

A displaced intelligentsia: aspects of Irish Catholic thought in *ancien régime* France

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INTRODUCTION

It is impossible to investigate the history of ideas in Ireland during the 17th and 18th centuries without considering the work of Irish scholars based on continental Europe. A major portion of those people who would naturally have formed a native Irish Catholic intelligentsia either based themselves in Europe or were strongly influenced by their continental education. The early 17th-century priest, John Colgan, a crucial figure in the historical projects of the Irish Franciscans based at Louvain, was well aware that Catholic Irish scholarship had been displaced from Ireland to Europe.¹ The experience of 'exile' was not necessarily negative. Displacement opened up fresh opportunities to Irish catholicism and introduced scholars, pastors and ecclesiastical officials more quickly to the new intellectual trends. Moreover, it made scholars in particular more aware of a wider, European, audience. From the establishment of Irish colleges network within the European Catholic university system in the late 16th-century until the disruption of the French revolutionary wars and the foundation of the 'Royal College of St Patrick' at Maynooth in 1795, the intellectual life of Irish Catholics remained vigorous, diverse and European.²

Education was at the heart of the counter-reformation.³ The Irish

1 Bernadette Cunningham, 'The culture and ideology of the Irish Franciscan historians at Louvain 1607-1650' in Ciaran Brady (ed.), *Ideology and the historians* (Dublin, 1991), pp 11-30, 13. 2 This is not to suggest that the intellectual life of Catholics in Ireland stagnated, the reverse is clear, for instance, in the work of Cornelius Nary. See: Patrick Fagan, *Dublin's turbulent priest: Cornelius Nary (1658-1738)* (Dublin, 1991). The Gaelic intellectual tradition continued too, especially in literature and history. The bardic poets, for instance, strove to adapt, with some success, to the radically altered social and political environments of 17th-century Ireland. See, for instance, Breandán Ó Buachalla, *An aisling ghéar* (Baile Átha Cliath, 1996) and Marc Caball, *Poets and politics* (Cork, 1998). 3 For instance see: Helga Hammerstein, 'Aspects of the continental education of Irish students in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I' in *Historical Studies*, viii (1971), pp 137-53; Colm Lennon, 'Primate Richard Creagh and the beginnings of the Irish counter-reformation' in *Arch. Hib.*, li (1997), pp 74-86 and *Archbishop Richard Creagh of Armagh, 1523-86* (Dublin, 2000).

'counter-reformation episcopate', established in the first half of the 17th-century were formed in Europe.⁴ During this early period the most notable flowering of Irish intellectual activity abroad resulted from the work of the Irish Franciscans in contact with the European counter-reformation.⁵ There were strong connections, both personal and intellectual, between the activities of the hagiographers and historians based at Louvain and the philosophers and theologians who gathered around Luke Wadding in Rome and sought to revive the ideas of the medieval thinker John Duns Scotus.⁶ At their heart these projects were concerned not only with the modernisation of the Irish Catholic church but also with the need to present the political, cultural and national identity of the émigré Irish to a European audience.⁷

France was home to a great number of Irish students. Indeed, in the 1650s, the Irish at Paris claimed that the city hosted more of them than any other part of the world.⁸ Brockliss and Ferté have concluded that: 'Irish clerical exiles were to be found all over France: in one continental country at least there was a veritable Irish Diaspora.'⁹ Thousands of Irish students received their higher education at French universities. In many cases, they were attached to one of the Irish colleges, founded essentially to provide lodgings to students arriving from Ireland. A number of Irishmen managed to secure teaching and administrative positions while they continued their studies or after they had completed them. At least eight became professors of philosophy at the University of Paris, usually for a relatively short period, though Roger Omeloy may have taught at the *Collège de Beauvais* for forty years.¹⁰ Irish clerics also secured posts in theology, notably Luke Joseph Hooke, James Wogan and John Plunkett.¹¹ However, most Irish priests who decided to remain in France (and

4 Donal F. Cregan, 'The social and cultural background of a counter-reformation episcopate, 1618-60' in Art Cosgrove and Donal McCartney (eds), *Studies on Irish history presented to R. Dudley Edwards* (Dublin, 1979), pp 85-117, 112-13. 5 See Joep Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael: studies in the idea of Irish nationality, its development and literary expression prior to the nineteenth century*, 2nd edn (Cork, 1996), pp 254-9. 6 Leerssen, *Mere Irish and Fíor-Ghael*, pp 263-8; Benignus Millet, 'Irish Scotists at St Isidore's College, Rome, in the 17th-century' in *De doctrinā Joannis Duns Scoti*, 4 (1968), pp 399-419. 7 For an early example see: Thomas O'Connor, 'Towards the invention of the Irish Catholic *Natio*: Thomas Messingham's *Florilegium*' in *Irish Theological Quarterly*, lxiv (1999), pp 157-77. 8 In the course of the 1651 'Résolution et déclaration des Hibernois' the signatories described Irish clerics 'qui viennent estudier [*sic*] en l'Université de Paris en plus grand nombre, qu'en aucun autre lieu du monde'. Quotation taken from a translation of the original *Declaratio Hibernorum*, in *Conclusion de la faculté de théologie de Paris pour les Hybernois. Contre le décret de Monsieur le Recteur de l'Université du 4 Mars 1651 et contre les Jansenistes* (Paris, 1651), p. 5. 9 L.W.B. Brockliss and P. Ferté, 'Irish clerics in France in the 17th and 18th centuries: a statistical study' in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 87C (1987), pp 527-72, p. 531. 10 L.W.B. Brockliss and P. Ferté, 'Prosopography and notes' (copy deposited at the Russell Library, Maynooth), numbers 221, 665, 702, 723, 739, 902, 958, 1437. 11 *Ibid.*, 889, 958; L.W.B. Brockliss, *French higher education on the 17th and 18th centuries: a cultural history* (Oxford, 1987), pp 46-8. Statistics culled from the administrative

this accounted for a large proportion of those educated in the country) had to seek a position within the diocesan structures of the French church and often struggled to make ends meet.¹² For many a critical support was the networks of Irish communities which provided financial and cultural sustenance.¹³ A good example is the above-mentioned James Wogan, who taught philosophy and theology at the University of Paris in the early 18th century. He had access to a network of family members across the continent, including the relatively influential Jacobite, Charles Wogan, who was his brother.¹⁴

