aimed by those who strive to enlighten mankind.

<sup>140</sup> Dugald Stewart (1753-1828) had held the chair of moral philosophy of the University of Edinburgh since 1785. Stewart read an account of Smith's life to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in two separate sessions on 21 January and 18 March 1793. It was first printed in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh*, 3.1 (1794), 55-137, and reprinted, probably in 1794, under the title of *Account of the life and writings of Adam Smith, LL.D. : from the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* (n.d.). Information from English Short Title Catalogue.

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unhappily be involved in it, in consequence of the encouragement given to Spain by the adoption of the Family Compact.<sup>141</sup> I have read M. Dupont's pamphlet on this subject,<sup>142</sup> and think some parts of it writ too hastily. It is, I think, impossible our ministers should be so wicked as to meditate an unprovoked attack of France. The emission of Assignats also to so great an amount gives me apprehensions.<sup>143</sup> But I distrust my own judgment. The Revolution in France and the new constitution there formed are the hope of mankind. May Heaven protect them against the dangers. – Mr Rabaut De St Etienne has lately addressed a letter to the English nation which I admire;<sup>144</sup> but perhaps he has not sufficiently considered that, for want of a proper representation it is not the nation that governs.

Excuse, Dear Sr, this long letter; and permit me to repeat my assurances that I am, with the greatest respect,

Yours oblig'd and very obedient Servant,  
Richd Price

<sup>141</sup> The Family Compact is a treaty signed in 1761 by the Bourbon monarchs (France, Spain, and the duchy of Parma); it was a defensive alliance meant to counter the hegemony of the British Navy. Like many in Britain, including Pitt and his administration, Price feared that France would step forward in application of the Family Compact and declare war on Britain to defend Spain. As Price notes, Britain was preparing for war, and so were France and Spain.

<sup>142</sup> Pierre-Samuel Dupont de Nemours, *Le Pacte de famille et les conventions subséquentes entre la France et l'Espagne, avec des observations sur chaque article* ([Paris], 1790). The physiocrat economist Dupont de Nemours (1739-1817) had sent Price his *Mémoires sur la vie et les ouvrages de Turgot* (Paris, 1782) in 1788 (Price, *Correspondence*, vol.3, 184).

<sup>143</sup> On *assignats*, see note 112 above. Price must have been convinced by the arguments put forward by Condorcet, Talleyrand and Dupont de Nemours (*Opinion de M. Du Pont, député de Nemours, sur le projet de créer pour dix-neuf cents millions d'assignats-monnaie, sans intérêt: exposée à l'Assemblée Nationale le 25 septembre 1790* (Paris, 1790)); the prevailing opinion among members of the *société de 1789* seems to have been that an excessive supply of *assignats* would fuel speculation. Dupont advocated a strict restriction of the number of *assignats*.

<sup>144</sup> Jean-Paul Rabaut Saint-Etienne (1743-1793), a Protestant clergyman from Nîmes, devoted his life to the cause of religious liberty; his efforts were rewarded by the *Edit de tolérance* which Louis XVI passed in 1787. He was elected to the Estate generals, and became president of the National Assembly for a few days in March 1790 (André Dupont, *Rabaut Saint-Etienne 1743-1793: un protestant défenseur de la liberté religieuse* (Geneva, 1989)). An English translation of his *Adresse aux Anglais, par un représentant de la nation Française* (Paris) was published by Joseph Johnson as

*Thirteen Uncollected Letters of Richard Price***13. Letter from the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt to Price, 1 November 1790.**

Source: *Procès-verbaux et rapports du comité de mendicité de la Constituante, 1790-1791, publiés et annotés par Camille Bloch et Alexandre Tuetey* (Paris, 1911), 163-4. The original report is held in the *Archives nationales* in Paris, AF I\*15.

Séance du 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1790.

M. de Liancourt a écrit au docteur Price pour en obtenir des renseignements sur la manière de traiter les fous en Angleterre ; il y a été joint plusieurs questions à répondre sur les bâtards, etc. La lettre est conçue en ces termes, ainsi que les questions à lui proposées :

Paris, le 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1790.

Ami de l'humanité et lié avec presque tous les amis que vous avez en France, je m'adresse avec confiance, Monsieur, à un ami de l'humanité. Membre d'un Comité de l'Assemblée nationale, chargé de la législation des bâtards, je voudrais connaître les établissements anglais concernant les bâtards. Votre philanthropie éclairée vous a sans doute encore à cet égard donnée des idées utiles. Si je suis assuré de la servir en vous priant de vouloir bien me les communiquer et m'indiquer les ouvrages qui pourront répondre aux questions ci-jointes, j'y joins encore une autre prière.

Il y a plus de six mois que j'ai écrit au docteur Hunter pour lui demander des renseignements relatifs à l'hôpital des fous d'York, où je sais que les moyens les plus doux sont employés avec succès pour les guérisons, même des plus furieux. Je n'ai reçu aucune réponse de lui. Sans doute ma lettre ne lui est pas parvenue. Auriez-vous la complaisance de me faire connaître comment je pourrais lui en faire parvenir une

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*Address to the English nation.* All catalogues give the date of 1791 for both publications. The *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, however, published the address on 4 October 1790. Price must have had this article in mind. In the address, Rabaut affirmed that the French nation was averse to war and exhorted the English people to resist the warlike impulses of the government in the Nootka Sound crisis and maintain peace, which would secure England's security and prosperity. Price voiced his admiration for Rabaut Saint-Etienne's defense of religious liberty in *A discourse on the love of our country* (1790), appendix, p.10.

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seconde, et m'indiquer si M. Hunter ou quelque autre médecin a publié la méthode dont on se sert pour traiter la folie dans cet hôpital ? J'aurais bien des excuses à vous faire de toutes ces importunités, si je ne savais que c'est vous servir que de vous employer pour l'humanité malheureuse.

J'ai l'honneur d'être avec les sentiments les plus distingués, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

Signé : Liancourt.

Questions faites au Docteur Price sur les bâtards.

1° Y a-t-il à Londres des maisons pour recevoir les bâtards ? quel est leur régime ? combien y reçoit-on d'enfants, année commune ? combien ces maisons coûtent-elles annuellement ? à qui donne-t-on les enfants à nourrir ? combien et comment les nourrices sont-elles payées ? sont-elles soumises à des inspecteurs ?

2° Y a-t-il des établissements pour faire allaiter les enfants par des vaches ou des chèvres ? quel est le régime de ces établissements ? quels sont leurs succès ? combien coûtent ces établissements, année commune ?

3° Pour guérir les enfants scrofuleux, rachitiques, attaqués du vice vénérien, nourrit-on les animaux avec des plantes propres à guérir ces maladies, ou mélange-t-on le lait avec des infusions de [ces] plantes, ou fait-on prendre les remèdes autrement ? quels sont les succès de ces divers moyens ?

4° A quel âge les enfants sont-ils sevrés ? lorsqu'ils sont sevrés, où les place-t-on ? s'ils sont réunis dans une ou plusieurs maisons, quelle est la construction, quel est le régime de ces maisons ? les enfants y sont-ils sujets au *carreau*, au[x] scrofule[s], au scorbut, maladies qui doivent quelquefois leur origine au mauvais air, à la mauvaise nourriture, au défaut d'exercice ? les enfants sont-ils beaucoup dans la même chambre ? s'ils sont en grand nombre, à quelle maladie sont-ils le plus exposés ?

5° Lorsque ces enfants savent marcher, comprendre, agir, obéir, que leur fait-on faire ? que leur apprend-on ? pour quel métier, pour quelle profession les forme-t-on ? dans quel rapport est, année commune, la mortalité de ces enfants ? de combien d'enfants chaque personne est-elle chargée ? combien coûtent ces établissements, année commune ?

6° A quel âge ces enfants sortent-ils de la maison ? Après l'avoir quittée, sont-ils encore sous l'autorité des inspecteurs ? jusqu'à quel âge

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y restent-ils ? jusqu'où cette autorité s'étend-elle ?

7° Ces maisons ont-elles été fondées par des particuliers ou établies par la loi, ou n'ont-elles pas été dans le principe dotées par des particuliers et ensuite par le gouvernement ?

**Translation:**

Letter from the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt to Price, 1 November 1790.

Sitting of November 1, 1790.

M. de Liancourt wrote to Dr Price for information on the manner of treating the insane in England, joining several questions about bastards, etc. The letter and the questions submitted to Dr Price are drafted in these words:

Paris, November 1, 1790.

As a friend of mankind, and one close to almost all of the friends that you have in France, it is with confidence, Sir, that I address a friend of mankind. As a member of a Committee of the National Assembly in charge of legislation on bastards, I would like to know the English establishments what arrangements are made in England about bastards. Your enlightened philanthropy must have provided you with useful ideas on that account. While I am confident of serving it by begging you to impart them to me and to recommend the works that might answer the subjoined questions, I have yet another request to make to you.

It is more than six months since I wrote to Dr Hunter to ask him for information on the York madhouse, where I know the mildest means are used, with success, to effect the cure of even the most uncontrollable patients.<sup>145</sup> I have received no answer from him. My letter may well never have reached him. Would be so kind as to let me know how I could direct a second one to him, and to tell me whether Mr Hunter or any other physician has published the method used in treating madness in that hospital?

<sup>145</sup> La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt had sent the letter on or before April 23, 1790. It is reprinted in Bloch, Tuetey ed., *Procès-verbaux et rapports du Comité de Mendicité de la Constituante...*, 19.

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I would apologize profoundly for importuning you like this did I not know that to engage you in the cause of suffering humanity is in truth a service to yourself.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your most humble and obedient servant  
Liancourt

Queries submitted to Dr Price concerning bastards.

1° In London are there houses provided to receive bastards? what are their regulations? How many children are admitted during an ordinary year? How much do those houses cost yearly? To whom are the children put out to nurse? How much and how are the nurses paid? Are they subject to inspectors?

2° Are there institutions provided to have children suckled by cows or goats? What is the regulation of those institutions? How successful are they? How much do those institutions cost in an ordinary year?

3° In order to cure children afflicted with scrofula, rickets or the venereal vice, are the animals fed with plants suitable for curing those diseases, or is the milk mixed with infusions of those plants, or are remedies administered in another fashion? How successful are those various means?

4° At what age are the infants weaned? Once weaned, where are they placed? If they are gathered in one or several houses, how are those houses built and regulated? Are the children there prone to mesenteritis,<sup>146</sup> scrofula, scurvy – diseases that sometimes have their origins in bad air, bad food and the lack of exercise? Are there many children in one room? If there are many, to what diseases are they most exposed?

5° When the children can walk, understand, act and obey, what are they ordered to do? What are they taught? For what occupation, for what

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<sup>146</sup> *Carreau* was the popular name given to a variety of ailments, but more especially to an inflammation of the mesentery ('a fold of peritoneal tissue which attaches ... the small intestine to the posterior wall of the abdomen', *Oxford English Dictionary*). The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (4<sup>th</sup> edn., 1762) defined the *carreau* as a sort of oppression pressing against the stomach and the chest, causing the belly to become stiff, and noted that children were more subject than adults to that disease.

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station are they trained? What is the rate of mortality of those children in an ordinary year? How many children is each person in charge of? How much do those institutions cost in an ordinary year?

6° At what age do the children leave the house? Once they have left, are they still placed under the inspectors' authority? Until what age? What is the extent of that authority?

7° Have those houses been founded by private persons or established by law, or were they not originally endowed by private persons and later by the government?

## A FURTHER SEVEN UNCOLLECTED LETTERS OF RICHARD PRICE

*Paul Frame*

Though the following seven letters do not appear in the three volumes of Richard Price's collected correspondence edited by W. Bernard Peach and D O Thomas in 1983, 1991 and 1994, the letters to the colourful clerk of the Royal Society, E M da Costa, (Letter 3) and to Mary Wollstonecraft (Letter 7) have been noted in previous publications.<sup>1</sup> The remaining five letters, two to a member of Price's family in south Wales (Letters 1 and 2), one to George Cumberland (Letter 4), one to his wife Sarah (Letter 5) and another to William Godwin (Letter 6) are here recorded for the first time.<sup>2</sup> The letters cover a variety of topics in Price's private and public life and relate to the years 1777, 1783, 1785, 1787 and the penultimate year of Price's life, 1790. The letters are arranged below in chronological order.

A further letter in the British Library from Price to the physician and Quaker Dr. John Coakley Lettsom (1744–1815) is not transcribed here since the original version of it already appears in the collected correspondence.<sup>3</sup> The Historical Society of Pennsylvania currently owns this original version and the British Library letter, though seemingly signed by Price, appears to be either his original draft or a copy of the original.<sup>4</sup> The handwriting of the British Library manuscript is, however,

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<sup>1</sup> For da Costa see Carl Cone, *Torchbearer of freedom: the influence of Richard Price on eighteenth century thought* (Lexington, 1952), 155. For Mary Wollstonecraft see, Gary Kelly, *Revolutionary feminism: the mind and career of Mary Wollstonecraft* (Basingstoke, 1992), 27-8; Saba Bahar, 'Richard Price and the moral foundations of Mary Wollstonecraft's feminism', *Enlightenment and Dissent* (cited as *E & D*), 18 (1999), 2; Lyndall Gordon, *Mary Wollstonecraft: a new genus* (London, 2005), 143.

<sup>2</sup> For access to archival material and permission to publish these letters I am indebted to Mr Rory McLaggan of Merthyr Mawr and the staff at the Glamorgan Archives in Cardiff, Mrs. Nicola Bennetts, the Board of the British Library and to the Bodleian Library. I am also indebted to David Perry and John Morgan for genealogical advice on the Price family.

<sup>3</sup> W Bernard Peach & D O Thomas eds., *The correspondence of Richard Price* (3 vols., Durham, North Carolina and Cardiff, Wales, 1983-1994, cited hereafter as *Correspondence*), III, 83-4.

<sup>4</sup> British Library Additional Manuscripts, shelf-mark 26055, f.26.

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markedly different from Price's usual hand and it may well be a copy made by someone else. Since there are no textual differences between the original Pennsylvania version and the British Library 'copy' it was decided not to transcribe the latter here. The text concerns proposals to erect a statue or to establish a fund in honour of Price's friend John Howard, the prison reformer.

Family concerns constitute the main interest in three of the letters. The first two (Letters 1 and 2), which Price addressed in 1777 to his sister in law, Catherine Price (née Williams), in Wales, concern the death of her husband Samuel Price of Park, near Cardiff who, as Richard Price's stepbrother, was issue of the first marriage of their father Rice Price (1673–1739).<sup>5</sup> In the first letter Richard sends his condolences on the death of Samuel and, in the second, discusses financial issues relating to the dispersal of Samuel's estate. The letters are instructive in revealing the depth of Price's continuing involvement with his family in south Wales. Both of these family letters are from the *Merthyr Mawr Archive* held in part by the Glamorgan Archives Service in Cardiff and by a private family. Although other documents relating to the Price and Morgan families are in the *Merthyr Mawr Archive*, a search of the well-indexed material has revealed no further correspondence by or to Richard Price.

The third letter dealing with family matters (Letter 5) was written by Price to his wife Sarah Price (nee Blundell) while he visited Yarmouth in 1785. Currently, and with the exception of a few extracts from Sarah's correspondence quoted in Caroline Williams,<sup>6</sup> this letter is the only one

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<sup>5</sup> With a few exceptions it is usually Richard Price's eldest step brother John Price who is noted in the current literature as living at Park with his wife Catherine the recipient of Price's letter. See, for example, Roland Thomas, *Richard Price: philosopher and apostle of liberty* (London, 1924), 14 and D O Thomas, *The honest mind: the thought and work of Richard Price* (Oxford, 1977), 3. However genealogical work by David Perry and John Morgan on the Price and Morgan families has shown this to be wrong. It was Samuel Price (1701–1777), another step-brother, who came into ownership of the estate called Park through his marriage to the relatively wealthy heiress Catherine Williams. John Price, the eldest step brother, is now believed to have died much earlier, in about 1741. Samuel and Catherine Price went on to have a son named John Price who continued living at Park until his death in 1818, a fact from which much of the genealogical confusion may have arisen.

<sup>6</sup> See Caroline Williams, *A Welsh family in the eighteenth century* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., London, 1893).

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to survive between Richard and his wife following their marriage at Newington Green Church on 16 June 1757. Though well respected and remembered in letters to Price from the likes of Benjamin Franklin, Sarah is most often noted in Price's surviving correspondence when joining with her husband in sending thanks to the likes of Lord Shelburne for the loan of a book or a gift of pineapples and to William Hazlitt [senior] for a gift of brawn. The only time Price mentions her in some depth is during her long illness, which had become severe by the time he wrote to her from Yarmouth. She died in 1786, just a year after the letter below was written. As this surviving letter bears witness the lack of detail in Price's letters concerning his wife does not reflect a lack of affection on his part. On the contrary, the letter helps establish that Price found in Sarah not only the love of his life but his best friend.<sup>7</sup>

The remaining four Richard Price letters – to E M da Costa; to William Godwin; to Mary Wollstonecraft, and to Mr. Cumberland – illuminate moments in Price's public life.

Born in London of Portuguese descent Emanuel Mendez da Costa (1717–91) was well known in intellectual circles at home and abroad. Not least because by the mid 1740's he had begun trading extensively in 'shells, fossils and minerals' with one correspondent describing him as the 'Grand Monarch des Fossilistes'. His *Natural history of fossils* appeared in 1757 but a planned second volume never materialized. In 1763 he became clerk to the Royal Society at a salary of fifty pounds per annum, a sum unchanged since the days of Edmund Halley, the first

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<sup>7</sup> Tantalizingly the writer Fanny Burney makes reference to a 'Mrs. Price' in her published diary. On 23 March 1781 Burney 'met a small party, consisting only of Mrs. Price, who was a *Miss Evelyn*, Miss Benson, Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Carter.' Burney goes on to declare Mrs. Price to be 'a very sensible, shrewd, lofty, and hard headed woman.' Whether this is a description of Sarah Price cannot be confirmed (a 'Major Price' appears later in the work but there is no further mention of 'Mrs. Price') but Burney's comparison of her to 'Miss Evelyn', the central character in her novel *Evelina*, may be suggestive since Evelyn not only suffers from ill health at one point in the novel but also spends her life under the guardianship (and moral guidance) of Arthur Villars, a reverend gentleman. (See *Diary and letters of Madame d'Arblay (1778-1840)*. Edited by her niece [i.e. Charlotte Frances Barrett] (vol. II [1781-86] of 7 vols., London, 1842-46), 12-13.

