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Religion and Politics George Berkeley's Understanding of Ireland's Wellbeing in Early and Late Editions of *The Querist*¹

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/RF.2015.008>

George Berkeley is best known as the author of such works as *A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, (1710) or *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous* (1713). However, as surprising as it may seem, he was also “one of the most percipient analysts of Ireland’s economic and social problems from the 1690s to the 1720s.”² His later work *The Querist*, which he wrote while residing in Cloyne, Ireland between the years of 1734 and 1752, earned him a reputation as thinker on economics. The philosopher revealed his interest in the situation in Ireland in great detail there and included his ideas of improving its economy and the wellbeing of its inhabitants.

The Querist is an example of an improvement tract, which was written in the form of 940 questions. “Such works,” as Patrick Kelly writes, “devoted themselves to the “improvement” of the country’s welfare in a variety of fields - economic, educational, moral, and political, as well

¹ The research was financed by the National Science Centre (NCN) in Poland as part of the post-doctoral grant DEC-2014/12/S/HS1/00153.

² It was an opinion of Berkeley’s contemporary, William King (1650-1729), the archbishop of Dublin in the years of 1703 and 1729. See: P. Kelly, “Berkeley’s economic writings”. In K. P. Winkler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Berkeley*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 339.

as agricultural and horticultural.”³ The early edition of the work was published anonymously in three separate parts in 1735, 1736, and 1737 respectively. The revised, later editions of all three parts of the work with some queries omitted and some added appeared in one piece again in the years between 1750-1752.

As T. W. Hutchison claims, the differences in the early and late editions of the work are of no significance for Berkeley’s economic arguments⁴, which constituted the main subject of interest among Berkeley scholars⁵ who have analysed *The Querist* on the basis of the 20th-century Luce and Jessop’s edition.⁶ However, there is a new critical edition of *The Querist*, currently being prepared for publishing by Bertil Belfrage. It is based on the first Dublin edition of the work and includes all the queries from eight different editions of the work. As such, it helps to analyse Berkeley’s programme of the improvement of Ireland from a different perspective, to wit, the one of religion and politics. The two spheres were of great importance in the context of Ireland in the first half of the 18th century. At the time, the country was religiously and culturally divided between native Irish Catholics and English Protestants. It was also politically dependent on Great Britain. This complex situation resulted in diverse identities among the inhabitants of Ireland and different concepts of their wellbeing among thinkers of the time.

As Daniel Flage writes, Berkeley as a Bishop of Cloyne (1734-1752) sought the welfare of Protestants and Catholics alike.⁷ In addition, David Berman underlines this idea as follows, Berkeley’s “commitment to the well-being of those in his diocese - Catholic as well as Protestant - was exceptional for the time.”⁸ It seems worth considering in this context that it was only in the *Advertisement*, which was included in the late editions of *The Querist*, that Berkeley directly claimed to aim at “(...) improving the Manners, Health and Prosperity of his Fellow creatures⁹ and

³ P. Kelly, “Berkeley’s economic writings”, p. 340.

⁴ T. W. Hutchison, *Berkeley’s Querist and its Place in the Economic Thought of the Eighteenth Century*. In *Money, Obedience, Affection. Essays on Berkeley’s Moral and Political Thought*, S. R.L. Clark (ed.), New York, London: Garland Publishing, INC, 1989, p. 53, footnote 1.

⁵ See: works on *The Querist* by e.g. G. Caffentzis, T.W. Hutchison or P. Kelly.

⁶ G. Berkeley, *The Querist* [Q]. In *The Works of George Berkeley*, [W], A. A. Luce, T. E. Jessop (eds.), Thomas Nelson, London, Edinburgh, Paris, Melbourne, Tokyo, Toronto, New York, 1948-57, Vol. VI, pp. 105-181.

⁷ See: Daniel E. Flage, “George Berkeley (1685-1753)”. In *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/berkeley/> on 06.04.2015.

⁸ D. Berman, *George Berkeley. Idealism and the Man*, New York: Oxford University Press 2005, p. 167.