Most Irish *servants* in exile operated within these networks. They employed their abilities in a wide range of disciplines: theology, philosophy, history, catechetics, linguistics, hagiography, medicine and law. In these areas, they helped re-invigorate and modernise Irish Catholic thought and strengthened the Irish Catholic community's ties with counter-reformation Europe. The traffic was not all one-way. Irish clerics and scholars, because of their access to English language texts, were frequently in advance of their French contemporaries with regard to intellectual innovation.¹⁵ This sometimes enabled them to play a significant role in European intellectual movements and we find some Irish thinkers embroiling themselves in the more controversial aspects of intellectual change. The ongoing Jansenist affair, for instance, created challenges and opportunities for the Paris Irish from the mid-17th century.¹⁶ In a more secular vein, students, as well as scholars, lived through a formative period in European intellectual history, witnessing the rise of mechanistic science and the Enlightenment.¹⁷ At times the context to Irish activity produced bizarre

records of the universities do not always accord with other sources which note, rather arbitrarily, that certain individuals were 'professors' or 'doctors'. It should also be noted that university records are sometimes incomplete. Neither Thomas Dease nor Peter MacQuillan, for instance, appear on the Brockliss and Ferté list as professors, but are mentioned as such by Richard Hayes in his *Biographical dictionary of Irishmen in France* (Dublin, 1949), pp 54, 190. ¹² John McManners, *Church and society in 18th-century France* (2 vols, Oxford, 1999), i, pp 323, 400, 619, ii, p. 115. ¹³ For example see: Gráinne Henry, *The Irish military community in Spanish Flanders, 1586-1621* (Dublin, 1992), pp 98-113; Micheline Walsh, 'Irish soldiers and Father Charles O'Neill of the Irish College in Paris' in *Seanchas Ard Mhacha*, ix, 1 (1978), pp 95-122. ¹⁴ In fact James Wogan was forced to distance himself from the attempts of Charles to find him an episcopal see in Ireland: Patrick Fagan, *Ireland in the Stuart Papers: correspondence and documents of Irish interest from the Stuart Papers in the Royal Archives, Windsor* (2 vols, Dublin, 1995), i, pp 185, 190, 193, 195. Frank D'Arcy, 'Exiles and strangers: the case of the Wogans' in Gerard O'Brien (ed.), *Parliament, politics and people: essays in 18th-century Irish history* (Dublin, 1989), pp 171-85. ¹⁵ Niall Mackenzie, 'Review article: *An Irish theologian in Enlightenment France: Luke Joseph Hooke 1714-96*. By Thomas O'Connor' in *Royal Stuart Miscellany* (1999), pp 18-27, 22-3. ¹⁶ The publicly strident anti-Jansenism of a group of Irish clerics led to the so-called 'L'affaire des Hibernois' in 1651: see Joseph S. O'Leary, 'The Irish and Jansenism in the 17th century' in Liam Swords (ed.), *The Irish-French connection 1578-1978* (Paris, 1978), pp 21-43, 23-31. ¹⁷ Brockliss, *French higher education*, passim., provides an excellent introduction to the changes wrought on the universities' curricula during the period under discussion.

responses, as in the case of Dr Patrick Piers de Girardin.¹⁸ In other cases the work of Irish intellectuals *appears* obscure, as in the writings of the archbishop of Dublin, Peter Talbot, on the neo-Aristotelianism of Thomas White (*alias* Blacklow) and John Sergeant.¹⁹ But the work of Talbot or Girardin points to the diversity of Irish intellectual endeavours on the continent. This article examines the work of a number of Irish thinkers active in France in different intellectual areas: hagiography/history, theology, philosophy, jansenist apologetics and the Huguenot mission. The first was Bishop David Rothe of Ossory; Michael Moore and Luke Joseph Hooke, for their part, spent most of their lives working in higher education; finally Matthew Barnewall and Thomas Gould served in the French pastoral ministry. In all these cases, one discovers revealing reflections of the political, cultural and religious ferment of both Ireland and France. During this period, Irish Catholic thought remained vigorous, confident and formative of the Catholic Ireland that emerged in the 19th century. Helga Hammerstein has commented on the beginnings of the Irish educational phenomenon in Europe that: 'Even if they did not actively participate in the Irish mission, the scholars who remained on the continent gave it their advice and an academic orientation.'²⁰

DAVID ROTHE

The important connections forged between Ireland and France at the start of our period are illustrated by a work entitled *Brigida thaumaturga* (Brigid the wonder-worker) written by the bishop of Ossory, David Rothe (1573-1650), and published in Paris in 1620.²¹ Rothe had been educated at Douai and Salamanca and was appointed bishop in 1618. He was at the heart of the new counter-reformation episcopate, which was introduced to Ireland in the early 17th century, serving as a deputy to the non-resident primate, Peter Lombard.²² As a scholar he is best known for his sharp criticism of lord deputy

18 Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, 'An Irish opportunist in Paris: Dr Piers de Girardin' in Nigel Aston (ed.), *Religious change in Europe 1650-1914: essays for John McManners* (Oxford, 1997), pp 59-74.

19 Lominus [i.e., Peter Talbot], *Blackloanae Haeresis, olim in Pelagio et Manichaeis Damnatae, nunc denuo renascentis, historia et confutatio* (Ghent, 1675). 20 Hammerstein, 'Aspects of the continental education of Irish students in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I', p. 144. 21 The full title is: *Brigida thaumaturga sive dissertatio partim encomiastica in laudem ipsius sanctae, partim archaica, ex sacra et antiqua historia ecclesiastica, partim etiam parenetica ad alumnos Collegiorum, in qua elucidatur prodigium ligni aridi revirescentis ex attractu B. Brigidae Virginis, et symbolico sensu accommodatur ad antiquam quod intercesserat commercium inter Galliam et Hiberniam in rebus sacris, literariis, et civilibus, habita in Collegio Hibernorum Parisiense. Kalendis Februarii, die feste eiusdem sanctae* (Paris, 1620). For a summary see: Patrick Boyle, 'Brigida thaumaturga' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 4th series, xxix (1911), pp 225-34. 22 William Carrigan, *History and antiquities of the diocese of Ossory* (4 vols, Dublin, 1905), i, pp 86-112; Fergus O'Farrell, 'The

Sir Arthur Chichester and his record of the persecution of Irish Catholics in the *Analecta sacra* (Cologne, 1617–19). *Brigida thaumaturga* was written while Rothe was in Paris in 1620, where he was consecrated bishop. The work is particularly valuable because part of it was delivered as a sermon to the students of the nascent Irish College in the city, then under the stewardship of Thomas Messingham.