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holder of the post in 1685. The duties however had expanded enormously and da Costa, perhaps to make ends meet, for he was always plagued by indebtedness, became less than judicious in his keeping of the society's books. In short, in 1767 he was accused of embezzling their funds to the tune of 1500 pounds. Price became a member of the society in 1765 and would have been aware of the circumstances surrounding the case, not least because his close friend Benjamin Franklin attended the enquiry into the affair. Geoffrey Cantor, who has outlined the familial and personal circumstances of da Costa's life, notes that some in the society continued to have considerable sympathy for him. Consequently, when a vote for his expulsion came to be taken it was by no means entirely one-sided. Nevertheless, on the 24 March 1768 he was expelled from the Society. Though da Costa would continue to contribute to scientific endeavours for the rest of his life, bankruptcy and imprisonment as a debtor (for the second time) were the immediate consequence.<sup>8</sup> Price's letter of 1783 (Letter 3) concerns his supplying da Costa with the minerals nickel and manganese and the friendly tone of the letter, despite being written in the third person, suggests Price might be numbered amongst those in the Royal Society who retained some sympathy for him. Why Price should be supplying such materials is impossible to say. Perhaps it was a small business venture akin to that da Costa had started in the 1740's. The letter itself, though, suggests Price is giving the material away rather than selling it so he may simply have been producing such materials for use in his own and other people's experiments.

The recipient of Letter 4, written by Price to a 'Mr. Cumberland' in 1783, is identified in the British Library catalogue as 'G. Cumberland'.<sup>9</sup> This is most probably George Cumberland (1754–1848). Although remembered as a writer on art and a landscape watercolourist he was, until 1785, a clerk in the Royal Exchange Assurance Company, which would have provided one possible route to his association with Price.

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<sup>8</sup> For further details of the life of da Costa, see Geoffrey Cantor, 'The Rise and Fall of Emanuel Mendez da Costa: A Severe Case of "The Philosophical Dropsy"?', *The English Historical Review*, 116, no. 467 (June, 2001), 584–603.

<sup>9</sup> The following details are from the *ODNB*, to which the reader is referred for further information on George Cumberland.

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Furthermore, Cumberland does not appear to have been troubled by radical politics or those engaged in it for he was acquainted not only with Richard Price but also William Blake, with whom he also had a fruitful artistic association. Later Cumberland joined the Geological Society and developed a major fossil collection suggesting, in view of the da Costa letter (Letter 3) discussed above, another possible route to an association with Price.

Price's letter to Cumberland concerns the return of a series of papers Cumberland had forwarded to Price for his opinion. Price informs us that a 'Mr. Smeathman' wrote the papers. This is probably Henry Smeathman (1742–86). Originally from Scarborough, he was a celebrated entomologist and traveller and in the years 1771 to 1775 had been in Sierra Leone. According to the ODNB in 1783, the year of Price's letter to Cumberland, Smeathman proposed the development of a settlement in Sierra Leone to be supported by plantation style agriculture undertaken by former slaves and other free men. It seems likely, therefore, that it is these plans that Cumberland had forwarded to Price for his comments.<sup>10</sup> Though Price welcomes and wishes success to Smeathman's plan, he did not feel properly qualified to judge its merit. Nevertheless, he notes that: 'One of the blessings attending [the plan] would be the destruction of the slave trade'. Quite why he thinks this he does not make clear. Perhaps he thought the settlement would provide a bolthole for escaped slaves; though their getting there would have been difficult, if not impossible. Alternatively, Price may have believed a successful settlement and plantation agriculture developed and run by freed slaves would prove, by example, the iniquity of plantation work using the enslaved. He also comments that he considers the slave trade 'wicked and diabolical, and which I can never think of with patience....' Price's abhorrence of slavery is well known and his condemnation of it appeared in *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution* (1785).<sup>11</sup> But though he wrote in praise of the abolition movement, and supported it financially, as far as is

<sup>10</sup> Smeathman's plan was actually published in 1786 as *Plan of a settlement to be made near Sierra Leona, on the grain coast of Africa*.

<sup>11</sup> Richard Price, 'Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution and the Means of making it a Benefit to the World (London, 1785)' in D O Thomas ed., *Price: political writings* (Cambridge, 1991), 150.

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known he was never actively involved in the abolition campaign itself. As a consequence it can be argued that he adopted a pragmatic approach to abolition, in accord with his advice to the Americans to abolish slavery ‘with as much speed, and at the same time with as much effect, as their particular circumstances and situation will allow.’ Yet the fact that in his letter to Cumberland he notes that he cannot think of the trade ‘with patience’ suggests, perhaps, a rather more active desire to see abolition.<sup>12</sup>

In 1783 Smeathman’s Sierra Leone project looked set to fail completely after his Quaker friends refused to back a plan that argued for the free settlers to be allowed to bear arms. Price is clearly aware in his letter to Cumberland that Smeathman is encountering problems getting support for his plan, but if the clause concerning arms were included in the material he received it clearly did not concern him too much. At the end of 1783 Smeathman was in Paris lecturing on entomology while still trying to find sponsors for his plan, with little success. Then, in 1786, Granville Sharpe and the *Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor* began to champion it. By May that year the project had the financial backing of the Treasury and it went ahead, with most of its early settlers coming from London’s poor and black population. Smeathman, however, did not live to see his plans fully developed. He died in London at the end of 1786 from a fever caught during his earlier travels.

Letter 5, to William Godwin in 1787, is interesting as it provides a name for the otherwise unidentified ‘dutch minister’ referred to in a letter from Price to the Marquis of Lansdowne on 10 November 1787.<sup>13</sup> From the Lansdowne letter it is clear the Marquis had asked Price a number of questions concerning the anonymously published *History of the internal affairs of the United Provinces, from the year 1780, to the commencement of hostilities in June 1787* (London, 1787). Price identifies the author of the work as William Godwin but notes that he is not able ‘to get to him immediately to ask him the questions your Lordship has proposed’. Instead, he continues, ‘I have a neighbour, a dutch minister, who is

<sup>12</sup> For a full discussion of Price and the issue of slavery see Anthony Page, “‘A Species of Slavery’”: Richard Price’s Rational Dissent and Antislavery’ in *Slavery & Abolition*, 32: 1 (2011), 53-73.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Price to Marquis of Lansdowne, *Correspondence*, III, 152.

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equally able to answer the question relating to the failure of the negotiation between the Stadholder and his opponents on account of his objecting to the words *legal* prerogative; and he tells me that the Stadholder could not consent to the use of the word *legal* without giving up the power he has usurped in elections, a power which he says in some States was got by force at the time of the regulation of 1674, and which cannot be pretended to be legal.' These concerns reflect Price's interest in what Peach and Thomas describe as the dispute between 'the Stadholder at the time, William V of Orange, the oligarchic States-General and the bourgeois democrats (the Patriots)'.<sup>14</sup> Price's letter to Godwin indicates that the name of the Dutch minister who might be able to help Lansdowne on these issues is 'Mr. Van Effin'. This is almost certainly the Reverend Melchior Justus Van Effen who was minister to the Dutch Church in Austin-Friars in London. His father, Justus Van Effen, had been a secretary in the London Netherlands Embassy and member of the Royal Society and is celebrated for making a significant contribution to the development of early eighteenth century Dutch literature and journalism. The son died suddenly in 'Nimeguen' in 1797 at the age of 62.<sup>15</sup> Genealogical research by David Perry and John Morgan concerning the life of George Streatfield (1683–1757), to whom Richard Price acted as private chaplain between 1744 and 1756, shows that Streatfield's wife, Elizabeth Lodwick was of Flemish Protestant descent. She was born of the union of Charles Lodwick and Margrieta/Margaret Meijnderts. While George Streatfield remained a staunch member of the congregation of Richard Price's London based uncle, Samuel Price (1676–1739), his wife frequented the Dutch Church in London. It may be, therefore, that Price became acquainted with the ministers of this church at an early phase of his career and that the acquaintance continued into later life.<sup>16</sup>

Letter 6, to Mary Wollstonecraft, was written in December 1790 near the very end of Price's life; he died in February 1791. In the letter he thanks 'Miss. Wolstonecraft' (sic) for having sent him a copy of her otherwise anonymous pamphlet *A vindication of the rights of men*.<sup>17</sup> In

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, note 4.

<sup>15</sup> See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 81, 352.

<sup>16</sup> I am indebted to David Perry and John Morgan for the George Streatfield information.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A vindication of the rights of men* (London, 1790).

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this work she defended Price from the attack made by Edmund Burke in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*<sup>18</sup> on the views Price had expressed in his 1789 sermon *A Discourse on the love of our country*.<sup>19</sup> Mary had attended Price's meeting-house in Newington Green and it seems likely he had, at various times, aided her both financially and in gaining employment.<sup>20</sup> From her description of him in *A vindication of the rights of men* he clearly made a great impression on her as a virtuous man, a moral philosopher and a teacher. So much so, she apparently took to calling him 'Le Sage'.<sup>21</sup>

Swansea

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**1. Letter from Richard Price to his sister-in-law Catherine Price, 21 July 1777.**

Source: Glamorgan Archives. Merthyr Mawr Archive DMM/ PR/162/1.<sup>22</sup>

Mrs Price<sup>23</sup>  
At Park  
near Cardiff  
Glamorganshire

Newington = Green July 21<sup>st</sup> 1777

Dear Sister,

By a letter which Mr. Lewis<sup>24</sup> has favoured me I have just received the melancholy news of my Brother's death.<sup>25</sup> Permit me on this occasion to

<sup>18</sup> Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1790).

<sup>19</sup> Richard Price, *A discourse on the love of our country* (London, 1789).

<sup>20</sup> See Lyndall Gordon, *Mary Wollstonecraft*, 76 and 78.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to Mr. Rory McLaggan for permission to publish this and the following letter.

<sup>23</sup> Catherine Williams (c.1720–August 1808) the wife of Richard Price's stepbrother Samuel Price (1701–18 July 1777) of Park.

<sup>24</sup> Probably the Rev. Wyndham Lewis (1735–81) who married Mary (a.k.a. Margaret) Price (1745–98) the daughter of Samuel and Catherine Price in 1768. Genealogical information from Perry and Morgan.

<sup>25</sup> Samuel Price of Park (1701–77), Richard Price's stepbrother.

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joyn my grief to yours. It is impossible that such an event should not particularly impress me; but how much more must you feel? God grant that this call of Providence may be properly attended to by us. My Brother has run his race and is now landed on the Shore of Eternity. How affecting the thought? But we shall all soon follow. How diligent should we be in improving the time that may be left to us; and in endeavouring to be as useful, virtuous and worthy as possible, that when death shall come we may be removed to a better and happier world. There all virtuous friends and relatives shall meet again, and be happy together for ever. There is joy unspeakable in this prospect. It is enough to give support under the heaviest afflictions of this life. We have nothing to do but to discharge our duty and avoid wickedness, and all will end well.

I am just going for Norwich on particular business; but I and shall be back in less than a fortnight. Be so good as to inform me whether I am capable of being of any use to you or to my Nephew<sup>26</sup> in the settlemt of my Brother's affairs. Deliver my love to my Nephew and his Lady.<sup>27</sup> May they enjoy all possible happiness. Give my love also to Mr Lewis and Mrs Lewis,<sup>28</sup> and my niece Price.<sup>29</sup> I return many thanks to Mr Lewis for his letter. My wife<sup>30</sup> joyns with me in kind remembrances of you and all the family, and hopes you will accept her sincere condolence. May heaven guide us thro' this vain and transitory world. I am, Dear Sister, with much affection, sincerely yours,

Richd Price

I cannot expect you should write to  
me yourself, but I hope my Nephew will be so good  
as to let me hear from him.

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<sup>26</sup> Probably John Price (1750–1818), son of Samuel and Catherine Price.

<sup>27</sup> Probably John Price (1750–1818) and his wife Jane Birt (c.1754–1821), they were married in 1776. Information from Perry and Morgan.

<sup>28</sup> Probably the Rev. Wyndham Lewis (1735–81) and his wife of 1768 Mary (aka Margaret) Price (1745–98) the daughter of Samuel and Catherine Price. Information from Perry and Morgan.

<sup>29</sup> Probably Ann Price (1758–1813), the daughter of Samuel and Catherine Price.

<sup>30</sup> Sarah Price (née Blundell), (1728–86).

*A Further Seven Uncollected Letters of Richard Price***2. Letter from Richard Price to his sister-in-law Catherine Price, 30 October 1777.**

Source: Glamorgan Archives. Merthyr Mawr Archive DMM/  
PR/162/2.

To  
Mrs. Price<sup>31</sup>  
At Park

Newington Green Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 1777

Dear Sister

I am very Sorry my Nephew<sup>32</sup> and you have had the trouble of sending me the Probate of my Brother's will,<sup>33</sup> and the Power of Attorney inclosed in my Nephew's last letter. There was no occasion for either of them, because I have all along received my Brother's Dividends as one of the Executors of my late Uncle's will wch these *Stocks* came to my Brother, and not by any power derived from him. I have, therefore, returned the Probate by a person who is coming into Glamorganshire, and who will convey it to you safely ————— Had you any occasion to Sell my Brother's Property in the Funds I should want the Probate and a Power of Attorney, but they are not necessary to enable me to receive the Dividends. ————— All that my Brother has had in the Funds for sometime as far as I am acquainted with it is £600 Bank Stock on wch : 5½ per cent is divided, or £16 every half year, and it is always in course of paymt at the end of April and October. He had also £100 South Sea Stock on wch 3½ per cent is divided, or £8 1s every half year payable in the beginning of Feby and August. You may, therefore, always draw upon me for these Sums at these times————— My Brother had before he died drawn all that was due to him to April last. I have since received £8 15s, being the last Dividend on South Sea Stock; and £2 2s being half a year's interest due at MidSummer for £140 three *per cent* Stock belonging

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<sup>31</sup> Catherine Williams the wife of Richard Price's stepbrother Samuel Price (1701–77) of Park.

<sup>32</sup> Probably John Price (1750–1818), son of Samuel and Catherine Price.

<sup>33</sup> Samuel Price of Park (1701–77), Richard Price's stepbrother.

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to the congregation at Bridgend for which my Brother, Mr. Morgan Price<sup>34</sup> and I were trustees<sup>35</sup> ————— There is now due half a year's Dividend on *Bank Stock* or £16 — My Nephew has, I suppose, paid Mr. David Williams of Cardiff<sup>36</sup> £3 being a half yearly allowance wch is always sent him from London; and wch my Brother used to pay him. All these Sums together make £29 : 17. Deduct 10 guineas wch you have been so obliging to order me for a ring, and there will remain due to you £19 : 7. For this sum you may draw upon me as soon as you please. My Brother always directed his Bills to me at Messrs Welch and Rogers Bankers in Cornhill.<sup>37</sup> ————— I have lately received £5 for Mr. Davies of Merthyr.<sup>38</sup> He has perhaps apply'd to you or my Nephew for it, and if he has be so good as to include it in the Bill ————— Deliver my kind love to my Niece Anne,<sup>39</sup> and to Mr and Mrs Lewis.<sup>40</sup> May you, Dear Sister, enjoy much happiness. With sincere regard I am your obliged Brother and very Humble Servt Richd Price

<sup>34</sup> Probably Richard Price's cousin Morgan Price (c.1710–78) who was the son of Jennet Price (1683–1756) and Rees S Morgan (1676–1731/32). Jennet Price was the sister of Richard Price's father Rice Price (1673–1739). Information from Perry and Morgan. The use by Morgan Price of his mother's maiden name does not appear to have been an uncommon circumstance in Wales at this time, especially if her family name were better known locally than that of her husband. Alternatively, Morgan may have adopted another Welsh tradition and taken the name of his paternal grandfather Rees Price (c. 1642–1723). I am indebted to Perry and Morgan for the latter information.

<sup>35</sup> Richard Price's father Rice Price (1673–1739) helped in the establishment of two Dissenting meeting places, one at Bettws outside Bridgend and the other at Newcastle within the town. D O Thomas in *The honest mind: the thought and work of Richard Price* (Oxford, 1977), 3, notes that Rice's brother, Samuel Price (1676–1756), left £140 to Richard Price in trust for these two establishments, which conforms to the amount Richard mentions in his letter. From the letter however it would appear 'Morgan Price' was also a trustee but D O Thomas makes no mention of the fact, which suggests it did not appear in the source from which he extracted his information – J Cyril Bowen (ed.) *Hanes eglwysi Y Tabernacl, Penybont-ar-Ogwr, 1662–1850* (1950).

<sup>36</sup> Not identified further.

<sup>37</sup> The bank of George Welch and Thomas Rogers in Cornhill was established about 1766. Rogers was Price's close neighbour at Newington Green and treasurer of his Newington Green meeting place from 1767. See Thomas, *The honest mind*, 16.

<sup>38</sup> Not identified further.

<sup>39</sup> Probably Ann Price (1758–1813), the daughter of Samuel and Catherine Price.

<sup>40</sup> Probably the Rev. Wyndham Lewis (1735–81) and his wife of 1768 Mary (aka Margaret) Price (1745–98) the daughter of Samuel and Catherine Price. Information from Perry and Morgan.

*A Further Seven Uncollected Letters of Richard Price*

Mrs Price<sup>41</sup> desires to be kindly remember'd to you.

8 : 15 : 0  
 2 : 2 : 0  
16 : 0 : 0  
 26 : 17  
3 : 0 : 0 Mr Williams  
 29 : 17 : 0  
10 : 10 : 0 Re Jewel for ring  
 19 : 17 : 0

April 1778 ½ years Dividend

On £600 Bank Stock at 5½ pr cent ————— £16 : 0 : 0

Octr 1778 - ½ years Dividend on D° at D° ——— £16 : 0 : 0

**3. Letter from Richard Price to Emanuel Mendez da Costa, circa 23 May 1783.**<sup>42</sup>Source: © *British Library Board*. Shelf Mark: Additional Manuscripts 28541, f.40.

Verso

Mr. DaCosta

Recto

Dr. Price presents his compliments with the enclosed specimens to Mr DaCosta. He is sorry that his stock at present constrains him to make them so small especially that of the Reg:[?, or Keg:] of Nickel which however is half of what he had by him which he thought sufficiently pure.

He has not yet made any more Reg:[?, or Keg:] of Manganese but when he does, will request Mr DC's acceptance of some.

Friday morn.

NB 23 May 1783<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Sarah Price (née Blundell), (1728–86).

<sup>42</sup> The date on the letter (see below) appears to have been added in a heavier and slightly different hand, possibly by Da Costa upon receipt of the letter.

<sup>43</sup> See note above.

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**4. Letter from Richard Price to Mr. Cumberland, 11 (or 12) September 1783.**

Source: © *British Library Board*. Shelf mark: Additional Manuscripts, 36494, f.145.