⁹ *Advertisement by the Author*. In *Q*, Vol. 6: 103.

his objectives were nonexclusive, i.e. he intended to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, by promoting an honest industry.¹⁰

This article is an attempt to compare the early and late editions of *The Querist* as regards Berkeley's views on diversity in religious and political identities in Ireland. My aim is to indicate differences in his concept of the wellbeing of Ireland as far as religion and politics are concerned and to provide an answer to the question of whom he considered his 'fellow creatures' in the religious and political context of the 1730s and 1750s. The first part of the text will be devoted to a presentation of differences regarding Berkeley's attitude towards Roman Catholics and Protestants and the role of religion in uniting the diversified society in common interest. The second part will include a study of his understanding of the political relationship between Ireland and Great Britain in the 1730s and the 1750s as well as an outline of his ideas regarding Ireland's place in the emerging British Empire. The analysis and quotes included in the text are based on the critical edition of *The Querist* edited by Bertil Belfrage. Due to its broader availability however, the numbering of the queries follows Luce and Jessop's edition of the work. Numbers of queries in Belfrage's edition are provided in square brackets.

1. The Wellbeing of Irish Catholics or Protestant Ascendancy¹¹?

There are two possible ways of understanding whom Berkeley referred to as his fellow creatures as far as their religious identity is concerned. The early and late editions of *The Querist* differ in that respect. First, it is important to underline that the Bishop's reference to 'the hungry' and 'the naked' in the *Advertisement* of 1750s was general and limited neither to Catholic nor Protestant inhabitants of Ireland. Most probably they meant any man in need of help. Although they were not clearly stated, the Bishop shared similar objectives in the early editions of the

¹⁰ See: *Advertisement by the Author*. In *Q*, Vol. 6: 103.

¹¹ James Kelly claims that the term of Protestant Ascendancy (...) had no currency prior to the 1780s and early 1790s, when it was appealed to by conservative ideologues, who apprehended that the Protestant constitution was in danger of being undermined by the actions of Catholics without and reform-minded Protestants within. Prior to that moment, the favoured descriptive term employed by Irish Protestants was 'Protestant interest'. See: J. Kelly, *Politics and Administration in Ireland, 1715-1770*. In *History of Modern Ireland – Sample Materials 1494-1815, Multitext Project in Irish History, University College Cork, Ireland*, accessed from http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Politics_and_Administration_in_Ireland_1715-1770 http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Politics_and_Administration_in_Ireland_1715-1770 on 9 February 2015.

work. An example of that is query 71 [687]¹², which was omitted in the 1750s. Berkeley referred to the project of clothing and feeding people there. Contrary to the late edition of *The Querist*, in the 1730s his understanding of the 'people' of Ireland was different and influenced by their religious identity.

The double reference to the fellow creatures is made explicit in query 255 [318], in which Berkeley asked whether "(...) a Scheme for the Welfare of this Nation should not take in the whole Inhabitants? And whether it be not a vain Attempt, to project the flourishing of our Protestant Gentry, exclusive of the Bulk of the Natives?"¹³ It may mean that Protestants and Catholics were equally important in his plan of improving the well-being of the people of Ireland. A similar idea is also expressed in query 334 [520]¹⁴, where Berkeley referred to respecting the rights of different groups of people while promoting the good of the community. In the edition published in 1735, however, query 255 [318] was followed with another question, i.e. "Whether, therefore, it doth not greatly concern the State, that our Irish Natives should be converted, and the whole Nation united in the same Religion, the same allegiance, and the same Interest? And how this may most probably be effected?"¹⁵ In the light of the query, which was omitted in the late editions, Berkeley's vision of Ireland was different. In the 1730s the Bishop did refer to both English Protestant gentry and Irish Catholic natives. However, he could have had the welfare of a homogeneous, i.e. a Protestant nation in mind.

The analysis of the early and late editions of *The Querist* shows that Berkeley's attitude towards Catholics differed between the 1730s and the 1750s. In the early editions of *The Querist* he referred to Catholics as papists. The only exceptions are query 256 [320]¹⁶, where he raised the issue of requiring an oath of allegiance to the British king from Roman Catholics, and query 295 [325]¹⁷ in which he mentioned an idea of obliging them to a passive participation in the services of the Church of England. The term 'papists' underlined Catholic submission to the Pope and was derogatory. It is important to remember that Berkeley differentiated between purely religious doctrines and the ones that affected the country and made some further distinctions among papists into mere papists and recusants in the 1730s.¹⁸ The former group consisted of people who only professed Catholic faith and possibly did not threaten the political

¹² See: *Queries Omitted, Part III, Q*, Vol. 6: 174.

¹³ See: *Q*, Vol. 6: 126.