Ostensibly, Rothe's work was one of hagiography, devoted to St Brigid, on whose feast day the sermon was delivered. But in common with texts written by Irish authors during the early 17th century, the religious-historical themes were directly applied to the contemporary circumstances of Irish catholicism. In his dedication, Rothe addressed the most pressing need of the Irish students who sought education on continental Europe: financial security. There he praised the Irish College patron, John L'Escalopier, contrasting the persecution suffered by Catholics in Ireland with the encouragement they received through his patronage. Here was an explicit appeal for continued support from what Rothe considered a pivotal institution in the regeneration of the Catholic church in Ireland.²³

The bulk of the text concerns Irish history and hagiography. Rothe's starting point was St Brigid, whose miraculous actions he uses as a metaphor on two levels. Brigid's mission in Ireland is the image both of the medieval Irish mission to Europe and of the seminary clergy's current mission to Ireland.²⁴ Rothe was particularly concerned to demonstrate the immense contribution made by the Irish to France throughout its history. Firstly, he pointed to Hiberno-French associations in ecclesiastical matters, beginning with St Patrick's apparent French links and particularly emphasising the role of St Columbanus.²⁵ Secondly, he noted the Irish contribution to French intellectual development.²⁶ Most interestingly, Rothe repeated the tradition that the University of Paris owed its origins to two Irish monks, Albinus and Clement. Moreover, he noted the huge contribution of the medieval philosopher, John Scotus Erigena.²⁷ Finally, he pointed out the antiquity and density of civil and political links.²⁸ In this discourse he also remarked that despite their contribution

Catholic church in County Kilkenny, 1600–1800' in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds), *Kilkenny: history and society* (Dublin, 1990), pp 197–250; Colm Lennon, 'Political thought of Irish counter-reformation churchmen: the testimony of the "Analccta" of bishop David Rothe' in Hiram Morgan (ed.), *Political ideology in Ireland, 1541–1641* (Dublin, 1999), pp 181–202; Thomas O'Connor, 'Custom, authority and tolerance in Irish political thought: David Rothe's *Analecta* 1616' in *Irish Theological Quarterly* lxx, 2 (2000) pp 133–156. 23 Rothe, *Brigida thaumaturga*, 'Epistola dedicatoria', unpaginated. Thomas Messingham also dedicated his *Florilegium insulae sanctorum* (Paris, 1624) to L'Escalopier. James MacGeoghegan later singled out L'Escalopier as a crucial patron, *The history of Ireland, ancient and modern*, trans. Patrick O'Kelly (Dublin, 1844), pp 479–80. 24 Boyle, 'Brigida thaumaturga', p. 227. 25 Rothe, *Brigida thaumaturga*, pp 28–66. 26 *Ibid.*, pp 66–101. 27 *Ibid.*, pp 67–74, 77–80. 28 *Ibid.*, pp 101–23

to France, the Irish were now reduced to seeking their education abroad in the face of persecution. The inference is simple: the Irish were in need of assistance, which was ultimately their due because of their past contribution to France.²⁹ With this assistance they would do great things for the church in Ireland.

The third section of the work was directly addressed to the students of the Irish College in Paris. Rothe's basic point was that the future of the Catholic church in Ireland was in the hands of the seminary-trained clergy. Rothe was convinced of the necessity of a motivated, educated clergy, if Trent's programme for pastoral renewal was to make any impact in Ireland. However, government hostility in Dublin, poverty and the tenacity of traditional religious practices meant that the implementation of Tridentine reform was at best piecemeal. Indeed, Rothe's idea of a clergy-based reform of the Irish church was not practical in the prevailing conditions but it did prove inspiring as a model. The difficulties of the Irish mission ensured that Rothe especially stressed the need for unity among the exiled Irish. He commented on the strength of provincial identity, which often divided clerical communities on the continent.³⁰ Rothe stressed the need for unity in order to advance the mission.³¹ He referred his listeners to the history of the Irish saints. There they would find model evangelisers and seasoned enemies of heresy.³²

In the final part of the work, Rothe attacked the Scottish priest Thomas Dempster. He had sparked off a major historiographical row by claiming that many of the saints who had been considered Irish, were in fact Scottish.³³ This claim undermined Rothe's argument for French funds due in return for the past contribution of Irish saints to the French church. It also robbed the counter-reformation Irish of their native saints. This explains the rapidity and the ferocity of his reply. Rothe attacked Dempster's piracy of Irish saints, mounting a systematic, historically-based assault on the Scotman's claims.³⁴ His was only the first in a series of creative and provocative responses by Irish authors on the continent.³⁵ His *Brigida thaumaturga* illustrates how Irish thinkers used historiography and history as a propaganda tool to attract European financial and diplomatic support and to inspire a new generation of Irish clergy. The text shows the connections between the search for financial security on the continent, the reform of the church in Ireland through

29 Ibid., pp 86-95. On the question of martyrdom he refers his readers to the *Analecta sacra*.

30 Rothe, *Brigida thaumaturga*, pp 124-61. 31 Ibid., pp 133-4. 32 Ibid., pp 147-8.

33 D.N.B., xiv (1888), pp 335-40. 34 Rothe, *Brigida thaumaturga*, pp 163-80; Benignus Millet, 'Irish literature in Latin, 1550-1700' in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and F.J. Byrne (eds), *A new history of Ireland* (Oxford, 1976), iii, pp 561-86, 569-70. A longer response was published in *Hibernia resurgens* (1621). 35 Messingham's *Florilegium* appeared in 1624. The greatest achievement of Irish hagiographical scholarship were Franciscan, especially John Colgan's *Acta sanctorum veteris et maioris Scotiae, seu Hiberniae sanctorum insulae* ... (2 vols, Louvain, 1645).

the seminary clergy and the prelate's concern to secure, with European pressure, a more favourable political deal for Irish Catholics from Dublin and London.

MICHAEL MOORE

The career of Michael Moore (c.1639–1726) illustrates the ability of an Irish émigré to gain prominent academic and administrative positions within the world of French higher education. Dublin-born Michael Moore was educated at Nantes and Paris and was ordained a priest for the archdiocese of Dublin.³⁶ On graduating from the University of Paris in 1662, he carved out a position at the *Collège des Grassins*, initially teaching philosophy and rhetoric, and later rising to the position of vice principal. During the later 1680s he returned to Ireland and was appointed provost of Trinity College, Dublin in October 1689.³⁷ The following year Moore disagreed with James II over his ecclesiastical and educational policies and was banished. As a result, Moore spent the 1690s in Italy. From 1696 to 1701 he was rector and professor at Montefiascone, a prominent Tridentine seminary. Despite the loss of jacobite patronage in the 1690s, his career blossomed in the early 18th century. On returning to Paris in 1701 he was elected rector of the University of Paris. He also secured posts at two of the leading intellectual institutions in Paris: the *Collège de Navarre* (where he was principal of arts students from 1702) and the *Collège de France* (where he was professor of Greek and Latin philosophy from 1703).