Verso

Mr. Cumberland<sup>44</sup>  
Church Court  
Clemens Lane  
Lombard Street

Recto

Newington Green Sept. 11 [or 12]  
1783

Dear Sir,

I came home a few days ago from Brighthelmston<sup>45</sup> and found the papers w'ch you had been so good as to leave for me; and I have also since received your letter. I have read Mr. Smeathman's<sup>46</sup> papers with much pleasure, and have received from them information and instruction. I cannot pretend to be in any degree a competent judge of the proposal they contain; but the representation Mr. Smeathman makes of it is such that I cannot help being struck by it, and considering it as very important. Indeed I admire his views, and think it a pity he should not be encouraged to carry them into execution.

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<sup>44</sup> In the British Library cataloguing of this letter the recipient is noted as G Cumberland, probably George Cumberland (1754–1848). See introductory comments for further details.

<sup>45</sup> I.e. Brighton. Price, with his love of sea swimming, often spent part of his summer holidays at this fashionable seaside resort.

<sup>46</sup> Probably Henry Smeathman (1742–86) born in Scarborough and a well-known entomologist. See introductory comments for further details.

*A Further Seven Uncollected Letters of Richard Price*

There is now an opening in the *new* world which promises an improvem't in the affairs of mankind.<sup>47</sup> The execution of this plan might in time make another opening in the old world of the greatest consequence. One of the blessings attending it would be the destruction of the slave trade, a trade wicked and diabolical, and which I can never think of with patience – some time ago I heard Mr Oswald (the Negotiator of the peace who has large concerns in Africa)<sup>48</sup> advance sentim'ts in conversation very much the same with some of those in these papers. Perhaps, therefore, it might not be improper to consult him.

With many thanks for the papers w'ch I now return, and much respect, I am S'r

Your very obed't and humble serv't

Rich'd Price

**5. Letter from Richard Price to his wife Sarah Price, 23 August 1785.<sup>49</sup>**

Yarmouth Aug. 23d 1785

My Dear Wife,

Miss Prince's letter which I received on Sunday was very welcome to me, and I hope she is sensible that I take very kindly her attention in taking the pains to write to me so often.<sup>50</sup> I should tell her this by writing

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<sup>47</sup> Price wrote this letter just after the 3 September signing of the definitive peace treaty between America and Britain, hence the 'opening in the *new* world' and its promise of improvement.

<sup>48</sup> In April 1782 Lord Shelburne had sent the seventy six year old Scottish merchant Richard Oswald to open peace negotiations with the American Commissioners in Paris. Henry Laurens, another of Price's correspondents, acted as Oswald's American agent in the slave trade and Oswald stood bail for Laurens after he had been imprisoned in the Tower of London following the capture of his ship off Newfoundland. A copy of a projected treaty between America and Holland had been discovered in Laurens's papers.

<sup>49</sup> I am grateful to Mrs. Nicola Bennetts for allowing me to publish this letter as part of the current collection.

<sup>50</sup> Miss Prince is not identified further but may well be someone brought in by Price to look after his wife Sarah, who was ailing at this time, or else she is a friend brought in to keep company with Sarah while he is away.

Paul Frame

to her; but she will, I doubt not, excuse me and consider every letter to you as an answer to her letter. — I am sorry you have so much reason to complain of your head; but our sufferings are under the direction of infinite wisdom and goodness, and all will end in everlasting happiness of the virtuous. The time is drawing near when I hope to be restored to the partner of my life who is dearer to me than any thing in the world; and I look forward to next week with desire and pleasure. I am, however, made happy here by every attention that I can well expect. Yesterday we intended to go an excursion of pleasure to Leostoffe<sup>51</sup> wch is about eight miles from here; but the weather has been bad to an uncommon degree, and this has kept us at home, and prevented me from bathing ever since Saturday. Sunday was a complete day of rain. Today we are to receive the company of some of the congregation to drink tea with us. I am glad you found Mrs. Chapone's verses.<sup>52</sup> I shall, probably, entertain Mrs Barbauld<sup>53</sup> with them this afternoon. — Remember me very kindly to Miss Summers<sup>54</sup> if with you. I think it very good in her to come to you in my absence. My affectionate complim'ts wait also on all our good neighbours Mrs Keeling,<sup>55</sup> Miss Rogers,<sup>56</sup> Miss Mitchell,<sup>57</sup> Mrs Burgh,<sup>58</sup> Mrs Graves,<sup>59</sup> Mrs and Miss Saffrey's<sup>60</sup> etc. My two nephews and their

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<sup>51</sup> I.e. Lowestoft.

<sup>52</sup> Hester Chapone (1727–1801), a literary Bluestocking and friend of Richard Price. She published *Letters on the improvement of the mind addressed to a young lady* in 1773 and *Miscellanies in prose and verse* in 1775. Both works went through a number of editions.

<sup>53</sup> Anna Letitia Barbauld (née Aikin, 1743–1825) poet, essayist and of a radical disposition akin to that of Price. In '*An address to the opposers of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts* (1790), as well as chastising the acts opponents, she hailed the French Revolution. In '*An epistle to William Wilberforce esq.* (1791) she satirised the slave trade and its supporters. Her memorial plaque in Price's Newington Green Church notes that she employed her gifts in the cause of 'humanity, peace, and justice' and 'civil and religious liberty' with 'wit, genius, poetic talent and a vigorous understanding.'

<sup>54</sup> Not identified further.

<sup>55</sup> Not identified further.

<sup>56</sup> Probably one of the daughters of Price's neighbour Thomas Rogers (1734/5–93) and his wife Mary Rogers (nee Radford, 1734/5–76) who in all had eight children.

<sup>57</sup> Not identified further.

<sup>58</sup> Hannah Burgh (nee Harding, d. 1788) wife of James Burgh (1714–75).

<sup>59</sup> Not identified further.

<sup>60</sup> Not identified further.

*A Further Seven Uncollected Letters of Richard Price*

wives send their best remembrances.<sup>61</sup> We constantly drink your health at dinner and supper; and wish we could give it as easily as we can drink it.—— I am quite well; and when I can believe you to be tolerable, I think myself refreshed and cheared [sic] by this journey. Mr Willm. Morgan has a disorder in his mouth and neck wch they call the mumps<sup>62</sup> and which is very troublesome to him; but we are in hopes that he will soon grow better. The two little children are very well and very agreeable.<sup>63</sup>

With ardent prayers that God would support and bless you and unite us in a better state I am

ever yours  
R. Price

**6. Letter from Richard Price to William Godwin, 26 November 1787.**

Source: *The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford*. Shelf mark: [Abinger] Dep.c 766/2.

Verso

[Main Address]

To  
Mr Godwin  
New Norfolk Street<sup>64</sup>  
Grosvenor Square

<sup>61</sup> George Cadogan Morgan (1754–91), who married Nancy Hurry in 1784, and William Morgan (1750–1833) who married Susannah Woodhouse in 1781. Both men were the sons of William Morgan of Bridgend and his wife Sarah Price (1726–1803), the sister of Richard Price.

<sup>62</sup> Price seems unused to the term ‘mumps’ but he may have known it by the terms squinancy or quinsy/quincy given in Johnson’s dictionary. Thanks to Martin Fitzpatrick for this information.

<sup>63</sup> Both George Cadogan Morgan and William Morgan named their first children Sarah after their mother; George’s daughter being christened by her father in the Octagon Chapel in Norwich on 11 December 1784 (thanks to Nicola Bennetts for this information). William Morgan’s daughter Sarah is also believed to have been born in 1784.

<sup>64</sup> Not present in the modern London street maps of the Grosvenor Square area but there was, at one time, a Norfolk Street in the nearby Park Lane area.

*Paul Frame*

[Subsidiary Address, probably added by Godwin]

Mare Street<sup>65</sup>  
Hackney  
Opposite the  
Stone Mason

[Personal notes, probably added by Godwin].

Chairs – 2..2.. –  
Table – 2..2.. –  
Fire Irons – 15.. –  
Carpet – 1..1.. –

Recto

Dr. Price presents his compliments to Mr. Godwin. The bearer is Mr. Van Effin a Dutch Minister<sup>66</sup> and a Neighbor and friend of Dr. Price's who wishes to speak to Mr. Godwin on the subject of the late History of the united Provinces.<sup>67</sup>

Dr Price will, therefore, be oblig'd to Mr. Godwin for any civilities he will shew him.

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<sup>65</sup> Mare Street is the main road running north through Hackney. It also forms one side of St. Thomas's Square where it is known Richard Price lived following his move from Newington Green. It seems likely that Price's home was on the Mare Street side of the square 'opposite the stone mason' and that Godwin was noting down the address in order to answer Price's letter.

<sup>66</sup> In replying on 10 November 1787 to a query from the Marquis of Lansdowne a week earlier, Price notes that 'The author of the History of the internal affairs of the united provinces is Mr Godwin. He was brought up a dissenting minister at the College at Hoxton. He has now given up his profession as a minister, and now subsists by writing'. Lansdowne had clearly asked Price a number of questions and since Price was unable 'to get to Godwin immediately' and relate the questions, he told Lansdowne of 'a neighbour, a dutch minister' who could answer them (see, *Correspondence*, III, 152-53). This minister, 'Mr. Van Effin', can be identified as the Rev. Melchior Justus Van Effen minister at the Dutch Church in Austin-Friars, London (see opening comments).

<sup>67</sup> William Godwin, *History of the internal affairs of the United Provinces, from the year 1780, to the commencement of hostilities in June 1787* (London, 1787).

*A Further Seven Uncollected Letters of Richard Price*

Hackney Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> 1787

[Unsigned]

**7. Letter from Richard Price to Mary Wollstonecraft, 17 December 1790.**

Source: *The Bodleian Library, University of Oxford*. Shelf mark: [Abinger] Dep.c 514(a)

To  
Miss Wolstonecraft [sic]  
George Street<sup>68</sup>  
Black-Fryars Bridge  
Surrey Side  
Friday

[Stamped twice – ‘7o’clock’ & ‘Penny Post Paid’]

Hackney Dec. 17<sup>th</sup> 1790.

Dr. Price presents his kind compliments to Miss Wolstonecraft, and returns her his best thanks for sending him her *Vindication of the rights of men* in answer to Mr. Burke,<sup>69</sup> and for the pleasure he has derived from the perusal of it. He has not been urprised to find that a composition which he has heard ascribed to some of our ablest writers, appears to come from Miss Wolstonecraft.<sup>70</sup> He is particularly happy in having such an advocate; and he requests her acceptance of his gratitude for the very kind and handsome manner in which she has mentioned him.<sup>71</sup>

[Unsigned]

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<sup>68</sup> No George Street appears in the Blackfriars area south of the Thames (Surrey side) today but the street may relate to Saint George’s Circus at the southern end of modern Blackfriars Road or Saint George’s Road at Elephant and Castle, a little further south.

<sup>69</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft, *A vindication of the rights of men*, (London, 1790), a rebuttal of Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1790).

<sup>70</sup> *Vindication of the rights of men* had been published anonymously.

<sup>71</sup> In *Reflections* Burke had launched a personal attack on Richard Price as well as his ‘wicked ideas’ and support of the French Revolution. Price had long been Mary’s friend, mentor and minister at Newington Green Chapel. She launched a passionate defense of Price in *Vindication of the rights of men*.

**OTHER VOICES OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT: RELIGIOUS DISSENT,  
ROMANTICISM AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN**

*Mary Spongberg*

**Daniel J White**, *Early Romanticism and Religious Dissent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, HB ISBN-13 978-0-521-85895-3, £64.00, pbk. 23.00, Kindle edn. £17.21p.; & **William McCarthy**, *Anna Laetitia Barbauld: voice of the Enlightenment*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 2008, HB ISBN-13 978-0-8018-9016-1, £32.50; \$62.00.

The history of Enlightenment feminism has been dominated by the figure of Mary Wollstonecraft. Her romantic life and tragic death have since the early nineteenth century set the parameters of the Enlightenment debate around the rights of woman. Most historical accounts of Enlightenment feminism have insisted that the immediate period following the death of Wollstonecraft saw its instantaneous and emphatic decline. It is usually asserted that following the scandal that ensued upon William Godwin's revelations of his wife's unorthodox life in his *Memoirs of the author of a Vindication of the rights of woman* (1798) most of her friends and contemporaries beat a hasty retreat, too cowed by Anti-Jacobin vilification to engage in further dispute. Godwin's account of his wife as a unique figure in the political landscape of the 1790s has endured, and while feminist historians have often criticised him for depoliticizing Wollstonecraft, they have long accepted his idea that her death marked the end of Enlightenment feminism in Britain.<sup>1</sup> Godwin's idealized portrait of Wollstonecraft in the *Memoir* has also ensured she has also come to be represented as a key figure in the formation of the Romantic imagination in Britain. This image of Wollstonecraft as a politician of feeling has come to be privileged over Wollstonecraft the radical, obscuring her political education in Dissent.

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<sup>1</sup> Pamela Hirsch, 'Mary Wollstonecraft: A Problematic Legacy' in Clarissa Campbell Orr ed. *Wollstonecraft's daughters* (Manchester, 1996), 43-60, Jane Rendall, *The origins of modern feminism* (Basingstoke, 1985), Barbara Caine, 'Victorian Feminism and the Ghost of Mary Wollstonecraft' *Women's Writing*, 4. 2 (1997), 261-75, & Barbara Caine, *English feminism 1780-1980* (Oxford, 1997).

*Other Voices of the Enlightenment: Religious Dissent, Romanticism and the Rights of Woman*

Yet as Daniel E White's *Early romanticism and religious dissent* and William McCarthy's biography of Anna Letitia Barbauld clearly demonstrate, there are very different ways in which both the history of feminism and the history of Romanticism might be told. Indeed both works provide an excellent history of the Dissenting world into which Wollstonecraft launched herself as a radical intellectual, while they also complicate and extend our understanding of the vital role of Dissent in creating the space that made Enlightenment and Romantic feminism possible. It has long been recognised that Dissenting women were critical to the emergence of feminism in Britain, yet key figures such as Barbauld have never really received the attention they have warranted.<sup>2</sup> Women of the Dissenting community of Newington Green were, of course, among Wollstonecraft's earliest supporters and their friendship and encouragement allowed her to first find her voice. As G J Barker-Benfield has documented, Wollstonecraft's radicalism was formed in that exciting crucible, where she found a maternal figure in Hannah Burgh, wife of the radical writer James Burgh, who supported the young sisters Wollstonecraft when they arrived in London. It was Hannah Burgh who encouraged Wollstonecraft to establish a school at Newington Green and Wollstonecraft appears to have identified closely with the Burgh's efforts to perpetuate education in that community.<sup>3</sup> Wollstonecraft was called to political engagement in defence of her minister at Newington Green, the Reverend Richard Price, whom Edmund Burke had vilified in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. It was through these connections that Wollstonecraft met Joseph Johnson her stalwart friend and publisher, whose financial and emotional support ensured her survival in the harsh political climate of England during the 1790s.

Mary Hays too, became a close friend through Dissent and would be Wollstonecraft's most loyal and disinterested defender in the years after her untimely death in childbirth. Hays wrote much of Wollstonecraft's

<sup>2</sup> Ruth Watts has a brief discussion of Barbauld in her *Gender, power and the Unitarians in England 1760-1860* (London, 1998), focusing on her contribution to women's education. It is principally as an educationalist that Barbauld has been acknowledged. See also Mary Hilton, *Women and the shaping of the nation: education and public doctrine in Britain 1750-1850* (Aldershot, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> G J Barker-Benfield, 'Mary Wollstonecraft: Eighteenth Century Commonwealthwoman', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50 (1) [1989], 97.

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political education in Dissent in the 'Memoirs' she published in the *Annual Necrology* of 1800, directly challenging Godwin's account of his wife's irreligious death. Godwin had scandalized with his revelation, that 'during her whole illness not one word of a religious cast fell from [Wollstonecraft's] lips'.<sup>4</sup> In her 'Memoirs' Hays describes Wollstonecraft's move to Newington Green as formative, 'giving a tincture to her future views and character'.<sup>5</sup>

Daniel E White's study of relationship between early Romanticism and Dissent during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century leaves little doubt why someone like Wollstonecraft, thirsting for radical communion, would be drawn to Newington Green. But more significantly perhaps, he demonstrates why the Dissenting community in England produced other extraordinary women, such as Hays, but also the poet Anna Letitia Barbauld and her niece and biographer Lucy Aikin. Read together these works give great insight into the cultural significance of the Dissenting academies for women such as Barbauld, Aikin and Hays. The lineaments of the system established a Warrington and replicated across provincial England, created spaces that bred radicalism in both men and women. While women were not formally allowed to study at these academies, the sociability they generated, even on their peripheries, allowed women of the middling classes greater entrée into intellectual and political communities than had ever been previously possible. Hays' political education began on the margins of these academies, and continued there, long after the death of her beloved friend Mary Wollstonecraft.

Unlike Hays, Barbauld did not exist on the margins of this community, but was born into Dissent. She was descended from one of the most influential eighteenth-century Calvinist Independents and Presbyterians, including her maternal grandfather, John Jennings and his brother David

<sup>4</sup> William Godwin, *Memoirs of the author of a Vindication of the rights of woman*, eds. Pamela Clemit and Gina Luria Walker (Ontario, 2001), 118.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Hays, 'Memoirs of Mary Wollstonecraft', loc.cit., 416. Figures of Dissent Hays mentions as in her memorial include the Rev Richard Price, Mrs James Burgh, Hays also says that Wollstonecraft compiled *The female reader* in the model of Dr Enfield's *The Speaker*.

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Jennings.<sup>6</sup> Barbauld's father and her brother were Dissenting pedagogues and ministers, and from the age of twelve she lived at Warrington, where her father was a tutor in languages, literature and divinity. She became close friends with other tutors and students at Warrington, including the formidable Joseph Priestley and his wife Mary, and William Enfield. As White suggests Barbauld's heritage was 'a powerful one, for both directly and indirectly her forebears were responsible for educating an astonishing proportion of the Dissenting elite'.<sup>7</sup> Although Barbauld's mother feared that being in an environment such as Warrington would cause her daughter to become a 'hoyden', Barbauld was greatly influenced by her experience at Warrington, and the connections she formed there would definitely shape her ideas on the education of young children as she became its most prominent spokesperson.

While Wollstonecraft's writings on pedagogy are frequently ignored by critics who focus on the *Vindications*, or her later romantic writings, Barbauld has been remembered principally as an educationalist. As McCarthy powerfully demonstrates Barbauld's fresh approach to children's literature 'revolutionized the culture of childhood, spreading a new way to teach literacy, a new religious mood, and the idea of associating childhood with rural life'.<sup>8</sup> Such ideas became synonymous with the name 'Mrs Barbauld', as she transformed children's books into children's literature. Barbauld articulated the idea widely held by pedagogues ever since, that the education of children should take centre stage in any discussion of social policy. Moreover her efforts as an educator devoted to utilising the classroom as a place where young men might be summoned 'to a higher ethic of citizenship' bore significant fruit. Thomas Denman, the man who drafted the 1832 Reform Act, had been her pupil, and according to McCarthy, remained devoted to her memory all his life.<sup>9</sup>

If Wollstonecraft's career was too scandalous for the Victorians, and her reputation diminished during that period, the reverse was true of

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<sup>6</sup> White, *Early romanticism and religious dissent*, 37.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, *Anna Laetitia Barbauld*, ix.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., x.