¹⁴ *Q*, Vol. 6:133.

¹⁵ See: query 289 [319]. In *Queries Omitted Part I, Q*, Vol. 6: 174.

¹⁶ *Q*, Vol. 6: 126.

¹⁷ Query 295. In *Queries omitted, Part I, Q*, Vol. 6: 160.

¹⁸ See: queries 297-299 [327-329]. In *Queries omitted, Part I, Q* Vol. 6: 160.

order in Britain. From the Protestant perspective they could have been wrong in their beliefs, but not dangerous to the political stability of the country. In Berkeley's opinion they could have been granted tolerance.¹⁹ On the other hand, the latter group denoted those who, first and foremost, professed their submission to the Pope and could therefore have questioned British powers. For Berkeley they were wrong in their political beliefs. His stand on Catholic religious faith is less explicit though.²⁰ It should be noted for the purpose of this article that, although the distinction between religion meant as an individual faith and religion referred to as an institution was present in Berkeley's queries, he seemed not take it into account in his suggestions of converting Catholics, which was most probably aimed at a resignation from both Catholic profession of faith and obedience to Pope.²¹ It should be underlined that Berkeley expressed his objection against compelling Catholics to a profession of Protestant faith (see: query 293 [323]²²). At the same time, he required that they obeyed the English king and listen to Protestant sermons. What is more, he wondered whether educating Catholic children in charity schools and making them apprentices of Protestant masters would lead to their conversion (see: queries 304 [334] and 306 [336]²³ omitted in 1750s). He also hoped that Protestant preaching in Irish among Catholics would finally result in their conversion to Protestantism (see: query 261 [338]²⁴).

The idea of Catholic conversion in the 1730s could have been of double importance for Berkeley. First of all, he hoped that it would result in a change of Catholics' attitude to work, which was an essential factor in enriching the public wealth. In order to achieve that, it was also important that the interest of the Catholic majority in Ireland was the same as the Protestant one. If Catholics identified with a Protestant Ireland as their own country, they would work and help to develop its national economy and therefore contribute to its common wellbeing. Secondly, the conversion of Catholics could guarantee an absence of native Irish support for the Catholic Jacobite claim to the throne of England, which was supported by the French government and kept Protestants in their political power over Ireland. Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, which was in minority and comprised about 20 per cent of Ireland's population

¹⁹ See: query 299 [329]. In *Queries omitted, Part I, Q* Vol. 6: 160.

²⁰ It would be necessary to analyse the sense in which Berkeley uses the term 'to convert' and the role he grants faith in his vision of the improvement of the wellbeing in Ireland, which goes beyond the aim of this article.

²¹ The issue needs further analysis, which goes beyond the aim of this article.

²² *Queries omitted, Part I, Q*, Vol. 6:160. I.

²³ *Queries omitted, Part I, Q*, Vol. 6:161.

²⁴ *Q*, Vol. 6:133.

oscillating between 2 and 2.5 million,²⁵ was obviously afraid of a potential change of royal power. As Kenneth L. Campbell notices in *Ireland's History: Prehistory to the Present*, "(...) Ireland still remained interested in the Jacobite cause for much of the eighteenth century."²⁶ This was due to the ideological complexity of the movement. "Jacobitism was not merely the negation of existing regime; it provided a source of legitimacy for political dissent of all kinds," writes F. J. McLynn.²⁷ Aimed at the restoration of Catholic Stuarts to the throne of Great Britain and Ireland, the Jacobite Rising of 1745 could have given hope to Irish Catholics for regaining their position, which had been diminished by the penal laws. As such, the prospective success of the rising jeopardized the position of Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Although depicted as powerful, the group were a minority in 18th century Ireland. It was important for Protestant Ascendancy to maintain the penal laws, despite the fact that they were used selectively at the time. As Ian McBride states, "The maintenance of the penal code was one way of protecting the Protestant monopoly of the public sphere in this complex, increasingly Catholic society."²⁸ It comprised a tool for Protestants with the help of which they could limit public expression of Catholicism, intimidate Catholics and persuade them to remain compliant with the Protestant Ascendancy.²⁹

Berkeley expressed the Protestant fear of Irish Catholics in his two letters written on the occasion of the Jacobite Rebellion. In a *Letter on the Occasion of Jacobite Rebellion* (Oct. 1745), which was addressed to the Anglican Clergy, he wrote „(...) we never had, humanly speaking, so bad a chance to form our religious liberties as at this time, if we should be so unhappy as to see the present enterprise succeed and a popish prince (...) placed on the throne."³⁰ Important as it seems, when addressing the Roman Catholics in the second *Letter on the Occasion of Jacobite Rebellion* (Oct. 1745) the Bishop referred to them as countrymen and fellow subjects. He asked them not to support the rebellion and argued that it would have some negative financial consequences on their interests and fortunes in Ireland.