Moore's most important intellectual contributions were in the realm of philosophy, specifically the Scholastic–cartesian debates of the 17th and early 18th centuries. During a brief interlude between his departure from Ireland in 1690 and his subsequent trip to Italy, Moore wrote his major work: *De existentia Dei et humanae mentis immortalitate secundum Cartesii et Aristotelis doctrinam disputatio* which appeared in Paris in 1692.³⁸ As the title suggests, Moore's work was an attack on the increasingly influential philosophy of René Descartes, in particular his *Meditations on first philosophy*, which had appeared fifty

³⁶ For basic biographical details see: Patrick Boyle, 'Dr Michael Moore, sometime provost of Trinity College and rector of the University of Paris (A.D. 1640–1726)' in *Arch. Hib.*, v (1916), pp 7–16; Colm Connellan, 'Michael Moore (1640–1726)' in Fran O'Rourke (ed.), *At the heart of the real: essays in honour of the most reverend Desmond Connell, Archbishop of Dublin* (Dublin, 1992), pp 261–70. ³⁷ The strongest evidence for this appears in the writings of William King, for example: *The state of the protestants of Ireland under the late King James's government* (Dublin, 1691), p. 194. ³⁸ On the existence of God and the immortality of the human soul, disputed according to the doctrine of Descartes and Aristotle.

years earlier. During the second half of the 17th century, cartesianism had challenged the authority of the scholastic philosophers who dominated the universities and claimed the heritage of Aristotle. In Paris, the 1690s were the key decade in a debate that saw much of the cartesian position adopted by the professors of philosophy by the early 18th century.³⁹

Moore focused on two propositions central to christianity: the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, stating that he hoped to examine Descartes's theories '... not according to the criterion of faith but rather according to what appears true and clearly proven to us: a criterion which Descartes himself is sometimes wont to recommend.'⁴⁰ Moore focused on a particular version of the new theories produced by Descartes in the course of a letter to his collaborator Martin Mersenne.⁴¹ He then spent the bulk of the book examining and rejecting the various definitions, postulates, axioms and demonstrations which Descartes had outlined.⁴² Moore was especially concerned to reject Descartes's *a priori* arguments for the existence of God.⁴³ He also provided his own methods of determining the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, firmly located, as one might expect, within the Thomist understanding of aristotelianism. Here the authority of the Greek thinker was reasserted. Moore firmly rejected the view that Aristotle had denied the immortality of the soul.⁴⁴

Moore's *De existentia Dei* was a contribution to one of the formative intellectual debates of the 17th and 18th centuries. His work also had important implications for the intellectual development of Irish students in France and the continent in general. Philosophy during this period was not the exclusive preserve of a small coterie of students. In fact, any student wishing to pursue a higher degree in medicine, law or theology had to pass through the faculty of arts where they studied philosophy. Study of the subject was supposed to provide them with the academic tools necessary to defend their religious faith and to assume their appointed role in the *ancien régime*.⁴⁵ Moore, as philosophy teacher and author, had access, therefore, to a wide audience. His conservative aristotelianism, which dominated the French universities until the

39 See: L.W.B. Brockliss, 'Aristotle, Descartes and the New Science: natural philosophy at the University of Paris 1600-1740' in *Annals of Science*, xxxviii (1981), pp 33-69; Idem, *French higher education*, pp 185-227, 337-90. 40 Moore, *De existentia Dei*, p. 5. 'Verum quae ab ipso proposita sunt, ea nobis licebit expendere, neque iis ante fidem adhibere, quam ea nobis vera visa sint, et clare probata, ut praecipere nonnunquam solet ipse Cartesius.' My thanks to Dr John Cleary for providing the translation. 41 René Descartes, *The philosophical writings of Descartes*, trans. J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff and D. Murdoch (2 vols, Cambridge, 1985), ii, pp 113-120. 42 Moore, *De existentia Dei*, pp 1-331. 43 Ibid., pp 161-208; 331-45. 44 Ibid., pp 345-60. Moore acknowledged the difficulties in Aristotle's thought for Christian theories of the soul. 45 L.W.B. Brockliss, 'Philosophy teaching in France, 1600-1740' in *History of Universities*, i (1981), pp 131-68.

early 18th century,⁴⁶ helped shape the intellectual and professional formation of the French *ancien régime élite*.⁴⁷

The fact that *De existentia Dei* may have been translated into English⁴⁸ suggests an even broader readership than that of the universities, particularly among the English-speaking Irish students destined for the native mission. Moore's philosophical traditionalism reflects a need to ensure the educational orthodoxy of the Irish priests trained in France, and throughout Europe. While a monolithic and agreed aristotelianism existed only in the minds of its opponents,⁴⁹ the vast majority of Irish students in Europe received a philosophical training centred on Scholastic ideas. The tenuous position of Irish catholicism in the aftermath of the Williamite victory must have influenced the decision of Moore and his students to remain within the boundaries of political and religious 'orthodoxy' until the early 18th century when cartesian ideas became increasingly acceptable in official educational circles.⁵⁰ The conservative intellectual mindset, which Moore represents, formed an important part of the intellectual make up of Irish catholicism in the early 18th century. Indeed, it mirrored the intellectual reticence of the Irish Catholic hierarchy in their religious and political dealings during the same period.⁵¹

Michael Moore's intellectual pursuits also had more positive and creative dimensions. *De existentia Dei* was part of a reaction to what Moore and like-minded scholastics saw as the destructive potential of cartesianism. For Moore, the breakdown in the coherence of thomist-inspired aristotelianism threatened catholicism itself. This line of thinking was most succinctly expressed by Moore in a short *Hortatio* published at Montefiascone in 1700. In that work Moore argued for the reinvigoration of scholasticism and humanism in order