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Barbauld. Revered by the Victorians, this adulation saw her dropped from literary history as modernist scholars sought to repudiate everything associated with that name. As McCarthy argues, her image among the Victorians as ‘an icon of sentimental saintliness’ ensured that her tough-mindedness and political courage have been obscured.<sup>10</sup> Wollstonecraft may well have inaugurated this trend. When Wollstonecraft began her career as a political polemicist she too sought to diminish any connection between herself and Barbauld, cattily describing the poet as ‘a Lady, with some painted Flowers’, in her second *Vindication*. But the agenda Barbauld had set as a pedagogue and ideologue of bourgeois domesticity, shaped Wollstonecraft’s early writings on education, and would continue to influence women writers on this subject for several generations. Barbauld pioneered the idea that a ‘principal end of cultural production was to sustain the progressive force of the market but to inflect its values with the warmer tones of domestic life’.<sup>11</sup> This was the essence of sensibility for Barbauld, and as White demonstrates she did not engage sensibility lightly, but rather throughout her writings showed how—reason, science, free enquiry, abstract philosophical speculation, theological disputation, religious liberty, personal self-denial and a middle-class commercialist ethos could be moderated, made warmer and more beautiful through familial collaboration and poetic techniques of sensibility, which would together affiliate these austere features of non-conformity with the intimate plenitude of the home and the supposedly person, domestic and non-competitive relationships inside its walls.<sup>12</sup>

Wollstonecraft may have repudiated such an understanding of sensibility in her *Vindications*, but her *Letters written during a short residence in Sweden*, clearly evince Barbauld’s influence as she struggled to negotiate a mode of radical domesticity that could accommodate the rugged commercialism of her absent lover in that text. Such imperatives would mould the writings of a generation of Dissenting women, including Mary Hays, Joanna Baillie, Maria Edgeworth, Amelia Opie, Helen Maria

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii-xiv.

<sup>11</sup> White, *Early romanticism and religious dissent*, 68.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 68

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Williams, Elizabeth Benger and Lucy Aikin, who like Wollstonecraft drew upon Mrs Barbauld's techniques of sensibility.

McCarthy's study is also critical to reassessing Barbauld as a significant figure in Enlightenment feminism. Barbauld's absence from the history of feminism has usually been attributed to her refusal of Maria Edgeworth's offer to participate in the formation of a 'periodical paper, to be written entirely by ladies.' In her reply Barbauld suggested that there would be just as much to divide literary women as to unite them. She very sensibly advised Edgeworth, 'Mrs Hannah More would not write along with you or me, and we should probably hesitate at joining Miss Hays, or if she were living, Mrs Godwin'.<sup>13</sup> Yet as McCarthy argues Barbauld shared many of Wollstonecraft's views on women's legal position and that feminist desire forms a compensatory fantasy in her poetry. He offers a detailed and insightful account of Barbauld's engagement with Wollstonecraft that challenges the idea put forward by 1970s feminists that Barbauld rejected her views outright. McCarthy's suggestion that Barbauld's experience as a Dissenter may have lessened her desire to appear a vindicator of women's rights is important, indicating that for her the politics of religion always trumped gender. Yet at the same time her sex allowed her to engage in the politics of Dissent with less risk of persecution for sedition. She fearlessly critiqued slavery, empire-building and war, until cowed into silence by the opprobrium that greeted her most significant political poem 'Eighteen-Hundred and Eleven'.

As White acknowledges McCarthy's treatment of Barbauld refuses the image of her as a 'cardboard anti-feminist', but White cautions too against going to the opposite extreme and creating 'a cardboard feminist image of Barbauld'.<sup>14</sup> He puts forward a more subtle image of Barbauld as a daring poet whose religious writing manipulated 'eighteenth-century devotional theory and denominational cultures, elements of which at times involved deep-seated gendered associations'.<sup>15</sup> For White,

<sup>13</sup> Both White and McCarthy recount this anecdote. See White, *Early romanticism and religious dissent*, 35, and McCarthy, *Anna Letitia Barbauld*, 360-61.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel E White, *Early romanticism and religious dissent*, 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

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Barbauld's refusal of Edgeworth and her acute awareness of gender politics indicate that the binary terms feminist/anti-feminist might not be sufficient to a contemporary understanding of her oeuvre.<sup>16</sup>

Both of these works devote much space to restoring Barbauld's reputation as a poet and prose stylist of enormous significance to the history of Romanticism, but their real importance lies in their recognition that a feminine mode of Dissent existed in the late eighteenth century, that was distinctive and sometimes opposed to the more rational and philosophical modes of thought and worship adopted by male non-conformists.<sup>17</sup> Both works too challenge the idea that Dissent was in decline by the mid-1790s allowing instead the possibility that Dissenting ideas continued to flourish among women in the early nineteenth century, as a mode of private sociability, rather than as a public political discourse. Such ideas will reframe our understanding of both Romanticism and feminism in this period, and may allow other different voices of Enlightenment to be heard.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> For further discussion of these ideas and other voices of the Enlightenment, see McCarthy's and other articles in Gina Luria Walker & G M Ditchfield, *Intellectual exchanges: women and rational dissent*, Special Issue, *Enlightenment and Dissent*, 26 (2010), 1-309.

## ON BEING A NONCONFORMIST

*Martin Fitzpatrick*

**R Tudur Jones ed., with Arthur Long and Rosemary Moore, *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, Volume 1: 1550 to 1700***, Ashgate, 2007, pp. xiii + 421, Hardback; ISBN 978-0-7546-3864-3, £75.00, Website price: £67.50.

**Alan P F Sell ed., with David J Hall and Ian Sellers; *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, Volume 2: The Eighteenth Century***, Ashgate, 2006; pp. xvii + 459; Hardback; ISBN 978-0-7546-3853-7, £75.00; Website price: £67.50

**David Bebbington ed., with Kenneth Dix and Alan Ruston, *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, Volume 3: The Nineteenth Century***, Ashgate, 2006, pp. xix + 399; Hardback; ISBN 978-0-7546-3850-6; £75.00; Website price: £67.50.

**David M Thompson ed., with J H Y Briggs and John Munsey Turner, *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, Volume 4: The Twentieth Century***, Ashgate, 2007; xvi + 416; Hardback; ISBN 978-0-7546-4013-4; £75.00; Website price: £67.50.

In his address on the topic of ‘Why Dissent?’, which opened the new session at Manchester New College in October 1871, James Martineau posed the question:

Take away the Puritan conflict of the seventeenth century; take away the effects of the Act of Uniformity and St. Bartholomew’s Day...; take away the Wesleyan movement a century ago; take away the initiative of Joseph Lancaster in the creation of popular education; the Clarkson crusade against slavery; Elizabeth Fry’s compassion for the prisoner; and what would England now have been?

Not only did he believe that the nation would have been impoverished, but he argued that there remained a continuing need for its values of ‘a more vigorous insistency on the dignity of conscience and a larger pity for the

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privations and sufferings of men.’<sup>1</sup> In his own time he feared that those values were under threat. In our own age, in which public behaviour has hardly lived up to such values, no one has done more to remind us the significance of nonconformity than Alan Sell. As the series editor of these four volumes he assembled distinguished editors and assistants from present day nonconformity. The result is an incredibly impressive anthology of nonconformist life and thought, which transcends the value of most documentary series. Here we have a cornucopia of nonconformity from which scholars, students, conformist and nonconformists, the pious and impious may all benefit.

It was sensible of the series editor not to impose a rigid framework for each volume and to allow each individual editor to arrange the volumes under the main issues and priorities of the time. Thus, for example for the early volume we have a section on persecution, the eighteenth century on philosophy, nineteenth century on mission and the twentieth century of peace and war, all significant and distinctive themes in their period, but less so in the other centuries. For the eighteenth century edited by Alan Sell, the first theme is appropriately philosophy. This is followed by sections on ‘Christian Doctrine’, ‘Church, Ministry and Sacraments’, ‘Evangelism, Revival and Mission’, ‘Church, State and Society’, and ‘Nurture, Piety and Church life’. Although Alan Sell cautions (vol.2: 2) against thinking that the documents in themselves provide a complete picture of nonconformity and religious life, they do furnish us with a compelling and varied landscape of nonconformity. In the space of this review it will be impossible to convey the wonderful range of the documents chosen. Suffice it to note that this reviewer learnt something from almost every page turned.

Each volume begins with an editorial introduction which provides the setting for the chosen documents. They also provide valuable mini-histories of nonconformity. Tudur Jone’s introduction to the first volume

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<sup>1</sup> James Martineau, *Essays, reviews and addresses; IV: academical and religious* (London, 1891), 160-61; cf. Alan Sell’s Series editor’s *Preface* for each of the above volumes; also the extract from Milton’s *Aeropagitica* in vol. 1, doc.II.11: 135-45 at 141, re. ‘a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit’.

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is especially helpful in charting the complex phases of early nonconformity through to the emergence of modern nonconformity with the Great Ejectment of 1662. This was followed by a period of intermittent but severe persecution. Yet it proved to be a crucially creative period in the history of nonconformity, which helped subsequent generations of nonconformists to retain a sense of their own values and worth. For the eighteenth century, which will be of most interest to *E&D* readers, and on which this review will in the main focus, Professor Sell provides a lucid introduction to the documents noting the key aspects of Dissent in an era of toleration. As in the other volumes, each major section has an introduction; within the sections there are introductions for each document or composite set of documents. The latter are especially useful as they indicate the location of the primary source or sources, provide invaluable bibliographical guides as well as indicate the significance of the document(s). The length of each extract is determined by its content, so that some are short and pithy and others extended to allow the subject matter a fair exposition. Of course, not all of the documents are significant only in their own time. Many of the issues concerning Dissent spanned the centuries, and works published in one century were re-printed in subsequent centuries, sometimes even if they seemed concerned with specific dated issues. For example the excommunication of Joseph Rawson for heterodoxy from the Congegationalist church of Castle Gate, Nottingham, gave rise to John Taylor's *A defence of the common rights of Christians (1737)*. This was intended as a defence of Rawson yet it was reprinted in 1829 by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. In this case one wonders why? Was it as a subtle ploy which could be construed as a defence of the proprietarial rights of whole congregations which had departed from orthodoxy, or was it a defence of toleration at the time of the debate on Roman Catholic Emancipation which the Unitarians supported? If the latter, it could be regarded as a double edged sword, for while Taylor argued in favour of the widest toleration, defining 'Persecution' as 'any degree of hatred, or any kind of injury done to those who differ from us in religious sentiments', it attacked the intolerance of Rawson's minister James Sloss as a species of 'DISSENTING POPYRY',

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not quite as bad as genuine Popery but bad enough (vol.2, docs. II.14 & II.15: 79-81).

Matters of conscience are the essence of nonconformity; persecution, from real physical persecution to subtler forms of political and social exclusion, provided the cement. And this can be seen to be intact from its uncertain origins through to the twentieth century when it faced an uncertain future and continues to do so in our own new century. Through fighting against its disabilities, nonconformists gained strength from the sense that they were a people apart, 'everywhere spoken against'. When Dr. John Clifford wrote enthusiastically in his diary of the service of Thanksgiving of the Free Churches at the end of the Great War, he detected that it was 'the beginning of a new day in the relations of the State to "Dissent"' and that there was a 'lifting to a slight extent of the social stigma' (vol.4, doc.VI.9: 279). He was, however, mindful that the strength of the Free Churches lay 'in their inward simplicity and faith'.<sup>2</sup> One might add, also by their sense of exclusion from the established church. Indeed, one should note in relation to Dr. Clifford's enthusiasm for a 'new day' that, although the king and queen had graced the Free Churches' Thanksgiving service in the Albert Hall, those churches had been excluded from the Anglican rejoicings in Westminster Abbey.

Clifford's aspirations for nonconformity, which to a degree were fulfilled in the twentieth century, can be seen as misplaced. Nonconformity has been defined by its relation with the established church and the social and political marginalisation which goes with it, and so, as David Thompson notes, the twentieth-century 'quest for "recognition" and "integration"' may have been 'misconceived'.<sup>3</sup> Being a nonconformist in the eighteenth century was simpler than in the present day for the apparatus of discrimination was a constant reminder to nonconformists of their nonconformity. Yet nonconformity was never quite that simple. Although the nonconformist faith involved the disobedience of refusing to conform, that faith throughout its history came

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<sup>2</sup> On the formation of the Free Churches, see vol.3, Doc.X.4: 345-48.

<sup>3</sup> See vol.4: 8.

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in many forms, and involved conflicts of its own. We have noted how in the 1730s Joseph Rawson was expelled through the action of his minister, yet ministers did not always find their authority respected. John Reynolds, a visiting preacher at Bishop's Stortford, found that his strident preaching was not to the taste of the congregation (vol.2, doc.VI.60:422), and William Roby only just survived being 'assailed' by dissidents in his congregation for at least four hours without a break. He found no support until he resigned his charge, whereupon the congregation rallied round him and asked him to stay on. The experience was so distressing that Roby on leaving the church 'burst into tears and went weeping all the way home' (vol. 2, doc.VI.51: 398). Nonconformists were apt to remind themselves that this is not an ideal world; some of their own actions documented here confirm that view.

If nonconformity has always had a quarrelsome aspect, it has also had a questing nature which sought to understand the Christian message in the context of its times. In the eighteenth century some sought to reconcile Christian doctrine with enlightenment thought, and especially that of John Locke. His ideas for example on toleration, original sin, personal identity and thinking matter all posed problems for those who believed that contemporary learning and scriptural authority could be reconciled. Of course not all thought that and the case for an educated ministry and laity was one which had to be made, so that on the one hand we have Howel Harris warning of the 'danger of philosophy' (vol.2, doc.VI.11: 335) and on the other, the Bristol Education Society arguing the case (in 1770) for a learned ministry: Christian conversion was not sufficient in itself, for 'with *very few* exceptions ...those ministers who have been the most laborious and successful in their work, have been as eminent for sound learning as for substantial piety' (vol.2. doc. VI.8: 330-32). That still left the question as to what is sound learning. Thus we find Isaac Watts wrestling with the question as to the nature of bodily resurrection. He deployed Scripture and the latest natural knowledge in the search for an answer (vol.2, doc.I.3: 14-19), concluding that science and apostolic authority argued for the resurrection of essentially the same body as that which had been buried. He believed that Locke had over-valued reason, and hoped that, with some charitable assistance, he would

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‘find him [Locke] out in heaven’ (vol.2: doc.II.7: 65-6). Watts was so well esteemed that Samuel Johnson recommended his readers ‘to imitate him in all but his nonconformity’ (vol.2, doc.VI.65: 433-34).

If one returns to Martineau’s question, these documents undoubtedly provide wonderful insight into the world of nonconformity. But to what extent will a documentary series, even as splendid as these nonconformist texts, lead to a greater understanding of nonconformity? The cost of these volumes is beyond the reach of most students and so most students of nonconformity will rely on their libraries to invest in all four volumes. If this is so, it suggests that there is a strong case for producing an online version for library subscription which would complement the hard copy on the shelves. Such a version would have a more flexible searchable quality than the hard copy, which would enable one to pursue themes and concepts across the volumes more easily. Maybe it would also attract readers who might be put off by the four impressive tomes. One would like to believe that the series will reach a wider audience than the academic. In an age when national and communal identities are often reduced to raucous simplicities, it is timely to remind the public of the richness of the nonconformist traditions, and of all the travails which nonconformity involved. Although it may well be that these volumes fulfil a useful purpose in anthologising the traditions before they die, one may hope that they serve a more vital purpose of acting as a reminder of the continuing importance of the values, which Martineau noted, of the ‘dignity of conscience and a larger pity for the privations and sufferings of men.’

Aberystwyth

## THOMAS PAINE AND HIS AMERICAN CRITICS

*H T Dickinson*

**Kenneth W Burchell** (ed.), *Thomas Paine and America, 1776-1809*, London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009, six volumes, pp. xxii + 301, 523, 373, 251, 486, and 450; £495.00 the set; ISBN-13: 9781851969647.

Thomas Paine attracted a great deal of admiration and hostility during his lifetime. He was deeply involved in the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the radical movement in Britain in the 1790s, the party conflicts in the USA in the early nineteenth century, and in the attacks on Christianity and the Christian clergy that were a marked feature of the last decades of his life. As well as actively engaging in political disputes, he was a prolific writer, propagandist and controversialist whose most famous works were more widely distributed and more intensely debated than any other works in the English language in his lifetime. Since the late nineteenth century, when favourable biographies of him began to appear in America and American scholars published scholarly editions of his works, he has attracted a great deal of favourable attention. The advance of democracy has perhaps made him more relevant to modern readers than he appeared to many of his contemporaries in his last years. The bicentenary of his death in 2009 was marked by many conferences and publications that stressed the importance and the relevance of his writings. There is a danger in all this in failing to recognize how much hostility Paine generated in his lifetime and how many of his contemporaries attacked his works and tried to attack his person. To understand Paine in the round and in the contexts in which he operated and published his major works, we need to read what his contemporary critics wrote about his works and his character.

Paine engendered widespread and intense antagonism, particularly in Britain and America where his works were also most widely distributed and most favourably received. By reading the many hostile criticisms of Paine's works produced by his contemporaries, we not only learn much about the ideas of his critics, but what precisely it was about Paine's own ideas and proposals, and about his writing style, that caused the greatest

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alarm. Paine's critics were all too aware that Paine's ideas opened the eyes of many among the lower orders to the corruption and abuses of the prevailing social, political and religious orders. Despite their frequent adverse comments, for example, about Paine's faulty logic and poor grammar, his critics were all too aware that these flaws did not undermine Paine's influence among his intended readers, but often strengthened it. Paine's radical ideas and populist style appealed to many, but these were precisely the same qualities that antagonized his opponents in both Britain and America. If we are to achieve a fuller understanding of Paine and his positive and negative influence on his contemporaries, then we need to do more than read only what Paine wrote. We need also to absorb the kind of substantial publication that Kenneth Burchell produced in 2009. Although an admirer of Paine himself, Burchell clearly appreciates that Paine's contemporary critics should not be ignored. He has therefore edited these six substantial and handsomely produced volumes of texts written by many of Paine's moderate critics, fierce opponents and occasional supporters that will do much to explain, and enhance our understanding of, Paine's reputation in America during his lifetime.