The problems of religion, poverty, and political obedience of the people of Ireland, which were thoroughly discussed by Berkeley in the 1730s, also remained important for him in *The Querist* of the 1750s. How-

²⁵ See: J. Kelly, *Politics and Administration in Ireland*, op. cit.

²⁶ K. L. Campbell, *Ireland's History: Prehistory to the Present*, London, New York, Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 157.

²⁷ F. J. McLynn, *Issues and motives in the Jacobite Rising of 1745*. In "The Eighteenth Century", Vol. 23, No 2. (spring 1982), p. 99.

²⁸ I. McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland: The Isle of Slaves*, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2009, p. 217.

²⁹ I. McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p. 217.

³⁰ G. Berkeley, *Letter on the Occasion of Jacobite Rebellion*. In *W*, Vol. 6:228.

ever, the Bishop's attitude towards addressing the problems underwent a change. This was first visible in the way he addressed Roman Catholics. Apart from the exception made in query 453 [728]³¹, where Popish nuns were mentioned, Berkeley replaced the term 'a papist' with 'a Catholic' in the late editions of *The Querist*. That may imply more respect to the religious group as well as a resignation from stressing their subjectivity to the pope in Rome, as it proved almost non-existent in the rebellion of 1745. Also, Berkeley's attitude to the process of educating Catholics in Ireland underwent a slight change. An example of that is query 191 [197], which was introduced in the late editions of *The Querist*. There, Berkeley suggested admitting Roman-Catholics into the Protestant Trinity College in Dublin without obliging them to attend chapel duties, catechisms, or divinity lectures. However, it is doubtful that it was an example of an act of courtesy or expression of ecumenical tendencies. It may rather be seen as a proof of his concern for not letting Catholics have their own schools as well as prevent them from sending their children to be educated abroad, e.g. in Jesuit colleges in France, which was practiced at the time.³² Berkeley suggested that not only the potential prejudices gained from a foreign education could have been prevented in such a way but also the money devoted to education would remain in Ireland. In fact, in this manner, Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland could still keep their control over Catholic education in Ireland.

Berkeley did not fully abandon his hopes of converting Catholics to Protestantism in the 1750s. It would be unwise to think otherwise, even with regard to his resignation from directly considering uniting Irish society in the same religion, allegiance and interest in the late editions of *The Querist*. It is probable that feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and promoting an honest industry was aimed at bringing Catholics to Anglican religion. Berkeley directly expressed such hopes in query 264 [341]³³:

Whether in defect of able missionaries, persons conversant in low life, and speaking the Irish tongue, if well instructed in the first principles of religion and in the popish controversy, though for the rest on a level with [parish] clerks, or the school-masters of charity-schools, may not be fit to mix with and bring over our poor illiterate natives, to the established church? (...).

³¹ Q, Vol. 6:142.

³² About Irish Catholic colleges on the continent in the 18th century see e.g.: P. Boyle, "Irish Colleges, on the Continent". In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 8, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. Accessed from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08158a.htm> on 10.04.2015.

³³ Q, Vol. 6:133.

The Bishop openly appreciated the usefulness of the Irish language in reaching that aim.³⁴ It should be noted that as such an approach was just a repetition of his earlier idea of converting people in America expressed e.g. in *A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations* (1725), where he referred to the necessity of educating 'savage people' in their own language and providing them with practical skills³⁵.

