CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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BAYLE
Political Writings

Pierre Bayle was among the most important sceptical thinkers of the late seventeenth century. His work was an influence on the ideas of Hume, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire (who acclaimed it for its insight on toleration, and emulated its candour on such subjects as atheism, obscenity, and sexual conduct). Banned in France on first publication in 1697, Bayle's *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* became a bestseller and ran into many editions and translations. Sally L. Jenkinson's masterly new edition presents the reader with a coherent path through Bayle's monumental work (which ran to seven million words). This is the first volume in English to select political writings from Bayle's work and to present its author as a specifically political thinker. Sally L. Jenkinson's authoritative translation, careful selection of texts, and lucid introduction will be welcomed by scholars and students of the history of ideas, political theory, cultural history and French studies.

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CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE
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AN

Hiſtorical *and* Critical

DICTIONARY.

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MONSIEUR *BAYLE.*

Tranſlated into Engliſh, *with many* ADDITIONS *and* CORRECTIONS, *made by the Author him-ſelf, that are not in the* French *Editions.*

VOLUME *the* FIRST.

A——B.

LONDON:

Printed for *C. Harper, D. Brown, F. Tonſon, A.* and *F. Churchill, T. Horne, T. Goodwin, R. Knaplock, F. Taylor, A. Bell, B. Tooke, D. Midwinter, B. Lintott* and *W. Lewis.* MDCCX.

Bayle, *Historical and Critical Dictionary.* Title page of the first translation into English, 1710. (The engraving of Minerva is by Michael van der Gucht (1660–1725) from Antwerp, who settled in London in 1682 where he became known for anatomical drawings and as illustrator of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion in England*, 1702–4.)

BAYLE

Political Writings

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To the memory of Elisabeth Labrousse, 1914–2000

For her commitment to intellectual liberty, and for making
Bayle's ideas accessible to future generations.

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Acknowledgements

This selection of texts in part originates with Quentin Skinner's insight that Bayle's Dictionary should be read for its political theory. It has roots too in the doctoral thesis on Bayle's early political writing which I submitted to the University of Sheffield in 1975. That project was supported by the Morrell Studies in Toleration whose advisors included the late Sir Isaiah Berlin, and whose Director was Professor Bernard Crick. Earlier still, at the London School of Economics, I had been dazzled by the seminars on Logic and Scientific Method of Karl Popper and Imre Lakatos. So when I came to read Bayle's *Pensées diverses*, his *Critique générale*, and his *Commentaire philosophique*, I was able, thanks to such distinguished teaching, to perceive not just Bayle the reputed 'sceptic' but also the theorist of pluralism, equipped to support his convictions with an epistemology of conjecture and refutation.

No study of Bayle from a political perspective can ignore the debt that is owed to the recent work of Professors John Pocock, Quentin Skinner, and Richard Tuck. For their respective analyses of Renaissance humanism and Atlantic republicanism have recovered a framework which reveals many of the nuances to which Bayle responded. There are debts to be acknowledged too, both to Professor Patrick Riley and to Professor Jerome Schneewind: their interpretations of normative theory after Descartes and before Kant have elucidated a context in which Bayle as a moral thinker can find a place.

Throughout the continent of Europe and beyond, students of Bayle's ideas continue to build upon the historical and biographical

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Acknowledgements

A note on the translation

The text

The excerpts selected for the present anthology have been newly
translated. The text is based on the last complete French edition
(ed. Beuchot) (Paris, 1820–4), 16 vols. in octavo, of which there is
an easily accessible facsimile reproduction by Slatkine (Geneva,
1969). The earliest French editions, however, those of 1697 and
1702 in particular, carry non-textual messages which no translator
can ignore. Likewise, the English translation of 1710, set in the
same format, was a major event in English publishing. Its title page
read: *An Historical and Critical Dictionary by Monsieur Bayle, with
Many Additions and Corrections Made by the Author Himself that
are not in the French Editions*. Subsequent English translations were
published in 1734–8 in five volumes, in 1734–41 in ten volumes,
and were read on both sides of the Atlantic.