Although all of Paine's writings aroused considerable interest and provoked considerable controversy, not all provoked substantial pamphlets or periodical essays commenting upon or criticizing Paine's arguments. This appears to be the case, for example, with Paine's *The case of the officers of Excise* (1772), *The American crisis* (1777-78), *Letter addressed to the Abbe Raynal on the affairs of North-America* (1782), *Dissertation on government, the affairs of the bank, and paper money* (1786), *A letter addressed to the addressers, on the late Proclamation* (1792), *Dissertation on first principles of government* (1795), and *Agrarian justice* (1797) and hence readers will find nothing about these writings in Burchell's six volumes. Two other works by Paine dealt only with British issues. Paine's *Letter to Mr Secretary Dundas ... on the Rights of man and the late Proclamation* (1792) produced only one response, published by a British author in London. Paine's *The decline and fall of the English system of finance* (1796) provoked five responses, but these were all written by British authors and were published only in Britain. Burchell is therefore justified in excluding all of these works from his six volumes.

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What Burchell has included in these six volumes are texts written by American authors or published in America in response to Paine's other writings and political activities. He includes seven American responses to Paine's *Common sense*. These include two essays in the newspaper press, which raises the issue of why Burchell has ignored entirely the eight letters by 'Cato' addressed 'To the People of Pennsylvania' and published in the *Pennsylvania Packet* between 11 March and 29 April 1776. 'Cato' was almost certainly William Smith, an Anglican clergyman and Provost of the College of Philadelphia, who became a leading American Loyalist and a prominent figure among those who later retreated to Britain. Burchell has printed two essays on the Silas Deane controversy, both by Americans, and six responses to Paine's *Letter to George Washington*, including two by British authors, though published in America. The responses to Paine's attack on the character, reputation and abilities of Washington help explain how support for him in America began to wane in the later 1790s.

Burchell has chosen to reproduce three substantial responses to Paine's *Rights of man*, as well as a dozen shorter pieces, all published in America. Given the much greater number of responses to the *Rights of man* published in Britain, it is clear that this work attracted far less attention and much less alarm in America than in a country where radical and conservative opinion reacted more profoundly to Paine's ideas and the French Revolution posed a more immediate threat. The pamphlet by John Quincy Adams, reproduced here, is perhaps the most intelligent and the fairest critique of Paine's *Rights of man* produced at the time. Burchell has also included fourteen substantial responses and eight shorter responses to Paine's two volumes on *The age of reason*. They constitute well over half of the pages in his six volumes. This is justified since *The age of reason* undoubtedly aroused more hostile comment in America than any other of Paine's other major writings. These pamphlets help us understand how it was that Paine's unorthodox religious opinions rather than his radical political opinions were responsible for the savage attacks launched on him in America. Surprisingly, perhaps, *The age of reason* produced even more hostile rejoinders in Britain than in America, and perhaps even than Paine's *Rights of man* did in Britain. On the other hand, a small

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number of British authors did write in support of Paine's religious opinions, whereas, if Burchell's selection is an accurate indication of what was printed in America, this appears never to have been the case there.

Burchell's last volume prints some forty short essays and brief notices printed in the newspaper and periodical press in America between 1801 and 1815. Many of these were written by bitter opponents of Paine, who held very different views on the issues exciting American party politics in these years and who brought up the opinions Paine expressed earlier in his *Letter to General Washington* and in *The age of reason* in order to undermine his present arguments in support of Thomas Jefferson and his policies. A few of these essays do defend Paine's current opinions or at least express gratitude for his earlier contributions to the American revolutionary cause. They all demonstrate how much use was made of Paine's ideas and reputation in order to support and attack the American government's policies. These newspaper essays, and some of the shorter pieces included in other volumes, are among the most useful texts provided by Burchell, since they are sources not easily located by readers and they appeared in publications not readily available to either scholars or students.

Deciding what texts to include in these six volumes undoubtedly presented the editor with some difficulties, but it is not clear what criteria he applied in making his selection. In his Introduction, he mentions that he has decided not to publish some texts that are readily available to readers in modern editions. He gives as an example Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the revolution in France*. This is certainly readily available in many modern editions, but it was right to exclude it because it was never a response to Paine, but rather to Richard Price as well as to the alarming events in France. Burke's only direct response to Paine occurs in several pages of *An Appeal from the new to the old Whigs*, though, even here, he never acknowledges that he is quoting Paine when he refers to dangerous radical ideas of the day. If one of Burchell's criteria for inclusion or exclusion was whether a work was available in a modern edition, then it is surprising that he includes John Adams' *Thoughts on government*, but excludes James Chalmers' *Plain truth*. Given the title of Burchell's collection, it might have been expected that his selection would

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only include works written by American authors, works first published in America or works responding to Paine's writings on American affairs, but he does not stick strictly to these criteria. He excludes, for example, many works written by American authors and only published in the USA, while including Vicesimus Knox's *Christian philosophy*, when this British author had published it years earlier in Britain. Burchell never discusses why he chose the responses to *The age of reason* that he has included. He seems unaware of the short but valuable bibliographic essays by Michael Lesser (in the *Bulletin of Bibliography*, 25 (1967), 41-43) and by Gayle Trusdel Pendleton (in the *British Studies Monitor*, 10 (1980), 36-45) that have endeavoured to identify all the contemporary responses to Paine's *The age of reason*. Despite his inclusion of non-American texts Burchell has chosen to ignore an interesting Irish response to Paine's *Common sense*, the anonymous *Reason. In answer to a pamphlet entitled, Common sense* (Dublin, 1776).

The vast majority of the texts in these six volumes have not been re-set by a printer. The publisher has chosen to reproduce them photographically exactly as they first appeared. This means that there is no uniformity to the font or page size or line spacing of these pages, but the quality of the original texts has been enhanced by superior photographic techniques and there are benefits in seeing texts exactly as they reached their first readers and complete with the original as well as modern pagination. Most of the texts are in larger font than the editorial material and are easy as well as a pleasure to read. Some of the essays from newspapers and periodicals, however, appear in the same columns, small font and narrow line spacing and, hence, are quite difficult to read. A tiny number almost require the reader to use a magnifying glass. Perhaps these should have been re-set by a printer.

The value of these handsomely produced volumes rests heavily on the value of the texts chosen to be reproduced and on the scholarly apparatus provided by the editor. As has been indicated above, it is not clear what material and how much of it has not been selected for these texts. I know, for example, that several American responses to Paine's *The age of reason* have not been selected for inclusion in these volumes. I am less certain

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whether there are American responses to other works by Paine that have not appeared in these volumes, for whatever reason. Although the editor has done a lot of good work in providing the scholarly apparatus to enable readers to get the best out of these texts, it is regrettable that his efforts include a disappointing number of inaccuracies and some significant omissions.

Each text is introduced by the editor with a Headnote that provides useful evidence on the author and the circumstances of its publication. Almost no effort has been made, however, to provide a brief introduction to the opinions expressed in the subsequent texts. A reader has to read the whole of each text to learn what particular line of argument is being advanced. Some of these Headnotes, however, are particularly helpful. Burchell has done a good job in managing to identify some of the anonymous or pseudonymous authors of these texts. I am a little surprised, however, that he has not identified the author of the essays signed 'Candidus' as this writer has often been identified as James Chalmers (1727-1806), the Scottish-born leader of the American Loyalists in Maryland, who later left for England. In his General Introduction, Burchell gives the author of *Plain truth: addressed to the inhabitants of America. Containing remarks on a late pamphlet intituled Common sense* as George Chalmers, when it was written, in fact, by this James Chalmers.

The editor's General Introduction is perhaps the most disappointing contribution that he makes to these six volumes. A mere ten pages in length, it devotes very little space to Paine's career or writings, or to a discussion of the contents of the texts that are subsequently reproduced in these six volumes. Two of the pages are devoted to the texts selected and the annotation adopted. More than two pages defend Paine against the frequently expressed charges that he drank too much. Burchell probably protests too much and half concedes the point in any case when he observes as part of his defence how heavily many of Paine's contemporaries drank. If he had looked closely at James Gillray's famous graphic satire on Paine, *Fashion before ease* (1792), Burchell would have noticed that Gillray saw fit to caricature Paine by giving him the face of a very heavy drinker long before Burchell believes that he took to

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drinking heavily. Burchell devotes three pages to the malicious contemporary biographies of Paine by George Chalmers and James Cheetham, points worth making, but more could have been said about the legal and physical attacks on Paine. The reference to Cheetham's devastatingly hostile and highly influential biography, published in America just after Paine's death, makes me wish it had been one of Burchell's chosen texts. I was pleased to be provided with a very useful combined index at the end of volume six.

An important advantage in reading texts like these in a Pickering and Chatto edition is that the editor provides extremely useful endnotes that seek to identify every person, place, incident or quotation mentioned in the texts. In this edition, Kenneth Burchell has worked extremely hard to provide many thousands of endnotes in small font in over 180 pages of these volumes. He is particularly good at identifying people, translating the many quotations from Latin, and in relating many parts of the texts to the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions. I also found it helpful that Burchell makes clear how often the authors of his texts misquoted Paine when launching their attacks upon him. A few grammatical errors have crept into these endnotes and there are some errors: the Tudor dynasty ruled England from 1485 not 1405; Richard Hooker (1554-1600) was English not British; Hogarth was not a cartoonist; David Hume was certainly Scottish not English; James II did not abdicate the throne and Parliament did not oust him from the throne in 1690. Furthermore, Alexander Wedderburn was not 'always a Tory'; Charles James Fox was not a supporter of radical reform; William Penn was neither an aristocrat nor a democrat; John Hancock was President of the Second Continental not Constitutional Congress; Minorca was in British hands in 1776; the present British Queen reigns but does not rule; Jeremy Bentham referred to natural rights not to Blackstone's *Commentaries* as 'nonsense [not ignorance] on stilts'; and the revolution of May 1793 refers to the rising of the Paris Commune against the Convention on the 27<sup>th</sup>. J.R. not J.A. Alden wrote *Stephen Sayre*; and it should be Arminianism not Armenianism, Emmet not Emmit, and Shaftesbury not Shaftsbury. More seriously, the Hampden mentioned on p. 197 of volume II is John Hampden (1595-1643), the great opponent of Ship Money, not his

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grandson, John Hampden (1653-96), the opponent of Charles II and James II. The Bishop of Lichfield mentioned on p. 45 of vol. III is James Cornwallis (1781-1824), not Brownlow North. The author described on p. 157 of vol. III as a champion of infidelity cannot be John James Blunt (1794-1855) as he would have been no more than one year old at this time! He is almost certainly Charles Blunt, or more usually Blount (1654-93) the author of such freethinking and deist works as *Anima mundi* (1678), *Miracles, no violation of the law of nature* (1683) and *Religio laici* (1683). The West mentioned on p. 95 and again on p. 111 of vol. IV is almost certainly neither Benjamin West (1730-1813), the famous painter, nor his brother Stephen West (1735-1819), but Gilbert West (1703-56), the author of *A defence of Christian revelation* (1748) and *Observations on the history and evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1747). The work cited in the footnote on p. 212 of volume IV is not from one of the works of John Locke, but from *A select collection of original letters; written by the most eminent persons on various entertaining subjects, and on many important occasions; from the Reign of Henry the Eighth, to the present time* (2 vols., London, 1755).

Despite his best efforts, Burchell has failed to trace the authors of various quotations. Perhaps because I have had greater access to important databases, I have been able to supply many, though not all, of Burchell's omissions. He and his readers may find the following of use:

Vol. I, p. 145, col. 2, lines 37-40: The quotation is from Francis Hutcheson, *A short introduction to moral philosophy, in three books* (Glasgow, [1753]), p. 272.

Vol. I, pp. 237, ll. 31-33 and 239, ll. 18-27: The quotations here are not from Rapin's *History of England*, but from his *Dissertation sur les Whigs & les Torys* (London, [1717]), pp. 2 and 19.

Vol. II, p. 148, col. 1, ll. 36-37: The line of verse here comes from Jacques' famous speech beginning 'All the world's a stage' in Shakespeare's *As you like it*, Act II, Scene VII.

Vol. III, p. 81, l. 4: I think the reference here to the Cinglions, a reformed church, is probably to the Zwinglians, the Protestant followers of Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531), the Swiss theologian.

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Vol. III, p. 225, ll. 5 and 8: Porphyry (234-305 AD?), a new-Platonist philosopher, born in Tyre, wrote a book *Against the Christians*.

Vol. III, p. 315, l. 4: The 'Christian Odes' of Alexander Pope include *The dying Christian to his soul* (1712) and *The universal prayer* (1738).

Vol. IV, p. 13, l. 20-p. 14, l. 14: The quotation is from Discourse IX in Thomas Sherlock, *Several discourses preached at the Temple Church* (2 vols., London, 1754), I, 270-71.

Vol. IV, p. 118, ll. 33-34: The footnote here refers to Alexander Pope, *Messiah, a sacred eclogue. In imitation of Virgil's Pollio* (London, 1766), lines 31-32.

Vol. IV, p. 173, ll. 43-44: Moses de Kotzri is Moses of Coucy, an early thirteenth-century Jewish scholar, who wrote *On The Precepts of the Law*. Samson Micosi is Samson of Coucy, a brother-in-law of Moses, who appears to have published nothing under his own name. Ben Nachman is known as Barnachnon or Moses ben Nahmon or Rabbi Bar Nachman (1194-1270). Junius perhaps refers to Junius 11, a version of early books of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon verse. Cunaeus refers to Petrus Cunaeus, the penname of the Dutch scholar, Peter van der Kun (1586-1638), most famous for his book *The Hebrew republic* (1617). Exactly the same list of authorities is to be found in Thomas Hartwell Horne, *An introduction to the critical study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (4<sup>th</sup> edn., 2 vols., Philadelphia, 1825), I, 561 note. See also Phyllis S. Lachs, 'Hugo Grotius' Use of Jewish Sources in *On the law of war and peace*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 30 (1977), 181-200.

Vol. IV, p. 202, ll. 36-37: I think the reference here is to Philip Doddridge, *The evidences of Christianity briefly stated, and the New Testament proved to be genuine. In three judicious and excellent sermons* (London, 1792).

Vol. IV, p. 215, ll. 9-17: This scene is recorded in detail in *The Scots Magazine*, 50 (1788), 83.

Vol. IV, p. 216, ll. 18-22: This quotation can be found in *Discourses on various subjects, by the late Reverend John Leland DD* (4 vols., London, 1769), I, preface, xli-xlii.

Vol. V, p. 68, ll. 16-29: This quotation can be found in James Muir, *An*

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*examination of the principles contained in The age of reason* (Baltimore, 1795), p. 65. It is on p. 385 of volume II of Burchell's own edition.

Vol. V, p. 136, ll. 25-26: This quotation can be found in William Cave, *Apostolici: or, the history of the lives, acts, deaths, and martyrdom of those who were contemporary with or immediately succeeding the Apostles* (4<sup>th</sup> edn., London, 1716), Introduction, ii.

Vol. V, p. 116, l. 17: This work is Pliny the Elder's *Historiae naturalis*.

Vol. V, p.137 fn: Eusebius Pamphilos (c. 263-339 AD), Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. He is the author of *Ecclesiastical history*.

Vol. V, p. 149, l.10-p. 151, l. 19: This section has been copied verbatim from Robert Jenkin, *The reasonableness and certainty of the Christian religion* (2 vols., London, 1721), I, 361-63.

Vol. V, p. 158, ll. 14-21: This quotation refers to the Babylonian Talmud, Tract Sanhedrim C. Helec in *Galatin*, Book 9, ch. 2.

Vol. V, p. 158, ll. 31-32: The source referred to here is Jean-Baptiste Bullet, *The history and establishment of Christianity compiled from Jewish and Heathen authors only; exhibiting a substantial proof of the truth of this religion* (London, 1776).

Vol. V, p. 180, ll. 31-33: This is from Kircher's *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* (4 vols., 1651), his supreme work on Egyptology.

Vol. V, p. 184 footnote: 2<sup>nd</sup> Apol. 73 refers to *The apologies of Justin Martyr ... in defence of the Christian religion* (2 vols., London, 1709), II, 73.

Vol. V, p. 201, l. 32: This is a reference to Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), author of *Proponitur, Maimonidis More Novochim typis mandandum lingua Arabica* (Oxford, 1690).

Vol. V, p. 231, l. 2-p. 232, l. 3: This long quotation is from William Jones, *A course of lectures on the figurative language of the Holy Scripture, and the interpretation of it from the scripture itself* (London, 1789), 443-45.

Vol V, p. 233, l. 11: This refers to George Forster, *Sketches of the mythology and customs of the Hindoos* (London, 1785), It is a loose rendering of what appears on p. 12.

Vol. V, p. 246, l. 19-p. 247, l.18: This long quotation is from Thomas

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Hardy's sermon, 'The Resurrection of Christ' in *The Scottish preacher: or, a collection of sermons, by some of the most eminent clergymen of the Church of Scotland* (4 vols., Edinburgh, 1789), IV, 10-11.

Vol. V, p. 261, l. 28-p. 262, l. 25: This long quotation can be found in Thomas Stackhouse, *A new history of the Holy Bible, from the beginning of the world, to the establishment of Christianity* (6 vols., Glasgow, 1796), VI, 552.

Vol. V, p. 278, ll. 27-34: This quotation can be found in William Newcome, *Observations on our Lord's conduct as a divine instructor, and on the excellence of His moral character* (London, 1795), p. 32. Newcome (1729-1800) was Archbishop of Armagh.

Vol. V, p. 288, ll. 9-22: This quotation is from Thomas Stackhouse, *A new history of the Bible*, p. 283.

Vol. V, p. 309, ll. 10-12 and ll. 21-31: These quotations are from William Paley, *A view of the evidences of Christianity* (7<sup>th</sup> edn., 2 vols., London, 1800), I, 243 and 209-10. Vol. V, p. 330, l. 23-p. 331, l. 14: This is a loose paraphrase of William Worthington, *The evidences of Christianity deduced from facts, and the testimony of sense, through all the ages of the Church to the present time* (2 vols., London, 1769), I, 136-40.

Vol. V, p. 366, l. 32: Philos. Princip. refers to the Chevalier [Andrew Michael] Ramsay, *The philosophical principles of natural and revealed religion* (2 vols., Glasgow, 1748-49).

Vol. V, p. 367, ll. 3-24: This long quotation is from Alexander Geddes, *The Holy Bible, or the books accounted sacred by Jews and Christians* (2 vols., London, 1792-97), I, xvi.

Vol. V, p. 380, ll. 31-33: This quotation is from Diodorus Siculus, *The historical library of Diodorus the Sicilian* (London, 1721), 49.

Vol. V, p. 382, l. 12: This refers to *The history of Dion Cassius abridg'd by Xiphilin* (2 vols., London, 1704).