It needs to be underlined that Berkeley changed his focus from religion to the poverty of Catholics when talking about the wellbeing of Ireland in the 1750s. This could have resembled a suggestion from Lord Chesterfield, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland³⁶ in the years of 1745-1746, given to Thomas Prior who was responsible for making Berkeley publish *The Querist*. In his letter from 14th June 1746 Lord Chesterfield wrote: "Think of your manufacturers more at least as much as your militia, and be as much upon your guard as against Poverty as against Popery. Take my word for it, you are in more danger of the former than of the latter."³⁷ As C. O'Connor noted in his review of the book on Lord Chesterfield by Samuel Shellabarger, the Lord was "(...) a cold, calculating, double-faced man, an egoist of the most extreme kind, full of self-seeing and ambition."³⁸ Although Lord Chesterfield controlled Irish Catholics, his skilful strategy helped him build an image of successful lord-lieutenancy of Ireland, as he was perceived as an Irish Lord-Lieutenant rather than a Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.³⁹ It can only be speculated to what extent, if any, Berkeley, who was honoured by Lord Chesterfield with his regard⁴⁰, followed his strategy, especially as he considered the Lord Lieutenant to be a great friend of poor Ireland and stressed that "The nation should not lose the opportunity of profiting by such a viceroy,

³⁴ See queries: 294 [324]. In *Queries omitted*, Q, Vol. 6:160, queries 260 [337], 261[338]. In Q, Vol. 6:133.

³⁵ See: G. Berkeley, *A Proposal for the Better Supplying of Churches in Our Foreign Plantations*. In W, Vol. 7:347, 357.

³⁶ Lord lieutenant was an English politician, accountable to the cabinet in London, who served as the chief governor of Ireland in the period after the Restoration. For more information see: S. J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 329.

³⁷ S. Shellabarger, *Lord Chesterfield and His World*, New York: Biblo and Tannen Booksellers and Publishers, Inc, 1951, p. 256.

³⁸ C. O'Connor, *Lord Chesterfield* by Samuel Shellabarger. In *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 25, No. 97 (Mar., 1936), p. 151.

³⁹ See: S. Shellabarger, *Lord Chesterfield and His World*, p. 256.

⁴⁰ See: Letter 336, Berkeley to Prior, June 23 1746. In *The Correspondence of George Berkeley* [later as C], M. A. Hight (ed.), New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 505.

which indeed is a rarity not to be met with every season, which grows not on every tree."⁴¹

In this article I do not aim at proving whether Catholicism was a less pressing issue for Berkeley than the one of the poverty of 'the Irish natives' in Ireland of 1750s. The analysis of the two editions of *The Querist* proves only that Berkeley abandoned his earlier direct considerations upon uniting the people of Ireland under one religion, which he expressed in query 289 [319]⁴², and adopted, as Ian McBride names it, "(...) a more secular approach to Irish problems in which Catholic 'laziness' was analysed in more secular trends."⁴³ Having in mind the examples of queries in which Berkeley returned to the idea of converting Catholics proves, however, that in his opinion they still seemed to endanger the wellbeing of Ireland. Although he did not mention any Protestant evangelical mission among Irish Catholics in *The Advertisement to The Querist* of 1750s, his suggestions of providing help for them in dealing with their 'hunger, nakedness and beggary lifestyle' were still aimed, though indirectly, at converting (or at least part of) them to Anglicanism.

The analyses of Berkeley's vision of the wellbeing of Ireland as it was described in the two editions of *The Querist* show that in the 1750s the Bishop was less direct in his judgments about the conversion of Catholics. His main focus was the economic status of Ireland, which was supposed to become a successful, economic partner of Britain. While in the 1730s Berkeley suggested uniting the nation under one Protestant religion, in the 1750s he was more focused on dealing with the 'laziness' of the Irish Catholic natives. The shift of focus was parallel with the change of identity among Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, which was also connected with the position of the country in the emerging British Empire at the time.

2. The Wellbeing of Which Ireland?

Ireland differed from Scotland, which was united with England to form the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1707. It was fully dependent on the British government and their interests. The British parliament had power to pass laws that were binding on Ireland. Also, the enactments of the Dublin parliament could have been amended or vetoed by the English Privy Council.⁴⁴ It caused both, poverty and the economical underdevel-

⁴¹ See: Letter 337, Berkeley to Prior, Letter 337. In C, p. 506.

⁴² See: footnote 15 in this article.

⁴³ I. McBride, *Eighteenth Century Ireland*, p. 217.