46 L.W.B. Brockliss, 'Curricula' in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *A history of the university in Europe, volume ii: universities in early modern Europe (1500-1800)* (Cambridge, 1996), pp 563-620. 47 This idea is explored more fully in: Liam Chambers, 'Defying Descartes: Michael Moore (1639-1726) and aristotelian philosophy in France and Ireland' in Michael Brown and Stephen Harrison (eds), *The medieval world and the modern mind* (Dublin, 2000). 48 Sir James Ware, *The whole works of Sir James Ware concerning Ireland, revised and improved*, ed. Walter Harris (2 vols, Dublin, 1739-45), ii, p. 290. The Blackmore translation has not been located to date. 49 Christiana Mercer, 'The vitality and importance of early modern Aristotelianism' in Tom Sorrell (ed.), *The rise of modern philosophy: the tension between the new and traditional philosophies from Machiavelli to Leibnitz* (Oxford, 1993), pp 33-67. 50 L.W.B. Brockliss, 'Philosophy teaching in France 1600-1740' in *History of Universities*, i (1981), pp 131-68. 51 On how the penal laws affected the archdiocese of Dublin, see James Kelly, 'The impact of the penal laws' in James Kelly and Dáire Keogh (eds), *History of the Catholic diocese of Dublin* (Dublin, 1999), pp 144-74. Even in the late 18th century Archbishop John Thomas Troy was unwilling to promulgate the Tridentine regulations on marriage (*ibid.*, p. 172). Irish clerics in France were undoubtedly concerned by the effects that their intellectual outlook could have on their prospects within the Irish church. See Priscilla O'Connor, 'Irish students in the Paris faculty of theology: aspects of doctrinal controversy in the ancien régime, 1730-60' in *Arch. Hib.*, lii (1998), pp 85-97, p. 93.

to combat the external threat of protestantism and the internal threat of heterodoxy.⁵² In the final two decades of his life, Moore worked to implement these ideas. Most obviously he continued to promote aristotelian philosophy at the *Collège de France*, and two of his courses there were published in 1716 and 1726.⁵³ In parallel he sought to reform the structures of the *Collège de Navarre* along counter-reformation lines, providing students with a strict education and moulding them into rounded Catholic citizens.⁵⁴ Moore, therefore, shares with Rothe a fundamental concern for the educational opportunities available to clergy and an appreciation of the importance of educated priests in the ordered modernisation of the Catholic church.

MATTHEW BARNEWALL.

If the case of Michael Moore and his contribution to philosophy illustrates the abilities of Irish clerics to attain high position within the academic world of France, that of his friend Matthew Barnewall (c.1657–1738) shows how difficult the life of an Irish clerical *émigré* could be. His career gives us a rare, focused insight into Irish involvement in the politico-theological movement called jansenism. Barnewall was educated at the University of Paris and returned to Ireland in 1685, but went back to the continent to continue his studies and subsequently occupied a series of positions in parishes, seminaries and hospitals around the country.⁵⁵ Between June 1712 and November 1713, he was imprisoned in the Bastille for distributing jansenist literature.⁵⁶ While in prison he requested ‘une imitation Latine avec une Bible Angloise in octavo couverte de noir pour chercher les passages dont les Protestants abusent pour les combattre.’⁵⁷ Another source indicates that he ‘travailloit beaucoup à la concorde des écritures.’⁵⁸ He later produced a French translation of the New Testament.⁵⁹

52 *Hortatio ad studium linguae Graecae et Hebraicae, recitata coram eminentissimo D.D. Marco Antonio Barhadico* (Montefiascone, 1700), especially pp 13–17, 39–45. 53 *Vera sciendi methodus* (Paris, 1716); *De principiis physicis seu corporum naturalium disputatio* (Paris, 1726). For a list of some of the courses taught by Moore see: ‘Fiches des cours’ Collège de France, 1711–20 (Archives du Collège de France). 54 ‘Memoire concernant la discipline au Collège de Navarre présenté par les principaux de dit collège, Août 1704’ (Archives Nationales, MM243, pièce 51). 55 For a brief biography see: O’Leary, ‘The Irish and jansenism in the 17th century’, pp 40–3. 56 Material relating to St Jean de Padriac, deacon, and Mattieu de Barneville [an adopted, French version of his name], priest, Bastille, 21 May 1712 and following (Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Archives de la Bastille, MS 10602, ff 87–183). 57 De Barneville à Mr Huré, 30 Juin [1712] (Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, Archives de la Bastille, MS 10602), ff 130–1. 58 Manuscrit à la Bastille, huitième lettre (Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, MS C.P. 3509), ff 87–8. 59 L’abbé Matthieu de Barneville, *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (Paris, 1719).

However, during the 1730s, Barnewall was again publicly involved in jansenist agitation in Paris. At this point he was attracted to the extreme wing of popular jansenism, known as the *convulsionnaires*.⁶⁰ This group was inspired by the extraordinary, allegedly miraculous, happenings in the cemetery of the Church of St Medard in the centre of Paris. Large crowds gathered at the grave of a jansenist deacon to witness cures and attendant spiritual convulsions. In fact, Barnewall was attracted to the more fanatical wing of the group which was led by 'Frère Augustin' (alias Jean Robert Cosse).⁶¹ On 12 January 1736, Barnewall and a group of *Augustinistes* were arrested while processing, at the dead of night, to the old jansenist haven at Port Royal. Barnewall appears to have spent the rest of his life imprisoned in the *conciergerie*, where he died in 1738. While in prison, Barnewall composed a strongly worded *Profession de Foy* outlining his beliefs.⁶²

The *Profession de Foy* is remarkable for its candour. In the last years of his life Barnewall was willing to enunciate his opinions in full without fear of further retribution. The work indicated Barnewall's recognition of the authority of the papacy, but immediately rejected the condemnations of jansenism issued by Alexander VII and Innocent X. In particular, he rejected his own renunciation of jansenism which the 'Ignatiens' had forced from him in return for his liberty from the Bastille in 1714.⁶³ He stressed the orthodoxy of Jansen, whose work was 'manifestement la doctrine de S. Paul, de S. Augustin, de S. Thomas et de tous les autres saintes défenseurs de la grace.'⁶⁴ Interestingly, Barnewall invoked an early Irish jansenist, John Sinnich, a Louvain theologian, who had lobbied on behalf of the jansenists in Rome in the early 17th century.⁶⁵ He also claimed the support of other likeminded thinkers, including Blaise Pascal and François de Pâris (whose death had sparked off the *convulsionnaire* phenomenon at St Medard, viewed by Barnewall as 'l'oeuvre tout Divine').⁶⁶ In the strongest terms possible he condemned the papal bull *Unigenitus* which was, for him, the fatal 'fruit de Molinisme' and the anti-jansenist formulary which, he noted, had been termed 'La cédule du Diable' because of the divisions it had caused.⁶⁷