Vol. V, p. 393, ll. 12-26: This is from Ramsay, *Philosophical principles of natural and revealed religion*, II, 203-4.

Vol. VI, p. 40, l. 2: This line of verse is from a soliloquy in Joseph Addison's play, *Cato*, Act V, Scene I, where it is 'cries' not 'speaks'.

Vol. VI, p. 61, ll. 9-10: This Latin quotation is from Suetonius, *The lives of the twelve Caesars*, vol. 02, Augustus.

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Vol. VI, p. 156, l. 4: The *Baltimore American* probably refers to a newspaper that frequently changed its name, but which was known as the *American and Baltimore Daily Advertiser* between 1799 and 1802.

Vol. VI, p. 341, ll. 5-7: This quotation is from Genesis 49-10 as recorded in the Targum or Aramaic version of the Torah.

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**Pamela Clemit ed., *The Letters of William Godwin: Volume I: 1778-1797*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. lvii +306; ISBN 978-0-19-956261-9, £100.**

William Godwin was one of the most profound and interesting of the radical thinkers in Britain in the Age of Revolution. Scholars interested in him can benefit from the fact that we now have excellent biographies of him, modern editions of most of his works, and excellent critiques of his most important published works. Pamela Clemit has now gathered together an expert team that is engaged in providing us with a complete scholarly edition of his letters. She herself has edited the first volume in the series; a volume that includes 187 letters and 4 undated drafts written by Godwin between 1778 and 1797. Some of these letters are published for the first time, all are newly transcribed, and all are heavily annotated in a most helpful manner. The annotations tell us much about the recipients of Godwin's letters, explain much about the contents, and quite frequently quote from the letters to Godwin to which he is replying. Professor Clemit also provides readers with a 24-page Introduction, a useful chronology, ten illustrations and an 18-page index. Her editorial work undoubtedly adds greatly to the value of these letters. She has left scholars in her debt and whetted our appetites for the succeeding volumes in this series.

The letters included in this first volume were sent to such leading politicians as Burke, Fox and Sheridan; to prominent radicals such as Kippis, Paine, Priestley and Thelwall; to publishers such as Thomas Holcroft, Joseph Johnson and George Robinson; and to fellow authors such as Elizabeth Inchbald, Mary Hays, and Mary Wollstonecraft. A number of letters were also sent to young men, especially Thomas Wedgwood, who were seeking to develop their talents and believed that Godwin could and would assist them. In his letters, Godwin was always energetic, forthright and cerebral. A great many of his letters demonstrate his indefatigable search for truth, his constant unwillingness to take anything on trust, his deep desire to improve himself and others, both morally and intellectually, and his frequent readiness to offer advice (whether it was asked for or not, and whether it was likely to be welcomed or not). Godwin's intellectual honesty and integrity are manifested again

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and again. He does not dissemble or hide his views whatever the subject, he is always ready to write what he thinks, and often discusses public issues such as the French Revolution and the prosecution of radicals in a most frank and open manner. He is willing to admit that he may be mistaken and to confess that he still has much to learn. He acknowledges human fallibility, despite his optimism about future progress. He is often morally brave and yet also cautious about jumping to conclusions or taking precipitate action.

It would be possible to fill pages of this review with superb quotations that are most revealing about Godwin the man and about his philosophical ideas. These can often be seen by modern readers to summarise or embellish opinions that Godwin expressed in his published works. The private correspondent revealed here is much the same as the public author. Godwin is generous in his praise and robust in his criticism, often in the very same letter, especially those he sent to Thomas Wedgwood, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Mary Hays. His love letters to Mary Wollstonecraft, particularly when they were apart because he took a most interesting trip to Josiah Wedgwood's pottery in the Midlands during which he also met Samuel Parr and Robert Bage, are quite wonderful. His letters to Elizabeth Inchbald and Mary Hays after Mary Wollstonecraft's death are quite distressing. Godwin emerges from these exchanges much the better human being than his two female correspondents.

Godwin consistently emerges from his letters as remarkably intelligent, deeply reflective, and intellectually and morally brave. He was always seeking to make a contribution to the world by improving his own work and his own character as well as the work and character of those to whom he wrote his carefully crafted letters. His letters are enormously revealing. Godwin did not try to dissemble or obfuscate, or seek the good opinion of his correspondents by deliberately hiding his views or obscuring his opinions. The recipients of his letters may not have always appreciated what he wrote, but his modern readers can be grateful for his candour. He fills at least this reader with every confidence that these letters reveal as much about the real Godwin as we are ever likely to discover.

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**James Vigus ed., *Henry Crabb Robinson: Essays on Kant, Schelling, and German Aesthetics***, Modern Humanities Research Association, (2010), pp. ix + 151; ISBN 978-0-947623-88-3; pbk £12.99; \$24.99; EUR 19.99.

Early in his adult life Henry Crabb Robinson became disillusioned first with the orthodox Calvinism of his upbringing, then with Rational Dissent, and finally with British philosophy in general. Priestley's materialism and necessitarianism seemed to him to be more compatible with atheism than with a belief in revelation; he wondered whether the thought of Locke and Hume could yield certainty in moral and religious matters; he felt that British philosophy could not properly account for human liberty. Full of sceptical doubts, Robinson left for Germany in 1800, where he encountered the philosophy of Kant, the several movements that developed out of Kant, and the work of the great German poets; he became personally acquainted with a number of the leading German intellectual figures. Robinson eventually registered at the University of Jena, where he attended Schelling's lectures. Once he learned the language and overcame the difficulties caused by the obscure style of Kantian writing, he converted to the new German philosophy. Robinson thought that Kant had managed to overcome both dogmatism and scepticism and, especially in ethics, had arrived at certainty. And once Robinson became more familiar with the speculative philosophy of Schelling, he switched allegiance, though he later did revert to a more properly Kantian position.

Vigus' volume reproduces or produces for the first time Robinson's philosophical writings from the period between 1800 and 1805, documenting Robinson's struggle both with British philosophy and with the new German one. Part I (28-55) is comprised of five articles intended for the *Monthly Register*; three of which were published in 1802 and 1803, while two were rejected. They provide an overview of the basics of Kant's epistemology, discussing the differences to French and British positions, as well as of Kant's concept of the beautiful; here Robinson emphasized especially the revolutionary nature of Kant's notion of disinterested art. Part II (55-119) starts with Robinson's letter to his brother, detailing how

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Schelling had diverged from Kant. Then a short piece in German on liberty and necessity, along with Vigus' translation, argues that our everyday conviction that we are free is unpersuasive and that only God can be conceived of as free. Subsequently, Vigus produces lecture notes, again in German and English, on Schelling's course on aesthetics that Robinson attended during the winter semester 1802-1803. In this phase of his philosophical development Schelling propounded the so-called 'Identity Philosophy', based on the idea that the absolute is ultimately identical with phenomena. In his aesthetics Schelling accordingly explained the basic concepts of aesthetics in terms of the absolute. Part III (120-138) includes three lectures that Robinson presented to Madame de Staël in January and February 1804. After again summarizing Kant's philosophy and discussing the differences between Kant and Schelling, Robinson traced the development of German aesthetics from Kant to Schiller to Schelling to the Schlegel brothers. Staël's written remarks on the lectures, printed in the footnotes, reveal that she was confronted for the first time with and was deeply impressed by the conception of disinterested art.

This volume will be of interest to scholars elucidating the state of Rational Dissent around 1800; to Kant specialists who deal with the early responses to Kant in Great Britain, especially given that the quality of Robinson's reception of Kant was superior to that of most of his British contemporaries; to Schelling specialists focussing on the development of Schelling's philosophy between 1800 and 1805; to Staël specialists investigating the background of her work on Germany *De l'Allemagne*, who will note that in that work Staël ended up presenting German philosophy from much the same perspective as Robinson had in his lectures to her. However, and perhaps most interestingly, Robinson's attempt to understand German philosophy will be relevant to those historians of philosophy and of ideas who believe that much can be learned from comparing radically different philosophical movements, investigating both the continuities and the discontinuities. In Robinson's own day such non-partisan comparisons were hampered, as he himself repeatedly noted, by mutual ignorance and prejudices on both sides; Schelling, for example, dismissed British philosophy out of hand, while

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in Britain Kant's philosophy was ridiculed by claiming that the notion of the '*a priori*' was a fallback to the innate ideas that Locke had refuted.

The value of Robinson's writings to present day historians of philosophy and ideas obviously depends on the level of his philosophical competence. As this issue is hardly raised by Vigus, I would briefly like to offer some comments on it. Robinson's understanding of Kant was uneven, though he did have a reasonably firm grasp of the basic notions of Kant's epistemology and aesthetics. In epistemology he appreciated Kant's requirement that both sensibility and understanding were needed for cognition. Robinson correctly seized the central idea of Kant's teachings on sensibility, explaining lucidly Kant's reasons for holding space and time to be mere forms of human intuition rather than pertaining to things in themselves. Robinson's overview of Kant's theory of the understanding is too brief, given that this is the key piece of Kant's positive epistemology; in this context, Kant justified his categories and answered Hume's analysis of causality. However, Robinson did correctly realize that at the heart of Kant's so-called 'Copernican Revolution' lay the question: 'how are synthetic judgements *a priori* possible'. Robinson also fully grasped the lesson taught by Kant's analysis of the limitations of the power of reason. According to Kant the main tenets of traditional metaphysics – the idea of the immortality of the soul, of the freedom of the will, and of God's existence – cannot be proved but can only be the objects of a rational faith, justified mainly through their use by practical reason. Here Robinson mistakenly added the question of the eternity of the world, which Kant considered to be genuinely not decidable. To realize this fact, Robinson would have had to notice Kant's distinction between the so-called mathematical and dynamical antinomies, a fine point which Vigus does not pick up in his critical apparatus either (8). Robinson's rendering of Kant's aesthetics was based on the first part of the *Critique of judgement*, and though it is brief, it is precise.

Without mentioning any names, Robinson globally criticized the French philosophers ('Locke full-grown', 30), though he obviously just meant the materialists (probably Helvétius and Holbach). He was, however, not completely unjustified in thinking that their philosophy resulted in atheism and could not provide an easy and obvious foundation of

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morality. One may also wonder how familiar Robinson was with British philosophy. One may suspect that in spite of his criticism of Priestley, he was nevertheless influenced by Priestley sufficiently to have had an overly unfavourable view of Hume, though there is not much in the writings published in this volume to prove this. Robinson's account of Locke and his followers is more differentiated. He was aware of the fact that Locke's followers had taken their master's thought in directions which the latter would not have endorsed: the French philosophers to materialism and atheism, the British ones to sensationalism. Robinson shows astute judgement in noting that Locke's ideas of reflection are related to Kant's project of investigating the powers of the mind (41), and that Locke's followers' reduction of ideas of reflection to ideas of sensation was therefore a step in the wrong direction. However, surprisingly, this does not result in a heightened esteem for Locke. But Robinson's prediction that of all British philosophy it will be the 'Scotch school' (31) that will first make use of Kant was prophetic indeed; of the major British philosophers it was in fact William Hamilton who first incorporated Kant into his own thought.

On the whole this volume is carefully done. The introduction provides a fine overview and the editor's notes are helpful. The inevitable editorial slips are minor; thus Vigus fails to note (36) the origin of Robinson's report on Kant's terminology (*CPR*, A 320/B 376-7), and in the bibliography he forgets two of the titles listed under 'Abbreviations' ('Behler' and 'Marquardt'); the full references can, of course, be easily found online.

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**Sarah Apetrei, *Women, Feminism and Religion in Early Enlightenment England*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 336, hbk; ISBN 97805215968, £58.**

In her first book, Sarah Apetrei gives a new and challenging account of the place of women in late-Stuart English society. She contends that this early Enlightenment period saw the emergence of a feminist movement whose foundations were not to be found in new philosophical ideas, but rather in the Bible itself. The book is divided into two main parts corresponding to the two forms of feminism generally acknowledged in this period, namely the 'humanist' and the 'prophetess' (33-34). It respectively explores these profiles through the emblematic figure of Mary Astell (1666-1731) on the one hand, and through various Quaker, Philadelphian and independent visionaries on the other, in an attempt to debunk the usual dichotomy presented in traditional historiography.

Chapters 1 and 2 look at Astell's sources of inspiration for her feminist plea. Apetrei sees the English debate on the place of women in religion and society as a transposition of the humanist debate generally known as the 'Querelle des femmes' (51-60). Although she does not mention her, Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701) immediately comes to mind here as a possible inspiring feminist figure for Astell, notably for her uncompromising condemnation of marriage as an oppressive institution for women. The singularity of Astell and her female circle resides, according to the author, in their effort to rehabilitate female biblical characters (55-60), chief among whom was Eve, at a time when religion became increasingly subject to critical thinking. Such claims did not, of course, resonate well among the targeted masculine audience, who rapidly portrayed Astell as a frustrated spinster or a religious zealot (76-79). Either way, Astell's centrality in this feminist controversy is unquestionable, and Apetrei convincingly argues that she may well be credited with laying the intellectual grounds of the defence of gender equality in Restoration England.

The third chapter explores the influence of Astell's philosophical background as a Platonic rationalist on her religious epistemology. It is

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shown that she contrasted reason, a divine gift mystically tied to the soul, with the passions, which she regarded as the corrupt source of irreligion (96-107). Yet her real philosophical complexity is revealed in her ingenious reversal of this traditional Platonic dualism to women's advantage. Reason, in her view, could only be feminine because it was the purer principle, whilst she held men's brutish passions responsible for the corruption of the Church, wars and moral decline (114-16). Astell is consequently presented as a subversive Platonist calling for the liberation and intellectual reformation of women and, as such, she certainly deserves our full attention.

In chapter 4, the author applies Astell's philosophy to her approach to biblical hermeneutics as the origin of her feminist argument. For Astell, misogyny was not in the original, incorruptible text of the Bible, but in the mistranslations made by men, which had kept women into ignorance for centuries (126). Her mystical emphasis on revelation over constraining linguistic boundaries therefore places her alongside the enthusiasts and forerunners of the radical Enlightenment. By the end of this first part, Mary Astell comes across as a deeply complex figure of the early Enlightenment, epistemologically balanced between rationalism and mysticism, and alternatively conservative and radical. The primacy of her theological concerns over her political philosophy further challenges our preconceived opinions on the compatibility between Toryism and feminism in Astell's case, leading Apetrei to conclude that of all her feminist contemporaries, it was Astell who 'really systematized the case for the moral and intellectual equivalence of women' (152).

The second part of the book opens with a series of short case studies of feminist visionaries and dissenting activists including Joan Withrowe (155-160), Ann Docwra (160-168) and Elizabeth Bathurst (169-76) for chapter 5, and M. Marsin (179-187), Jane Lead (187-198) and Richard Roach (198-207) for chapter 6. Each of these fascinating figures explicitly promoted the restoration of female dignity, the latter proving paradoxically the most feminist of all. As Apetrei rightly points out, this feminist protest was not an exclusively English phenomenon and it ought to be contextualized in light of greater millenarian expectations on the continent, evidenced by the multiplication of female mystics such as

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Jeanne Guyon, Antoinette Bourignon, Rosamunde von Asseburg (233-234), later to be followed up by mother Ann Lee and Joanna Southcott.

Chapter 7 explores the ‘universal principle of grace’ put forward by the Quakers and contemporary millenarians. Their anti-Calvinist campaign against the doctrine of double predestination is presented here as a determining factor in the shifting representation of God towards the end of the seventeenth century (213-217). We are told that the Almighty became gradually associated with the female qualities of compassion, mercy and justice from around the 1690s as a result of the penetration of these feminist discourses. Similarly, the dual rule of William and Mary, followed by Queen Anne’s unshared reign from 1702, echoed demands for sexual equality among dissenters and fuelled growing calls for a female ministry. Despite theological divergences, Philadelphians, Quakers, Behmenists and other millenarians all rejected the orthodox portrayal of a punitive and discriminating God, preaching instead universal salvation in what they saw as a favorable context for a female ascendancy set to reform mankind (232-235).

The last chapter is dedicated to the doctrines of ‘celestial flesh’ and ‘inner light’ that shaped, according to the author, the emergence of religious feminism in Restoration England. Apetrei reminds us here how Christian millenarians have yearned for the restoration of male and female bodies into a single divine substance –the doctrine of apokatastasis– from the Reformation until today (244-255). The restitution of female dignity allegedly begun by Christ and the Virgin Mary therefore came to be seen in the late seventeenth century as a prerequisite for the return to this prelapsarian androgyny. Such mystics and millenarians entrenched their feminism not so much in a literal reading of the Scriptures, but rather in their prophetic inspirations, preferring instead to listen to the voice of their ‘inner teacher’ (259). It is on this basis that these female visionaries, brought to our attention by Phyllis Mack twenty years ago, became spiritual leaders and itinerant preachers to challenge male authority and rehabilitate their sex.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were undoubtedly a period of great intellectual and religious changes that provided fertile ground for a feminist protest. After centuries of subjection and decades of

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witch-hunts, women gradually ceased to be perceived, to put it simplistically, as the mothers of all evils and evolved into virtuous beings in Enlightened minds thanks to the writings, actions and defiance of these religious feminists. The book's force lies not so much in its respective study of Astell's rationalism and female mystics, but rather in its ability to go beyond this historiographical dichotomy. Apetrei crosses the boundaries between enthusiasm and rationalism to show that the reality was indeed far more complex, as she reveals mutual influences between the 'humanist' and the 'prophetess' profiles delineating the structure of her study. Far from the social retirement and marginality they have long been consigned to by historians, these visionaries played in reality an essential role in the rehabilitation of women's condition. All in all, Sarah Apetrei not only antedates the birth of modern feminism generally credited to Mary Wollstonecraft by more than a century, but also establishes mysticism as a key component of the early Enlightenment in England in a brilliant and well-researched narrative.

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**Mark R M Towsey.** *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment. Books and their Readers in Provincial Scotland, 1750-1820*, Brill: Leiden, Boston, 2010, pp. xvi + 361, ISBN: 978-90-04-18432-9; £99.00.

In this thoughtful and important book, Mark Towsey is concerned with 'the extent to which the Enlightenment produced by such luminaries [as David Hume and Adam Smith] percolated through to readers in provincial Scotland' (1). One of those provincials is the Rev. George Ridpath, minister of the village of Stitchell and author of *A Boarder history of Scotland and England* (1776). Ridpath and others like him 'reflected seriously on what they read and through doing so participated in the experience [of the Enlightenment] in a way that modern scholarship has so far grossly underestimated' (2). Towsey finds that these provincial readers offered their own interpretation of Enlightenment books. For instance, they 'did not adhere instantly and unquestionably to the new forms of 'Anglo-British' identity propagated by the Scottish Enlightenment.' Rather, they often 'disrupted the narrative strategies so

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carefully constructed by the Scottish *literati*' (260). In supporting this and related arguments, Towsey demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the printed and manuscript sources on which he draws while masterfully incorporating a vast historiography to which his volume is a serious contribution.