⁴⁴ See e.g.: S. J. Connolly, *Eighteenth-century Ireland*. In *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy*, D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day,

opment of Irish society. As S. J. Connolly writes, “British government excluded Ireland from full participation in the most profitable branches of colonial commerce; it intervened directly to cut off lines of economic development – such as the export of livestock, wool or glass – that threatened British interests; and it deployed its influence in the Irish parliament to ensure that no compensatory action was taken to build up local enterprises or protect them against British competition.”⁴⁵ On the other hand, Ireland’s political dependency on Great Britain strengthened the interests of the Protestant Ascendancy there. As James Kelly writes, “(...) the Church of Ireland was an established church, and that Irish Protestants were united during the first half of the eighteenth century in their determination to secure the ‘Protestant constitution in church and state’ against its critics and opponents. Since in the Irish instance, the primary enemies of Protestantism were Catholics, Irish Protestants felt entirely justified in excluding Catholics from access to the political process and in curbing their economic, social and religious rights. To do otherwise must be to endanger their security.”⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, at the beginning of the eighteenth century the English-speaking Irish Protestants, who were in power in Ireland, still showed commitment to Great Britain, as they owed their ascendant position on the Emerald Isle. As Livesey notes with reference to *Some remarks occasion’d by the Revd Mr Madden’s scheme and objections raised against it, by one who is no projector*, which was published by an anonymous author in Dublin in 1732, Irish Protestants “unproblematically asserted their Englishness: ‘the Protestants of Ireland are a worth part of the king of Great Britain’s subjects, and that in no respect should be thought a people different from the English, ... I think they should ever be considered as the same people.’”⁴⁷ However, the enthusiasm of Irish Protestants in stressing their English identity had not been shared in Great Britain at this time. As Ian McBride states, “The English had already acquired an irritating habit of confounding the loyal Protestants of Ireland with

Routledge (eds.), New York, 1996, p. 15ff.

⁴⁵ S. J. Connolly, *Eighteenth-century Ireland*, p. 16.

⁴⁶ J. Kelly, *Politics and Administration in Ireland*, op. cit.

⁴⁷ J. Livesey, *The Dublin Society in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*. In “The Historical Journal” 47, 3 (2004), p. 627. A similar view was shared by Samuel Madden in his work *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland (1738)* See: S. Madden, *Reflections and Resolutions Proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland, as to their Conduct for the Service of their Country, as Landlords, as Masters of Families, as Protestants, as Descended from British Ancestors, as Country Gentlemen and Farmers, as Justices of the Peace, as Merchants, as Members of Parliament (1738)*, Printed by R. Reilly for George Ewing, at the Angel and Bible in Damestreet, Dublin: Bookseller, 1738, reprinted 1816, p. 89.

their popish enemies."⁴⁸ Similarly to the native Irish, they were regarded as 'bellicose and bibulous' and treated as foreigners by Great Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century, which made them finally reject the image of themselves as Englishmen.⁴⁹ Instead, they started showing more enthusiasm for Gaelic culture and language.

As Livesey claims, with British economic abuse of Ireland, Irish Protestant thinkers "had to find a way of explaining how one might enjoy all one's rights without sharing in sovereignty, a way of describing a community in which identity was not political."⁵⁰ Focusing on the economic situation of Ireland and its position in the British Empire became a way of building Irish identity among Protestant Ascendancy. In 1731 The Dublin Society was founded. Together with its focus on the economic and educational development of Ireland it "was an instrument of governance in Ireland for at least two centuries."⁵¹ The Society provided Ireland with a model of a nation organized around utility, which was a new idea in comparison with those of virtue or justice.⁵² With its help, in the 1740s Ireland started experiencing economic growth in different sectors, e.g. agriculture, manufacturing, banking, and transport.⁵³

A closer look at Berkeley's attitude towards Great Britain, as it emerges from the early and late editions of *The Querist* proves him to be a non-exceptional member of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. Berkeley was half Irish and half English. However, as a member of the established church in Ireland he considered himself to belong to the upper part of the people in Ireland both in the 1730s and 1750s. As such he also felt committed to England (see query 78 [694]⁵⁴) and showed it as an example for Ireland to follow. He stressed his Englishness by blood, language, religion, manners, inclination, and interest of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland in queries 91 [97]⁵⁵ and 92 [98]⁵⁶. He seemed to believe that Ireland was protected, guarded (query 322 [506]⁵⁷) and loved by England as bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh (query 323 [507]⁵⁸) and it was its role to foster it.

⁴⁸ I. McBride, 'The common name of Irishman': Protestantism and patriotism in eighteenth-century Ireland. In T. Claydon, I. McBride (eds.), *Protestantism and National Identity. Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 246.