60 See B. Robert Kreiser, *Miracle, convulsions and ecclesiastical policy in early eighteenth-century Paris* (Princeton, 1978). 61 *Ibid.*, p. 339. 62 Matthew Barnewall, *Profession de Foy de M. de Barneville, prêtre, Grande-Chantre de l'Église Cathédrale de la Sainte Trinité de Dublin en Irlande mort à la conciergerie au Palais de Paris le 16 Décembre 1738* (n.p., n.d.) (Bibliothèque de la Société de Port Royal, L.P. 197 Recueil des pièces (1651-1732) 25 bis). The original was dated 19 December 1736 and updated on 29 September 1738 when Barnewall stated he was eighty one years old. In July 1712 he had stated he was fifty three (Interrogatoire de Sr Barneville, 14 Julliet 1712 (Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Archives de la Bastille, MS 10602) f. 137). 63 Barnewall, *Profession de Foy*, pp 1-2. 64 *Ibid.*, p. 3. 65 *Ibid.*, p. 3. On Sinnich see: P. Franziskus Deininger, *Johannes Sinnich: der Kampf der Löwener Universität gegen den Luxismus* (Düsseldorf, 1928) 66 *Ibid.*, pp 3, 5. An 'oraison' to Paris was added to the printed version. 67 *Ibid.*, pp 3-4.

Barnewall expressly stated that he hoped his *Profession* would be made public. It appears to have been published by the pro-jansenists, possibly after Barnewall's death in 1738. Barnewall certainly viewed himself as a prisoner for his religious convictions, a self styled 'prisonnier pour Jesus Christ, pour son Evangile et pour son chef d'oeuvre Evangelique'.⁶⁸ Certainly the *Profession* illustrates how far Barnewall had distanced himself from Catholic orthodoxy. His opinions, he insisted, were genuine, the fruit of his intellectual endeavours and the document represented 'les véritables sentimens de mon coeur'.⁶⁹ It is ironic that Barnewall, who had hesitated to return to Ireland in the early 18th century for fear of persecution, discovered that, in his country of refuge, his opinions had placed him outside orthodox theological discourse and subject to ecclesiastical and civil sanction. But this did not prevent a further family involvement in the jansenist affair. During 1740-1, his niece Marie Anne de Barneville and one Marie Fitzgerald from Dublin were also imprisoned for *convulsionnaire* activity.⁷⁰

THOMAS GOULD

Unlike the other intellectuals under consideration, the work of the Cork-born priest Thomas Gould (1657-1734) was practical and targeted the protestant population in France. He was born in 1657 and arrived in Poitiers in 1678 where he studied theology. About 1681 or 1682 he received an appointment to the village of Thouars, where he was made *aumônier* to the Ursuline convent. At the same time he was nominated as missionary to the protestants of the region.⁷¹ Gould became one of the most successful proselytisers in the area consequently attracting the attention of both civil and ecclesiastical authorities. He was rewarded with a number of religious preferments and also received two pensions from the crown.⁷² Gould outlined his methods of conversion and instruction in a series of reports and publications.⁷³ His most successful text was entitled *La véritable croyance de l'Eglise Catholique et les preuves de tous les points de sa doctrine, fondées sur l'écriture sainte*.⁷⁴ This work had its origin in a letter published in 1705 (or possibly earlier) which provided a response to the accusations of two protestant ministers concerning the Catholic faith. By

68 *Ibid.*, p. 7. 69 *Ibid.*, p. 5. 70 Material relating to the affair of Sr Frion etc., September 1740 (Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Archives de la Bastille, MS 11,462) ff 54-150. 71 *D.N.B.*, xxii (1890), pp 288-9. An Irish college was founded in Poitiers in 1674 by the Jesuits: Francis Finegan, 'The Irish College of Poitiers: 1674-1762' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, civ (1965), pp 18-35. 72 *D.N.B.*, xxii (1890), pp 288-9; Yves Krumenacker, *Les protestants de Poitou au xviiiè siècle (1681-1789)* (Paris, 1998), p. 198. 73 For an overview see Krumenacker, *op. cit.*, pp 198-205. 74 First published in Paris, 1709.

1745, *La véritable croyance* had gone into multiple editions.⁷⁵ Gould enjoyed official sanction and the 1720 edition mentions the support of the bishop of Poitiers and the archbishop of Lyons. The costs of publication were met from royal funds.⁷⁶

The defining feature of Gould's 'missionary' work was its mild and reasoned approach. In the majority of cases he rejected the use of violence to produce and maintain conversion and relied instead on his ability to persuade his audience that the Catholic church was not a superstitious institution, as claimed by their ministers. The prime function of *La véritable croyance* was, therefore, to reject such accusations, as made in the catechism and letter of the two ministers noted above, which were outlined in the opening section of the book in fifteen points.⁷⁷ He then proceeded to deal with a series of controversial issues such as the veneration of saints and the Virgin Mary, the use of relics, the celebration of feast days, the sacrifice of the mass and other sacraments and the custom of abstaining from meat on certain days.⁷⁸

In dealing with the veneration of saints and the Virgin Mary, Gould tried to show that the practice was not an end in itself but rather a means of addressing prayer to God. As he put it: 'C'est une ignorance intolérable, ou mesme un blasphème, de croire que l'honneur que nous rendons aux saintes se termine à leur scules personnes . . .'⁷⁹ Titles granted to Mary, such as 'mère de miséricorde, de grace . . .' denoted respect and deference but did not suggest that mercy or grace had their origin or resided in her.⁸⁰ At times, Gould criticised the over zealous displays of his fellow Catholics. For example, he condemned their attitude towards the Virgin Mary on 'le jour de Notre-Dame de Septembre dernier.'⁸¹ God, not the saints, was at the heart of the 'culte religieux'. Nor did Catholics adore the relics of saints, rather they honoured them.⁸² Gould straightforwardly based his interpretation of catholicism in scripture and tradition: 'En effet, elle [l'Eglise] n'a rien de plus à cœur que d'enseigner à ses enfants la véritable doctrine par la sainte écriture, et par la tradition apostolique, sans rien avancer d'incertain et de fableux, ou d'indigne de la foy.'⁸³

The emphasis on scripture was particularly important in Gould's work and illustrated his willingness to dialogue with protestants on their own terms. An even more striking example of this attitude is his repeated use of examples and demonstrations drawn from a variety of protestant texts. He notes that they admitted the importance of the Virgin Mary and, in illustration, cited the opinions of a local minister, Drelincourt. When he discussed the celebration of