Part I, 'Encouraging Enlightenment', explores the place of Scottish Enlightenment texts in various libraries of provincial Scotland. He considers different types of libraries—private, subscription, circulating (which offered 'far more than the kind of ephemeral pulp fiction that supposedly attracted the stereotypical consumer base of giddy and impressionable young ladies' [109]), religious, and endowed. The contents of those libraries are approached first through surviving book catalogues. Towsey is keenly aware of the pitfalls associated with counting titles of books as a measure of influence, writing that 'book catalogues are not necessarily as articulate, precise or even comprehensive as they appear to be on the surface' (29). Nevertheless, they do 'provide a general sense of the cultural landscape' (33). Works of the most prominent Scottish Enlightenment writers were well represented in these libraries. David Hume's *History of England* (1754-62) was particularly popular, topping the list of the private libraries, for instance, where it was found in 67% of those surveyed. Indeed, Towsey presents ample evidence demonstrating the prominent place of historical writings in the Scottish Enlightenment generally. Other histories that were popular included those produced by William Robertson, his *History of Scotland* (1759), *History of the reign of Charles V* (1769), and *History of America* (1777). But, of course, all was not historical. Also ranking high in his lists are the poems of Robert Burns, Adam Smith's *Wealth of nations* (1776), Hugh Blair's *Sermons* (1777) and Tobias Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* (1748), among others. Reading between the lines of these catalogues, Towsey finds a 'patriotic appetite for specifically Scottish themes' (41) which often came through in regional histories of one sort or another—Ridpath's *Border history*, but also others such as Lachlan Shaw's *History of the province of Moray* (1775) and William Nimmo's *General history of Stirlingshire* (1777). These sorts of works are not often discussed in scholarship on the Scottish Enlightenment but they had been there all

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along, at least since the late seventeenth century when several were written by Sir Robert Sibbald and others.

In Part II, 'Experiencing Enlightenment', Towsey turns 'to readers' engagement with the books of Hume, Robertson, Smith et al' in an attempt 'to breathe life into the Scottish Enlightenment—not as it is usually conceived by modern scholars as a check list of leading authors and their ideas, but as a body of literature that was encountered daily by contemporary readers and that informed their most dearly held values and beliefs' (164). That exploration takes him from childish doodlings in a copy of Hume's *History* to anonymous reading reflections in prose, such as those by 'the Castlemilk reader,' to the commonplace books of men, such as Alexander Irvine of Drum, and women, such as Elizabeth Rose of Kilravock (a relative of Henry Mackenzie, with whom Elizabeth frequently corresponded) who clearly is one of Towsey's favourites. The provincial Enlightenment these Scots constituted is nicely connected in Towsey's notes and text with similar phenomena in England and continental Europe. Those familiar with American topics will find interesting parallels with scholarship concerned to show the diffusion of Enlightenment ideas in early America, such as John Fea's work on the 'rural Enlightenment' (which, however, goes unnoticed by Towsey).

Particular attention is given to Hume, including in a chapter entitled 'The Patron of Infidelity': Reading Hume and the Common Sense Philosophers'. Delving into borrowing records, Towsey identifies 'clusters' of readers, including those who read Hume's *Treatise of human nature*. 'The *Treatise* was borrowed by eight readers at Innerpefferay, including a surgeon and a schoolmaster, and with two borrowing different volumes in the same week (the surgeon John Alexander and farmer Robert Nelson) it is tempting to imagine readers discussing their experiences of Hume, perhaps sharing their thoughts on this unfamiliar and fundamentally challenging masterpiece of Scottish Enlightenment philosophy' (140). Finding that many provincial readers 'attempted to marginalise Hume' (298), Towsey argues that there were 'a number of important fractures in the 'interpretive community' of eighteenth-century Scotland, with many provincial readers resisting elements of intellectual culture as it was produced in the Scottish metropolis' (298). But that

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conclusion assumes a greater homogeneity to the eighteenth-century printed responses to Hume than is warranted. Those at the heart of the Enlightenment in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen (as well as centers of Enlightenment beyond Scotland) were often equally diverse in their reading of (and writing about) Hume, as several recent studies, including ones by James Fieser have shown (Fieser, the author or editor of three works on which Towsey draws is referred to throughout as 'Feiser').

Finally, this volume is nicely produced and is accompanied by extensive footnotes, a thorough bibliography, and an index. The index is not as useful as it could have been. While it has entries for all of the major figures and their works, as well as entries for place names, libraries, and the like, it is uneven in its coverage of the minor figures of provincial Scotland. As a result, many of those who Towsey strives to include in the Enlightenment go unnamed in the index. Quibbles aside, this is a fine volume. *Reading the Scottish Enlightenment* will be required reading for all who study the Scottish Enlightenment. Entertaining and instructive reading for many others besides, it should certainly be found in the catalogue of any self-respecting research library.

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**Wayne Hudson, *Enlightenment and Modernity: The English Deists and Reform*, London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009, pp. ix + 225, hardback, ISBN 978 1 85196 635 6; £60.00; \$99.00.**

This is the second of two monographs on the English deists. Hudson aims to show them as 'more complex and nuanced figures . . . and significant agents of reform in a range of significant areas' (1) than earlier historians such as Leslie Stephen supposed. The group he identifies consists of Charles Blount, John Toland, Anthony Collins, Matthew Tindal, Thomas Woolston, Conyers Middleton, Thomas Morgan, Thomas Chubb and Peter Annet. The first four are the subject of the first monograph while the last five, with the notable inclusion of Collins and Tindal *after* 1720, are the topic of the present. Collins and Tindal, according to Hudson, could be more open about publishing their views after 1720, and the arguments of their later works that were subversive of

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Christian revelation, particularly Tindal's *Christianity as old as the Creation*, influenced many who followed. The strength of the book lies in its accounts of Woolston and the rest. They have often been dismissed because, in the words of Peter Gay, 'It had all been said before and better.' (*Deism: an anthology* [New York, 1968], 140) For Hudson they deserve far better.

Significantly Hudson approaches his subject through a list that *others* have identified as the English deists. While he adopts the list, he does not accept the accounts historians have offered of what constitutes its members as deists. One cannot identify, for example, a common theology to which they all subscribed. For similar reasons, some have raised doubts about the usefulness of the label 'deist' and have characterized several such as Anthony Collins as atheists, while others have insisted that they were Christians albeit at the fringes of Christianity. Hudson carries on with the label, but claims there were multiple deisms and that the English deists were 'constellationally related', a phrase which covers a variety of relations ranging from drawing on one another and partnering in argument to having related, but distinct career trajectories. For Hudson, the English deists presented multiple personae adapted for different audiences. They appear as authors of rational Protestant texts in one context and disbelievers in Christianity in another. In some cases, indeed, the same work possesses layered meanings that make it capable of appealing to distinct audiences in opposed ways. In reality, this characterization resembles that of some eighteenth-century critics such as Richard Bentley and Samuel Clarke. The difference is that those critics viewed the Protestant commitments of these writers as deceitful disguises designed to draw in the unwary. For Hudson, there was no deceit. The deists accepted the Protestant culture they lived in as a given. As for the alleged atheism of some, Hudson argues that their private beliefs are either indeterminable, as in the case of Toland (5), or not the subject of his book, which deals with their public personae. As he puts it, 'None of these writers should be read as if they set out their private thoughts in their books.' (3)

Hudson's list of English deists is selective. Since the appearance of Leland's *View of the principal deistical writers* (3 vols, London, 1754-

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57) Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke have generally been numbered as such. On Hudson's own account Woolston and Middleton are only 'collateral' or 'co-opted' figures who pursued personal agendas (22), a fair assessment. He justifies the exclusion of Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke in an appendix 'as independent philosophers with their own substantive views and projects' (151). True, Shaftesbury was more than a deist, but as Hudson also insists, neither the interest nor significance of the others is exhausted by the label. The contributions of the English deists to moral philosophy and aesthetics would be considerably enhanced by his inclusion. Of Bolingbroke, Hudson remarks: 'Unlike the writers known as the English deists, Bolingbroke's philosophy was not the inspiration for republican developments in thought and practice.' (153) The point, however, is that Bolingbroke is precisely one of the writers historically known as English deists. What appears to influence Hudson's account is his wish to position the later deists as 'civil philosophers proposing more rational principles for the management of religion and politics' (21). Entertaining and developing serious doubts about Christian revelation, however, appears to be compatible with deep disagreement on other issues.

Hudson offers very sympathetic accounts of both Woolston and Conyers Middleton, particularly the latter. Both championed metaphorical accounts of the *Old* and *New Testaments* with Woolston pictured as a person wrestling with disbelief by which Hudson only means 'someone who was preoccupied with the possibility that Christianity as ordinarily understood, might be an imposture' (49). The sophisticated Middleton, who was close to the Cambridge latitudinarians and an accomplished classical scholar, is represented as a classical academic skeptic who 'did not break with the project of a national church administering the moral life of a successful Protestant society' (62). Hudson hesitates about pushing Middleton in the deist camp, a proposition more forcefully argued in Jan van den Berg in his brief 'Should Conyers Middleton . . . be regarded as a deist?' (*Notes and Queries* [June, 2009], 255-57). Hudson, on the other hand, does more to show why he was plausibly so regarded.

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The weight of Hudson's account of the later deists falls, accordingly, on his account of Morgan, Chubb and Annet. He concedes that, apart from Bolingbroke, there were no major deist thinkers who appeared after Collins and Tindal (73). The role of the later deists, as he sees it, was to contribute as controversialists to the 'diffusion of critical attitudes . . . [and ] of disbelief in particular theological points' to a wider audience. All three were influenced by Tindal and the notion he developed in *Christianity as old as the creation* of 'Christian deism'. But where Morgan and Chubb edged by degrees from their home base in the Protestant Enlightenment, only Annet stepped over the edge. That said, what Hudson finally appears to settle on as the key to their significance was their 'gradual rejection of all 'historical faith'' (102). This theme is most explicitly and fully developed in the discussion of Thomas Morgan. Morgan's distinction between the religion of nature and 'political' revealed religion led him to the view that Christianity could not be based on the *Old Testament*, even on an allegorical account of it (81). Even the *New Testament* he read as a human artifact rather than divinely inspired. His Jesus, indeed, rejected the role of the Messiah, a rejection for which he paid with his life. As Hudson sees it, Morgan applied the resources of a thorough-going historical naturalism to biblical exegesis. These are suggestive remarks that merit a fuller elaboration.

Nearly a third of Hudson's book is devoted to the significance and limitations of the English deists including those surveyed in the earlier monograph. Given their individual differences, he deals with characterizations that fit some better than others. His interest is to show that they were reformers with a wide range of interests, not just religious controversialists whose sole aim was to undermine Christianity. Once more he views their achievements contextually and made possible by the Protestant Enlightenment in England, although he is quick to add that they enjoyed a significant influence beyond England where their writings were read in quite different contexts. This last can raise some doubts about just how contextually perhaps they should be read.

Hudson singles out, first and foremost, their advocacy of freethinking or, as he also describes it, 'the social epistemological principle that individuals should rely on the exercise of their own reason to guide them

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in the conduct of human life' (106). The defence of freethinking as a right and in areas like religion a duty went hand in hand with a corresponding defence of free expression and debate as rights, but without any challenge, as Hudson rightly observes, to the existing constitutional scheme aside from the influence exercised by the Church. They did not appear in short as advocates of democracy and as such belong more in the tradition of civil rather than political liberty. As well, they saw natural religion, equated with the law of nature, trumping revealed religion, but, significantly, they also argued that natural religion could establish much less than some like Samuel Clarke supposed that it could, such as the soul's immortality, although once more there were exceptions, notably Thomas Morgan. Indeed, what they found to be most fundamental to natural religion was morality, charity and toleration in particular. As Hudson also observes, for the likes of Collins religion as such ought to be treated as a matter 'purely personal' and he notes the pluralist and secularizing tendencies of such a view.

Other themes Hudson emphasizes include the development of the doctrines of materialism and necessity, most notably by Toland and Collins, although, once more, others like Chubb stood on the other side of the divide. For critics like Clarke, these doctrines were no more than planks in the assault on Christianity, although, as Hudson rightly remarks, they were doctrines that some Protestants such as Priestley could and did embrace. For Collins, these philosophical explorations ought to be viewed as independent of religion, and he urged Clarke to keep religion out of their controversy over these issues. Similarly, as Hudson notes, several also argued that morals ought to be regarded as independent of revealed religion and, indeed, of God. This, indeed, is a theme that perhaps merits more attention than Hudson is able to devote to it. It is in this area that the inclusion of Shaftesbury, although acknowledged as an influence, would strengthen Hudson's account. Also notable for Hudson is that most of the deists – Blount, Toland and Collins most notably – were historical critics and philosophical historians who exercised their skills particularly on the Bible and Christian tradition, albeit obsessed with the discovery of clerical frauds and imposture.

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In the end, however, Hudson agrees with some of the contemporaries of the deists, like Clarke, who viewed deism as an unstable position. For Clarke, the only possibilities in the end were Christianity and atheism. Hudson doesn't put it quite like this, but he sees their tendency to combine rationalism, naturalism and skepticism as embracing positions that tend to undermine each other: 'If scepticism was broadly correct, there could be no theodic faith in reason, whereas if naturalism was true, then scepticism might be construed as contrary to nature.' (139) Here Hudson echoes earlier remarks on Collins' writings on the argument from prophecy that they combined an unstable mix of skepticism and epistemological optimism (33). But Collins' skepticism was exercised classically from premises offered by his Protestant opponents whom he played against each other, using the strengths of the one position to undermine the other. In particular, Collins plays literalist against metaphorical accounts of Jesus' coming and supporter of metaphorical accounts against the literalists. His is a moderate and limited skepticism that exploits openings that Christian writers acknowledged and tried to fix unsuccessfully. How that proves to be contrary to 'naturalism' or reason isn't obvious. True, Collins and others express what may be excessive confidence in the social upshot of a scheme of freethinking and perhaps, particularly in the case of Tindal, overly confident in the discoverability of an underlying natural religion obscured by priestcraft. Hudson's remarks merit fuller unpacking. Here in passing a small correction may be in order. According to Hudson, one of Collins' works in which he develops his critique of Christianity, *A letter to the author of the Discourse of the grounds and reasons of the Christian religion*, and the work Hudson regards as the most radical, was not published until after Collins' death so that his contemporaries had no opportunity to read and respond to it (32). This, however, is not the case. The work did appear in print before Collins' death and there indeed was at least one reply to it from John Greene, the person to whom Collins' work was addressed.

The strength of Hudson's account lies in situating the English deists in the midst of the Protestant Enlightenment. On this view, their identity and interest lies less in advancing a philosophical scheme based on its

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own set of principles independently of Christianity, but as parasitically operating within that structure in ways that threatened to undermine it. Collins, for example, confidently expressed to William Dodwell that his library contained as many works by clergymen of the Church of England as anyone. In *Letter to the Reverend Dr. Rogers* (1727), one of his late works, in the persona he adopts he was early convinced not only that Christianity was true, but that he joined the Church of England on the strength of his inquiries, even though in other works like the *Scheme of literal prophecy* (1726) he declined to reveal his religious allegiances. Significantly in correspondence he basked in the praise of those who thought that his defence of toleration might well have been written by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He viewed the principles of the Protestant Reformation as supports for the right and duty of freethinking. And he was partial to examining the claims of prophecy and revelation from premises offered by Protestant authors. Almost in passing Collins took note of Jewish manuscripts by Isaac Orobio de Castro and others that pressed strong objections to the Christian religion. But he declined to pursue those objections preferring to work from premises offered up by mostly Protestant authors with a sprinkling of Catholic ones and most notably, Richard Simon. Significantly the French atheist Jacques Naigeon later viewed Collins as having misspent far too much of his considerable philosophical talent on the authenticity and meaning of scripture where his real interest resided in his vigorous defence of the possibility of materialism and the necessity of human action in his clashes with Samuel Clarke.

James Dybikowski

**John P Wright, *Hume's 'A Treatise of Human Nature': An Introduction***, Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. xx + 316; ISBN: 9780521541589; £17.99.

This volume is one in the Cambridge Introductions to Key Philosophical Texts. Like others in the series it is intended to offer an introductory account, one which 'guides the reader through the main themes and arguments of the work in question, while also paying attention

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to its historical context and its philosophical legacy.’ Moreover, ‘no philosophical background knowledge is assumed, and the books will be well suited to introductory university level courses.’ That – one might immediately surmise – is no easy task to take on for a work as complex as David Hume’s *A treatise of human nature*.

Hume’s *Treatise* first appeared in print as an anonymous publication in three volumes in London in 1739 and 1740. Book 1, ‘Of the Understanding,’ and Book 2, ‘Of the Passions,’ were published in January 1739. Book 3, ‘Of Morals’, the following year, in November 1740. Although it now has a rightful place in the cannon of Western philosophy and is standard reading in introductory philosophy courses, its early reception was far less grand. Hume remarked famously in his *My own life* that ‘Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature.’ His assessment that it ‘fell *dead-born from the press*’ may be an exaggeration, but one which points to the difficult time his contemporaries had in comprehending Hume’s contribution to philosophy.

Since then the *Treatise* has been interpreted in a myriad of differing ways. John P. Wright realizes this all too well. What is to be done? ‘An attempt to take the reader through the scholarly literature comparing one interpretation with another one runs the risk of’ leaving the beginning reader bewildered. On the other hand, ‘presenting a single interpretation and disregarding all others’ would unduly oversimplify Hume’s message and would leave ‘the reader with little appreciation of the richness of the philosophical ideas he struggled with.’ Wright wisely chooses ‘a middle course’, one which presents ‘a unified interpretation of the *Treatise* while at the same time indicating how [his] interpretation differs from those of other commentators on [Hume’s] philosophy’ (ix). Wright is clear from the outset that the reading of Hume he presents is one that draws on Wright’s own previously published monograph, *The skeptical realism of David Hume* (1983), just as one would reasonably expect. For Wright, Hume’s philosophy ‘is *skeptical* in the sense that it denies the adequacy of our actual ideas of cause and effect, and *realist* in the sense that it postulates the existence of an unknown necessary connection in which we naturally believe’ (xi).