⁴⁹ I. McBride, 'The common name of Irishman'..., op. cit., p. 246.

⁵⁰ J. Livesey, *The Dublin Society...*, op. cit., p. 631.

⁵¹ J. Livesey, *The Dublin Society...*, op. cit., p. 616.

⁵² See: J. Livesey, *The Dublin Society...*, op. cit., p. 618.

⁵³ See: S. J. Connolly, *Eighteenth-century Ireland...*, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

⁵⁴ *Queries omitted, Part III, Q*, Vol. 6:174.

⁵⁵ *Q*, Vol. 6:112.

⁵⁶ *Q*, Vol. 6:112.

⁵⁷ *Q*, Vol. 6:132.

⁵⁸ *Q*, Vol. 6:132.

In general, Berkeley was a proponent of a friendly relationship, rather than a rivalry between Ireland and Great Britain both in the 1730s and the 1750s. He suggested in query 90 [96]⁵⁹ that the true interest of both nations was to become people and Ireland should not interfere with Britain (query 93 [99]⁶⁰). In order to keep an internal harmony among different parts of the British Empire, however, he advised that Ireland be useful to Great Britain and trust their governance.⁶¹ He expressed his belief in the power of friendship in promoting industry in Ireland again, when asking in query 443 [705]⁶²: Whether we may not obtain that as Friends, which it is in vain to hope for as Rivals? In practice, however, that meant Ireland's acceptance of the British prohibition of the Irish woollen trade.⁶³ In query 81 [87]⁶⁴ Berkeley observed that it should naturally put Ireland on other Methods, which give no Jealousy, which, as he remarked in query 89 [95]⁶⁵, consisted in a possible cause of bad relations between the two countries. Ireland's prosperity as such, when it didn't interfere with the British woollen trade, was, as Berkeley suggested, advantageous to Great Britain⁶⁶ (see: queries 78 [84]⁶⁷, 434 [690]⁶⁸, 577 [919]⁶⁹, 578 [920]⁷⁰).

Berkeley perceived Ireland as part of the British Empire both in the 1730s and in the 1750s. He described its position with the help of an organic metaphor mentioned in query 579 [921].⁷¹ With the suggestion of London being its metropolis (query 433 [506]⁷²), Ireland was supposed to be regarded as the capillaries (1730s) or the extremities or limbs (1750s) of the political body of the Empire. As such, its condition was by no means insignificant to the whole political body.⁷³ As Berkeley sug-

⁵⁹ Q, Vol. 6:112.

⁶⁰ Q, Vol. 6:112.

⁶¹ See: query 435 [691]. In Q, Vol. 6:141, and query 436 [692]. In Q, Vol. 6:141.

⁶² Q, Vol. 6:141.

⁶³ The export of woollen goods from Ireland to any destination but England was banned on the basis of the Woollen Act of 1699 in order to weaken the Irish economy. Ireland was granted free trade in 1779. For more information see e.g.: S. J. Connolly (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, p. 600.

⁶⁴ Q, Vol. 6:112.

⁶⁵ Q, Vol. 6:112.

⁶⁶ Organizing the Irish nation around utility was an idea of the members of the Dublin Society who aimed at the wellbeing and some sort of autonomy of Ireland, which was politically dependent on Great Britain and as such, consisted a part of the British Empire. See: J. Livesey, *The Dublin Society...*, op. cit., pp. 615-640.

⁶⁷ Q, Vol. 6:111.

⁶⁸ Q, Vol. 6:140.

⁶⁹ Q, Vol. 6:152-153.

⁷⁰ Q, Vol. 6:153.

⁷¹ Q, Vol. 6:153.

⁷² Q, Vol. 6:132.

⁷³ See: query 579 [921]. In Q, Vol. 6:153.

gested in query 580 [922]⁷⁴, though they were small, obstructions in the capillaries could result in great chronic diseases. That is why he believed that the prosperity of Ireland and advancing its wealth was supposed to be in England's interest (query 434 [690]⁷⁵). It was supposed to serve as a basis for its wealth, as the Bishop suggested in query 480 [802].⁷⁶

Berkeley's ideas of keeping Ireland in a healthy condition differed in the details between the 1730s and the 1750s. In the first decades of the 18th century it was connected with his commitment to the Protestant Colony in Ireland in the first place (query 78 [694]⁷⁷) and was considered with reference to the British Empire. In query 96 [712]⁷⁸ he assumed that England and Ireland, Prince and People, had one and the same interest. No wonder that he suggested that the value of the Irish currency was changed to that of the English one (query 29 [29]⁷⁹) and expected that Great Britain would not oppose Irish industry (nor the idea of establishing a national bank in Ireland) as long as the latter didn't interfere with theirs (query 68 [684]⁸⁰). He queried in 69 [685]⁸¹ whether England should be delighted with the low living conditions of the people of Ireland or whether the project of feeding and clothing the poor Irish would give any umbrage to England (query 71 [350]⁸²).