75 *Catalogue général des livres imprimés de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (231 vols, Paris, 1807-1981), lxii, pp 967-8; Krumenacker, *Les protestants de Poitou*, pp 200-2. 76 Gould, *La véritable croyance*, unpaginated. My comments are based on the 1720 version described by the author as a 'nouvelle édition revue, corrigée et augmentée' [title page]. 77 *Ibid.*, pp 3-8. 78 *Ibid.*, pp 1-74. 79 *Ibid.*, p. 26. 80 *Ibid.*, pp 31-5. 81 *Ibid.*, pp 36-7. 82 *Ibid.*, pp 39, 41. 83 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

feast days he noted that their retention in the Anglican church was ordered by a statute of Edward VI promulgated in 1547 and cited it at length. Similarly, the Anglican church, he noted, had retained many of the liturgical practices of the Catholic church as well as the custom of abstinence from meat in certain seasons (which St Paul appeared to have condemned).⁸⁴ Following his direct response to the specific concerns raised by the two ministers, Gould provided an outline of 'la véritable croyance', surveying Catholic teaching concerning the mass, the seven sacraments, papal primacy and purgatory. Unsurprisingly, he also argued that catholicism had the four 'marks' of the true faith, namely, unity, sanctity, universality and apostolic tradition.⁸⁵

Gould's text is littered with examples drawn from the practices of the Anglican church. This illustrates the benefits Gould derived from his first hand experience of state protestantism in Ireland and how he applied this knowledge to his professional responsibilities in Poitou. It would be tempting to suggest that Gould's reasonable approach to the conversion of protestants was a reaction to his own experiences in Ireland. However, Gould was not completely adverse to the use of some measures of repression. More importantly, he was part of a wider system of supervision involving bishops and royal officials. As Yves Krumenacker puts it: 'Gould se limite à la douceur et à la charité, mais à la condition que d'autres surveillent attentivement la conduite des N[ouveau] C[atholiques]'.⁸⁶ Whatever his opinions on the use of force were, there is no denying the success of his publications in particular. One of his later catechetical works was used, on the recommendation of Cardinal de Fleury, throughout France.⁸⁷ When Gould died in 1734, his nephew appears to have assumed his responsibilities.⁸⁸

LUKE JOSEPH HOOKE

Though dramatically different, the work of Gould and Barnewall indicate that many Irish clerical thinkers during the 17th and 18th centuries left their theological mark. Perhaps Benignus Millett's remark that most put their 'philosophical learning at the services of theology' is correct.⁸⁹ Of the Irishmen who occupied chairs of theology at the University of Paris during the period under discussion, Luke Joseph Hooke (1714-96) was the best known and the most controversial. His family background was confessionally mixed. Hooke's father, Nathaniel (*d.* 1763), the historian of Rome, was a devout Catholic, but

84 *Ibid.*, pp 29, 44, 49-50, 56-7. 85 *Ibid.*, pp 75-472. 86 Krumenacker, *Les protestants de Poitou*, p. 200. This was also evident in his preparation of detailed reports and intermittent denunciations, *ibid.*, p. 204. 87 *Ibid.*, pp 202-3. 88 *Ibid.*, pp 198, 203, 229. 89 Millett, 'Irish literature in Latin, 1550-1700', p. 580; Thomas Wall, '17th-century Irish theologians in exile' in *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 5th series, lii (1939), pp 501-15. Wall lists nineteen thinkers.

his paternal grandfather John (1655-1712), a founding member of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, authored a work in defence of dissenters which displayed no sympathy for Rome.⁹⁰ Furthermore, his granduncle, Maréchal Nathaniel Hooke (1664-1738), who had an important influence on Luke Joseph, though he died a Catholic, had been a spectacular convert to Rome in the late 1680s.⁹¹ Following his education in Paris from the 1720s, Hooke succeeded to the Sorbonne chair occupied by his fellow Irishman James Wogan in 1742. A decade later he was forced to abandon the post because of his involvement in the Abbé de Prades affair. He later resumed his theological teaching before being forced into retirement a second time, subsequently occupying a chair of Hebrew and Chaldean and the position of librarian at the *Bibliothèque Mazarine*. The French revolution brought fresh problems with a new administration before Hooke's death in 1796.⁹²

Hooke's publications displayed a wide range of intellectual interests, ranging from the biographical to the historical, legal and theological. His most important work was the theological tract: *Religionis naturalis et relevatae principia, methodo scholastica digesta*, first published in Paris between 1752 and 1754 and based on lectures delivered at the faculty of theology of the University of Paris.⁹³ This massive work began with a discussion of natural religion, presenting arguments for God's existence, and commented on morality and natural law. In the second half he explored revealed religion, i.e. the judeo-christian tradition by examining the basis of belief in the scriptures before moving on to the Catholic faith, its relationship with protestantism and the relationship between spiritual and temporal authority.⁹⁴

Hooke's work has often been treated as another typical apologetic written in the face of the Enlightenment criticism of revealed religion emanating from the Deist *philosophes* of the 18th century.⁹⁵ However, recent research suggests that a more complex interpretation is in order. Hooke was certainly well aware of the work of his contemporaries and near contemporaries, drawing on an impressive body of thought in the compilation of his work.⁹⁶ It is argued that Hooke and some of his contemporaries were, in fact, involved in an important Catholic engagement with the Enlightenment, furthermore that he was 'at the very centre of that movement'.⁹⁷ Hooke's pronouncements

90 John Hooke, *Catholicism without popery* (London, 1704). 91 Thomas O'Connor, *An Irish theologian in Enlightenment France: Luke Joseph Hooke 1714-96* (Dublin, 1995), pp 12-22; idem, 'The role of Irish clerics in Paris University politics 1730-40' in *History of Universities*, xv (1997-9), pp 193-226. 92 O'Connor, *An Irish theologian*, pp 12-101; idem, 'Surviving the civil constitution of the clergy: Luke Joseph Hooke's revolutionary experiences' in *18th-century Ireland*, ii (1996), pp 120-45. 93 On the various editions and emendations see: O'Connor, *An Irish theologian*, pp 102-3. 94 O'Connor, *An Irish theologian*, pp 103-4. 95 For an Irish instance see: Aubrey Gwynn, 'A forgotten Irish theologian' in *Studies*, lxxiii (1974), pp 259-68. 96 O'Connor, *An Irish theologian*, pp 104-21. 97 *Ibid.*, p. 11.