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Wright's account begins with a young (twenty-two-year-old) David Hume 'being jostled up and down' as he rides the stagecoach from London to Bristol in 1734. By that time of his life, several of the themes of the *Treatise* had already long been on Hume's mind. Wright's opening chapter, 'The author and the book', is a strong and interesting one. Rather than jumping in to the text of the *Treatise*, Wright aims to start his students off with an appreciation of the context out of which that book emerged. He dedicates this volume to the late John W Yolton, 'teacher and friend, who taught me to love both philosopher and its history, and to appreciate the difference.' Throughout this volume Wright balances philosophy and history, thereby illuminating Hume's message in the *Treatise*. The first chapter melds together Hume's immediate historical context in the village of Chirnside (where he was born and raised) with the broader contexts provided by the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment and, broader yet, the state of play in the history of ideas in early modern Europe. Wright gives attention to figures as disparate as William Dudgeon, John Locke, Samuel Clarke, Andrew Baxter, Lord Shaftesbury, Michael Ramsay, Bernard Mandeville, Francis Hutcheson, George Cheyne, James Birch, the Chevalier Ramsay, Nicolas Malebranche, Pierre Bayle, Henry Home, Joseph Butler, and Rene Descartes. Few scholars are as well positioned as Wright to take on that task. The resulting image is one that captures the genius of Hume (he was a 'complex and highly original' thinker [27]), but that genius has a context –Hume does not come from nothing.

Unfortunately, the surviving sources for Hume's early years are not as full as one would like. At times this leads Wright to speculate beyond the sources. For instance, we know Hume went to Bristol in 1734, but what did he do there? 'Hume might have consulted face to face with the physician to whom he wrote from London before getting on the stagecoach' (16); that physician 'may well have been Dr. George Cheyne' (16); and 'Cheyne may have provided Hume with a link' to Chevalier Ramsay who 'may have seemed to Cheyne an obvious person to put Hume in contact with' (18). Some may find too many links in that chain of speculation.

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The focus of the remaining chapters is a close reading of Hume's *Treatise* divided into chapters on 'First principles', 'Causation', 'Skepticism', 'Determinism', 'Passions, sympathy, and other minds', 'Motivation: reason and calm passions', 'Moral sense, reason, and moral skepticism', and 'The foundations of morals'. Wright alerts his readers to particularly difficult aspects of Hume's thought ('Hume's notion of reasoning, especially in so far as it concerns probability, is among the most difficult of the *Treatise* to sort out' [89]) and to especially contentious interpretations ('What Hume scholars mainly disagree about is his account of what causal power or causal connection really is – what we may call the *ontology* of causation' [80-81]). As well, his annotations are helpful, drawing students' attention to important passages in the *Treatise*, relevant passages in Hume's other writings (not only his other philosophical writings, but at times the *Essays* and even his *History of England*) and in the writings of Hume's contemporaries, and also to modern scholarly work on the *Treatise*. With undergraduates in mind, Wright aims to provide updated examples for Hume's principles, making reference along the way to e-mail messages and chocolate éclairs. In the end, this is a volume that captures nicely Hume's essence as a philosopher. Hume aimed to understand and explain the world of the mind rather than prognosticating for a particular philosophical system.

There is a useful bibliography that provides differentiated lists for 'Modern Editions of Hume's Own Writings', 'Classical and Early Modern Background to Hume's Thought', 'Eighteenth-Century Responses to Hume's *Treatise*', and 'Selected Secondary Sources'. This section concludes with a page providing useful leads to fuller bibliographies, such as those produced by Roland Hall and William Edward Morris; important journals for students of Hume, such as *Hume Studies*; and relevant scholarly societies, such as the Hume Society and the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Studies Society.

In short, this volume achieves quite well its stated goals. It will be a useful guide for students who are grappling with Hume's *Treatise* for the first time and it will provide them with many leads to pursue for further study. At the same time, one suspects it will be read with interest by more

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advanced students – including Hume experts – some of whom no doubt will not agree with all parts of Wright's reading and will find therein departure points for continued scholarly debate.

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**John Marshall, *John Locke, toleration and early Enlightenment culture***, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. viii + 762; ISBN: 978-0-521-12957-2; £38.00.

In the wake of his well-received book, *John Locke: resistance, religion and responsibility* (1994), John Marshall now comes forth with a work of staggering erudition that will further enhance his reputation as one of the leading interpreters of ideas-in-historical-context. Uninhibited by national or denominational boundaries, he surveys a vast geographical-cum-religious territory with Olympian aplomb. Undaunted by his peers, he charges them with having overlooked the importance of religious toleration as a key issue of modern political thought, and he regrets that Locke's apology for toleration has not been adequately placed in its practical and intellectual contexts, or with reference to those in the 'republic of letters' who at a time of widespread religious intolerance courageously advocated universal religious toleration. His work will thus remind historians of thought that the ideas they calmly discuss were forged in turbulent times; it will remind socio-political theorists of the powerful religious and doctrinal motivations of pro- and anti-tolerationists alike. While the supremely important Christian duty of charity deeply influenced those who favoured toleration, their opponents had recourse to opinions and actions that we latter-day souls may be inclined smugly to place on a continuum from the perverse to the demonic – an inclination checked perhaps by the memory of a Texan rancher who in our own time waxed not-entirely-lyrical concerning an alleged 'axis of evil'. Marshall makes abundantly clear the uphill struggle, and the varying degrees of risk, faced by tolerationists – as, for example, when the expression of a tolerant attitude towards Socinians by one who was not of that belief could yield the charge of 'heretic' by association. He does this by the careful discussion of arguments and description of activities that are

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closely focused upon the France, Piedmont, England, Ireland and the Netherlands of the 1680s and 1690s, albeit with context-setting excursions into preceding decades as required. Throughout he interacts with other toilers in this muddy yet fascinating field

Among the triggers of pro- and anti-tolerationist reflection and argument during the two decades primarily under review here were the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the persecution of Waldensians in 1686, and of English Protestants during 1685-6 - the early years of the reign of the Roman Catholic King James II. The Netherlands became a tolerant refuge for Huguenots, Locke, and many other exiles, though Marshall shows that this was more because existing intolerant laws were not enforced than because tolerationist legislation was enacted: hence, for example, Limborch's concern for Locke's safety in that country. He further observes that the Dutch Reformed Church knew what it liked in terms of upright behaviour, and exhibited little tolerance towards aspects of society of which it disapproved – the theatre, dancing and the like: one of many examples of the propensity of the devout for preaching salvation by grace whilst policing the saints as if they expected everyone to be saved by law. Similarly, Pierre Jurieu, staunch advocate of the toleration of Huguenots in France, was, when exiled in the Netherlands, by no means tolerant of doctrinal laxity within the Huguenot community – a stance which caused a rift between himself and Bayle, his fellow exile and former colleague at the Protestant Academy at Sedan.

The arguments of those few who advocated religious toleration and opposed intolerance are discussed in detail, as are the views of their many opponents. If tolerationists were in the minority, those who advocated universal toleration were a smaller number still: most felt that the line had to be drawn somewhere. Thus the generally tolerationist Polish Socinians supported the imprisonment of Francis David who challenged the propriety of the adoration of Christ; John Milton, in general tolerant of doctrinal differences, evinced a distinctly intolerant attitude towards Roman Catholics; and, on the political ground that Roman Catholics owed allegiance to a foreign power Locke concluded that they should not be granted toleration, albeit he had no principled objection to their right to worship.

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The position of, and attitudes towards, Jews and Muslims in the societies under consideration are discussed at some length. We learn that whereas Calvin had favoured the toleration of Jews, Luther had not (though Calvin receives a bad press as regards the death of Servetus). In the specific period under review, Gilbert Burnet preferred Jews to be converted, but would tolerate them if they were not. While some pro-tolerationist anti-trinitarians found similarities between their doctrine and that of Muslims, Thomas Goodwin branded the latter ‘Saracen locusts’, while to Henry More they were ‘Scorpion locusts.’

Considerable space is devoted to the networks and literary contributions of those who, convinced that many inherited views were now open to challenge and that new departures in many fields of intellectual endeavour required to be analyzed, assimilated or repudiated, comprised the ‘republic of letters’: Locke, Gilbert Burnet, Pierre Bayle, Jacques Basnage, Jean Le Clerc, and Philippus von Limborch among them. Their arguments were informed by reflection on the history of intolerance in post-Constantinian Christianity, and were characterized by opposition to credal and other varieties of ecclesiastical authoritarianism. Locke was uncertain, but Bayle was more sanguine, concerning the possibility that atheists might be tolerated. Most feared that chaos would ensue were morality’s theistic pillar to be toppled. The question of the right to resist intolerant civil authorities was a further important topic of discussion.

Numerous themes are illuminated by a detailed work of this magnitude. First, the way in which strife in one region had repercussions in another. Thus, for example, the response in France to the execution of Roman Catholics in England between 1679 and 1681 was the intensification of hostility towards the Huguenots. This, in turn, further inflamed English anti-Catholic sentiment. It did not go unnoticed that the refuge and liberty of worship accorded to Huguenots in England contrasted with the denial of such liberty to English Dissenters. Again, the violence suffered by Waldensians at the hand of Roman Catholics became an aspect of the Protestant case for violence against Roman Catholics in Ireland.

Secondly, our attention is drawn to many instances in which opposing parties could appear as mirror images of one another. Thus in regard to oaths, the Jesuitical theory of mental reservation was viewed askance by

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Protestants, while the refusal of English radical sectaries and of Waldensians to take oaths threw suspicion upon them. Locke was among others who observed that those who held no power seemed able to tolerate various idolatries, superstitions and heresies, but that once power came their way they were zealous in opposing perceived errors by force. Churchmen with power, he declared in his 'Critical Notes on Edward Stillingfleet' (1681-3), are 'very apt to persecute and misuse those that will not pen in their fold' – a point made with reference to the intolerance of Independents and Presbyterians in England and New England.

Thirdly there is much of interest in Marshall's account of the method of argumentation employed by pro- and anti-tolerationists. Much of it, on both sides of the Protestant-Catholic divide, was couched in terms of binary oppositions – human depravity *vis à vis* divine perfection, Christ *vis à vis* Antichrist, for example; though not all polemicists resorted to this method. Appeals to reason were frequently made – by Socinians against atheism, by Calvinists who wished to tar Socinians with the atheist brush. While both Roman Catholics and Protestants – Bossuet on the one side, Jurieu on the other – enlisted the aid of Augustine when advocating intolerance of heresy, Burnet accused Augustine of having brought about a 'night of ignorance' sustained by uncritical appeals to his authority. An argument that did not go down well with tolerationists in England was that which turned on the alleged distinction between punishment and persecution. Anglicans regarded the Huguenot protest as being in favour of true religion, and they were persecuted; but in England legitimate action was taken against seditious separatists who were not, therefore, persecuted, but punished. In an age of name-calling and slandering the term 'popery' became an elastic catch-all, hurled as it was against Catholic and Protestant alike (a ploy that continued long after the 1690s, as when eighteenth-century 'Arian' Presbyterians branded high Calvinist expectations of confessional subscription 'Protestant Popery'). 'Heretic' was a further widely-used emotive term; the Quakers, themselves repudiating the label 'heretic', were eager to pin it on the Muggletonians, for example.

Fourthly, as befits the book's title, Locke supplies a prominent running theme, and we are able to plot the development of his position on

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toleration which, as Marshall shows, was informed by epistemological, moral and religious considerations. In the early 1660s Locke strongly supported the idea of one inclusive Church of England. Accordingly he opposed the pro-tolerationist arguments of his Christ Church colleague, Edward Bagshawe. By 1667, in his 'Essay on Toleration', he argued that magistrates should intervene only when injustice was done or public order threatened, that toleration would be a solvent of sedition, and that Protestant dissenters should be tolerated. He regarded the war in Ireland (1689-91) through the lens of international conflict between Protestant and Roman Catholics. His later letters on toleration were composed against the background of what he sarcastically called the 'Evangelical method' of Inquisition, and he attacked Jonas Proast for lamenting the enactment of toleration by the Act of 1689. In *The reasonableness of Christianity* (1695) Locke countered the intolerance of Calvin and of his scholastic heir, Locke's contemporary, Turretin. In the same work he surmised that God, being just, would not penalize those who had never heard of Christ, and, unlike the Congregationalist John Owen, suggested that such persons were not debarred from salvation.

A reviewer who has been given so much feels disinclined to quibble. Therefore, after the manner of an eighteenth-century divine under instruction not to refer to the deceased in a funeral sermon, I shall not complain that Melanchthon's name is spelled correctly only in the Index, or that the moderate Episcopalian, Richard Baxter, who thought 'Presbyterian' an 'odious name', is nevertheless thus labelled. I forbear to mention the rather sketchy account of the terms of anti-Dissenter legislation from 1660 onwards, one result of which is that the theological motivations of the Dissenters are not brought clearly into view. While agreeing that 'The 'Toleration Act' of 1689 ... marked a major advance in English legislative practices of tolerationism by providing Parliamentary indulgence of nonconformist worship', I shall refrain from pointing out that, since no earlier relevant legislation was repealed it also cast the Dissenters in the role of second-class citizens – a position they occupied for centuries to come, and embedded the unfortunate 'Church/chapel' distinction in English society. Least of all shall I gloat over one or two overlooked sources. Instead of doing any of this, I shall

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simply thank John Marshall warmly for what is a veritable *tour de force*, and encourage scholars and students to read it with the close attention it deserves.

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**Robert D Cornwall and William Gibson eds., *Religion, Politics and Dissent, 1660-1832. Essays in Honour of James E. Bradley*** Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010, xiii + 254pp; £65.00; web site price £58.50.

Unlike some *festschriften* this is a volume that focuses clearly and purposefully on the scholarly contribution of its dedicatee, James E. Bradley, who is known for his studies on the character of Dissent in the long eighteenth century stretching from the Restoration to the Great Reform Bill. Like the work of Bradley the collection takes theology seriously and seeks to understand it in its own terms without rushing too quickly, in the manner of some historians, to translate theology into politics. Consistent with this, some articles involve a close theological reading of representative eighteenth-century figures to demonstrate the persistence of key theological debates and their continuing resonances in the long eighteenth century. Thomas Pfizenmaier, for example, argues that a theologically informed reading of the work of Isaac Newton and Samuel Clarke demonstrates that they did not subscribe to the type of Arianism advanced by their contemporary William Whiston — even though such a position is commonly attributed to them. In a case study of the Scottish Presbyterian clergyman, James Murray, Rena Danton shows how his radicalism flowed not from the rationalising influence of the Enlightenment but from his close reading of the text of Scripture. The much cited figure of Philip Doddridge is shown in Richard Muller's article to be an instance of the persistence of the continuing strength of the Calvinist heritage in the eighteenth century while also being an example of the way in which such forms of theology could be recast in forms such as mathematical reasoning which responded to Enlightenment impulses.

Such an emphasis on respecting the integrity of theology as an intellectual tradition with its own traditions and forms of explanation

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colours the way in which this collection addresses one of the key points of debate connected with James Bradley's writings. Whereas for J C D Clark (with some support from myself) the source of much of the political radicalism which destabilised the British Old Regime largely arose from theological roots, for Bradley the origins are more plausibly to be found in the opposition by Dissenters to the political and social discrimination which was their lot in a Confessional State. For Bradley, then, the transition from religious to political radicalism is not to be made too readily and the two domains had their separate logics and frames of reference. There is material in this collection to give aid and comfort to both sides of the debate. A number of articles bring out quite clearly the preoccupation of the established Church and the established order more generally with the issue of heterodoxy and its unsettling consequences. By taking the case study of William Bowman, Stephen Taylor illustrates how sensitive the Church was about forms of rationalising theology which questioned its institutional foundation. More menacing still was the potent theological ambiguity of a figure such as Conyers Middleton who, as Robert Ingram shows, was sufficiently dextrous not to present a clear theological target but who, nonetheless, advanced views which anticipated the explosive findings of nineteenth-century Higher Criticism. Instinctively, the established Church sought to curtail his influence denying him further preferment. Later in the eighteenth century the heterodoxy of Edward Evanson led to a clear parting of the ways and G M Ditchfield shows the path that led to his quitting the Church of England. The fact that Evanson joined with other Unitarians (some of whom had followed similar route away from Anglicanism) in supporting radical politics would seem to give support to the Clark thesis about the strong association between religious and political radicalism. Ditchfield, however, points to the diversity of radical political sentiment and its sources. Tellingly, these case studies of Bowman, Middleton and Evanson deal with Anglican clergy and, while demonstrating the concern within the established Church about the effects of heterodoxy, Bradley would no doubt argue that conclusions drawn from them cannot be mapped too readily on to the different world of Dissent. The example of the Dissenting Murray who was both orthodox and radical is a case in point.

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Though much of Bradley's work has been concerned with Dissent this is a collection where many of the articles deal with the established Church. Along with these studies of the Anglican religious radicals, Bowman, Middleton and Evanson, Robert Cornwall looks at the way in which the early eighteenth-century Anglican debate about lay baptism was, like so much else in the reign of Queen Anne, shaped by the looming dynastic concerns and the religious character of the Hanoverian claimants. A very different Anglican perspective emerges from Nigel Aston's study of Archbishop Markham's response to the American Revolution which was considered by influential members of the political elite to be too sympathetic to the monarchical cause to be truly consistent with the traditions of Whiggery. Here political conservatism reopened a critique of lingering Anglican attachment to notions of passive obedience to the Lord's Anointed – political theology could promote debates by being too conservative as well as being too radical. One of the great icons of the Reformation which brought the Church of England into being, John Foxe's *Book of the martyrs*, is shown by Peter Nockles to have been viewed ambiguously within the established Church as the theological temperature rose in the first half of the nineteenth century with the clashes between Evangelicals and Tractarians. High Churchmen particularly were wary of the way in which his work could reawaken the challenges to the establishment of the Elizabethan Puritans and conveyed some unsettling millenarian sentiments. As a consequence there were different editions of his work which presented different aspects of his multifaceted heritage.

Though Anglicanism looms surprisingly large in this collection, there are also studies which reflect Bradley's work on the dynamics of Dissenting political action in a political system which allowed them little room for manoeuvre. The need to draw as many participants as possible into the political process in an age dominated by 'the rage of party' from the Glorious Revolution to the coming of the Hanoverians meant that Dissenters often found themselves in surprising political company. As William Gibson's article on the period from 1688 to 1710 shows, the votes of Dissenters were often determined by local considerations so that they might support Tories while High Churchmen might support Whigs. The shrinking of the political nation after the coming of the Hanoverians

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is, on the other hand, reflected in David Wykes's article which illustrates the ironic conjunction of sympathy for a repeal of some of the discriminatory legislation against Dissenters with wariness about allowing too much challenging of the machinery of the Confessional State. As the various studies in this collection show such concerns determined the reaction to debates within the state Church as well as without. For this is a work which demonstrates, with much fine-grained detail, the extent to which the eighteenth century can only be understood by mastering the language of theology which resists too easy a translation into other tongues drawn from politics or economics with which our age is more familiar. By doing so the collection honours the work of James Bradley in illuminating an eighteenth century world where Church and Chapel existed in an uneasy proximity.

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