As it is implied in *The Querist* of the 1750s, Berkeley was less focused on Ireland's dependent position in the British Empire. He was rather more concerned about the internal relations between Protestant Ascendancy and native Catholics in Ireland as well as their care for the economic prosperity of Ireland by being industrious. He considered Catholics to be his fellow creatures both in the 1730s and 1750s. It was only in the 1750s, however, when he seemed to be treating them as his fellow countrymen. The shift might have been connected with a change of attitude among members of the Protestant Ascendancy after the Rising of 1745, which was discussed earlier in the article.

3. Conclusion

The comparison of the early and late editions of *The Querist* proves that Berkeley was deeply engaged in considerations regarding the wellbeing

⁷⁴ Q, Vol. 6:148.

⁷⁵ Q, Vol. 6:140.

⁷⁶ Q, Vol. 6:144.

⁷⁷ *Queries omitted*, Part III, Q, Vol. 6:174.

⁷⁸ *Queries omitted*, Part III, Q, Vol. 6:175.

⁷⁹ *Queries omitted*, Part I, Q, Vol. 6:154.

⁸⁰ *Queries omitted*, Part I, Q, Vol. 6:173.

⁸¹ *Queries omitted*, Part I, Q, Vol. 6:173.

⁸² *Queries omitted*, Part I, Q, Vol. 6:161.

in Ireland in the second half of the 18th century. As a Bishop of Cloyne he aimed at resolving the problem of a common good in society, which was not homogenous in respect of religion, language, culture, and political interest and obedience. As a collection of rhetorical questions, which are only partly interconnected and sometimes even ironic, the tract proves that Berkeley struggled with the current problems in the sphere of religion and politics. At least in the 1730s, presenting one coherent vision of improvement for Ireland that could be polemicized was not Berkeley's direct aim, as it seems. He suggested it in query 316 [350]⁸³, later omitted in the 1750s, "Whether, he who only asks, Asserts? And whether any Man can fairly confute the Querist?"

The analysis of different editions of *The Querist* proves that Berkeley's suggestions for the wellbeing of Ireland underwent a change in the period of the 1730s to the 1750s. First of all, it was a change of focus from the problem of religion in the 1730s to the one of economy in the 1750s. As regards religion, in the early editions of *The Querist* the philosopher was focused more on questioning the religious diversity of the people of Ireland. In a general sense, he wanted to bring Catholics to the Protestant state church, which was supposed to guarantee certain unity in the Irish society. In the 1750s also, Berkeley did not completely abandon his hopes of bringing Catholics to the state church, although the issue became less important for him. In the late editions of *The Querist* he was more concerned about the poverty of Catholics, which in his opinion greatly contributed to the poor economic status of Ireland that he wanted to improve. This shift of focus might have been connected with the lack of Catholic support for Stuarts in 1745 as well as the changing role of Ireland in the British Empire. As regards politics, in the 1730s Berkeley perceived Ireland as a country dependent on Great Britain first of all. In the 1750s on the other hand, due to the changes in identity among the Protestants in Ireland, Berkeley was focused more on the country's potential to become Britain's partner and serve the common wellbeing of the whole Empire.

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⁸³ Q, Vol. 6:161.

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Summary

The article is an analysis of the early (published in the 1730s) and late (published in the 1750s) editions of *The Querist* by George Berkeley. It is aimed at showing differences in Berkeley's suggestions for improving the wellbeing of the inhabitants of Ireland as regards the religious and political diversity in the country in the first half of the 18th century. The article consists of two parts. In the first part Berkeley's attitude towards Catholics and Protestants is studied. The second part includes an analysis of his understanding of the political relationship between Ireland and Great Britain in the 1730s and 1750s.

Keywords

George Berkeley, *The Querist*, religion, Catholics, Protestants, politics