exposed him to accusations of heterodoxy. Indeed, his theology had more in common with deism than one might suspect, not only in the use of common sources, but also in its search for an organising, rational principle underpinning the world.⁹⁸ Indeed, it can be argued that Luke Joseph Hooke was a *moderniser* within the world of academic theology in mid-century Paris.⁹⁹ He and his circle were accused of plotting with the *Encyclopédistes* to destroy the church from within, an accusation which, in the heated circumstances of the times, stuck. However, Hooke and his troop of modernisers were probably aiming at nothing more sinister than bringing '... the faculty's theological discourse up to date with contemporary philosophical and scientific changes.'¹⁰⁰

The view that Hooke engaged with, rather than simply reacted to, mid-18th-century French Enlightenment thought raises some interesting questions concerning the relationship between religion, catholicism and Enlightenment, not least in the Irish context. While Hooke spent his entire career in France, he can be considered as part of an Irish Catholic Enlightenment as he taught large numbers of Irish seminarians and was widely read by English and Irish Catholics.¹⁰¹ His fellow Irishman and professor of theology in Paris, John Plunkett, appears to have held broadly similar opinions.¹⁰² Surely their students carried home at least something of the French Catholic Enlightenment picked up in class in Paris.¹⁰³ In fact, it may not be going too far to suggest that the political and social circumstances prevalent in Ireland at the time, which limited Catholics' access to land and excluded them from politics, actually encouraged them to embrace aspects of French rationalism if only as a means to articulate their criticism of the Irish protestant ascendancy. In this context, it is useful to recall that John Toland's rationalistic deism, which implicitly undermined confessionality in Ireland, questioned the assumptions that supported the enactment of penal legislation against Catholics and dissenters.¹⁰⁴ Hooke's view had similar potential. Indeed, the peculiar circumstances of Irish Catholics in the late 18th century provided especially fertile ground for the reception of aspects of the Enlightenment, especially those pertaining to legal equality. The critical, reforming impulse which had both indigenous and foreign stimuli, encouraged the radicalisation of Catholic demands in Ireland during the early 1790s. This not only opened the way to an alignment with protestant radicals, but also split the careful Catholic consensus which

98 *Ibid.*, pp 185-8. 99 *Ibid.*, pp 176-96. 100 *Ibid.*, p. 59. 101 *Ibid.*, pp 10-11. 102 *Ibid.*, p. 201, footnote 31. 103 On the importance of the geographical-cultural context to the Enlightenment see: Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (eds), *The Enlightenment in national context* (Cambridge, 1981). 104 *John Toland's Christianity not mysterious: text, associated works and critical essays* eds Philip McGuinness, Alan Harrison and Richard Kearney (Dublin, 1997); David Berman, 'The Irish counter-Enlightenment' in Richard Kearney (ed.), *The Irish mind: exploring intellectual traditions* (Dublin, 1985), pp 119-40.

had achieved limited reform from the 1770s.¹⁰⁵ It goes without saying that France-based Irish Catholic intellectuals dealt with the novel ideas of the 18th century within the context of *ancien régime* society, where change was usually understood as the reform of existing institutions. However, many politically excluded Catholics in Ireland received Enlightenment thought, not only as a spur to governmental reform, but also as an incentive to the dismantling of what they considered a corrupt administration and, ultimately, to the questioning of the link with England.¹⁰⁶

The fact that the Irish experience abroad was so closely interwoven with the fortunes of the Stuart dynasty (not least in the cases of Michael Moore and Luke Joseph Hooke) suggests the need for a more penetrating examination of the political outlook fostered by the Irish on the continent. The Irish abroad paid lip service to a monarchical government in exile and both jacobites and later subversive groups in Ireland, particularly the Defenders, shared a loyalty to the historical past which legitimised their political opinions. This was in sharp contrast to the self-consciously progressive and internationalist United Irishmen. The complex political ideology of late 18th-century Ireland, articulated for example by the militant Defenders, was a blend of French and Irish radicalism, proto-nationalism and agrarian discontent.¹⁰⁷ This suggests that the Enlightenment as experienced in Ireland was not exclusively the result of radical political organisations. Intellectuals like Luke Joseph Hooke were already assisting the spread of fresh ideas among Irish students from the mid-18th century. Establishment figures and ideas in France could take on a very different aspect once displaced to Ireland. For instance, Irish priests like Mogue Kearns, James O'Coigley and Michael Murphy were almost executed during the early French Revolution for their opposition to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Yet these three, in the teeth of episcopal opposition, became radical leaders in Ireland during the 1790s, involved in the militant United Irishmen and the 1798 rebellion.¹⁰⁸ The Irish Catholic Enlightenment, its relationship with the clerical and other Irish communities abroad and its interplay with the political and religious situation in Ireland, was a complex, fertile phenomenon, riddled with apparent contradictions.

105 Dáire Keogh, *'The French disease': The Catholic church and Irish radicalism, 1790-1800* (Dublin, 1993), pp 47-67. 106 See: Kevin Whelan, 'The republic in the village: The United Irishmen, the Enlightenment and popular culture' in *The tree of liberty: radicalism, catholicism and the construction of Irish identity 1760-1830* (Cork, 1996), pp 59-96, 59-61. 107 Thomas Bartlett (ed.), 'Select documents xxxviii: Defenders and Defenderism in 1795' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxvi, 95 (1985), pp 373-94; Liam Chambers, *Rebellion in Kildare 1790-1803* (Dublin, 1998), pp 33-44. 108 Keogh, *'The French disease'*, p. 32.

CONCLUSION

The sheer diversity of Irish intellectual contributions in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries is striking. This paper has been concerned with the thought of a number of clerical thinkers, writing on broadly religious themes and based in France. Even this brief sample of writers demonstrates that Irish Catholic intellectual activity not only survived the travails of the period under discussion, it actually flourished.¹⁰⁹ Irish clerical thinkers engaged with the fundamental intellectual and political developments of their time: the question of national identity in the face of exile, the rise of mechanistic science, the secularisation of politics, the challenges of jansenism and the Enlightenment. Their diversity and the importance of their impact suggest that a re-assessment of the history of ideas in Ireland under the *ancien régime* may be in order. Critical to this will be the investigation of how ideas with which Irish Catholic intellectuals engaged in France were introduced to Ireland and refined when applied to the Irish situation. The implications of the work of Irish scholars abroad for our understanding of 17th and 18th-century Ireland will be properly understood only when they are investigated in their specific contexts.¹¹⁰

109 Millet, 'Irish literature in Latin, 1550-1700', p. 585. 110 I would like to acknowledge my sincere thanks to Dr Thomas O'Connor for his assistance and advice while preparing this article. My research has benefited from the financial support provided by a Daniel O'Connell Postgraduate Fellowship awarded by NUI, Maynooth and a Government of Ireland Scholarship.