Layout and referencing

The huge in-folio volumes of the eighteenth-century editions,
whether of Rotterdam or London, carried visual information that is
lost in modern format. By taking advantage of their length, width,
and spacious margins, the printers could reinforce, with three font
sizes, Bayle's three-fold distinction between fact, comment, and evi-
dence. Accordingly, the framework of each article (referred to by
convention as 'the body of the text', abbreviated here in cross-
references to '*txt*') was outlined in the largest print. Footnotes

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A note on the translation

(referred to by convention as 'remarks') contained the editor's critical comments and appeared on the same page, set in a medium-sized print. These 'remarks', frequently essays in their own right, imparted extra impact through their two-column format as in a gazette. We follow Bayle in sometimes altering slightly the wording of the body of the text to which the remarks are referenced. Thirdly, the sources relied on by Bayle were set in fine print and were located in the side margins.

Beuchot's edition of 1820–4 abandoned the in-folio page and the three sizes of font, as well as the use of the side margins for bibliographic references. It retained the format in two columns, and the system of notation. These excerpts follow Beuchot apart from the two-column format. That is, the 'remarks' are indicated by uppercase letters in round brackets: (A), (B), (Z) etc. and follow the 'body of the text', and the sources by superscript lower-case characters. Letters a, b, . . . z etc. denote the sources relating to the 'body of the text', while numerals 1, 2 . . . 9 etc. denote the sources relating to the 'remarks'. So that the reader can easily consult Beuchot's edition, we retain Bayle's system of notation for sources, but before Bayle's letter or number we place the appropriate character and an 'equals' sign if necessary to generate an unbroken sequential order. To take 'Elizabeth' as an example, Bayle's last lettered footnote in the body of the text of that article, note h, appears here as 'g=h', while Bayle's first numbered footnote to the remarks appears as '1= 8'. This means that our footnotes 'g' and '1' are footnotes 'h' and '8' in Bayle's original text, omissions in text and remarks having led to the loss of the footnotes attached thereto. Our sequence for notes and remarks omits 'j', following Bayle's preference. Omission of complete remarks is shown thus: '[Remarks (A)–(H) omitted.]'. Starred footnotes appear among the footnote sequences from time to time. Sometimes they represent Bayle's own afterthoughts, sometimes they indicate the comments of the editors of other editions, and when this is so, we point this out by an observation within square brackets. We have not attempted to verify all Bayle's references, nor identify all his sources. Comments added to this anthology are contained within square brackets, mainly in the headnotes that introduce each article; elsewhere (occasionally) to explain references. All footnotes to the texts, therefore, are Bayle's, unless expressly indicated otherwise.

A note on the translation

Cuts within the text

Given that the Dictionary consists of some seven million words, and that even many 'remarks' run to several thousand, making cuts within an article could not be avoided. A strategy was to omit a whole 'remark' in order to leave as intact as possible the 'remarks' retained. Omitted 'remarks' and footnotes remain referenced in the 'body of the text' in square brackets, and can be consulted in the complete editions. Cuts are indicated by '. . .', whether within the 'body of the text' or within a 'remark'.

Translation from French

Many concepts in political thought pose pitfalls in translation. '*La politique*', for example, is more accurately translated as 'policy' than as 'politics', and this was as true in Bayle's day as in the present though, as the articles 'David' and 'Elizabeth' show, the word 'state-craft' can, on occasions, be even better. Additionally, it was requisite to consider context and Bayle's thought as a whole when deciding whether to render '*le mal*' as 'harm', or 'pain', or 'evil', or in some other way. Faced with such hazards, who would dare to omit Bayle's own caveat when he says in his 'Project' that he is certain that he will make 'only too many . . . mistakes', and that his critics will 'gratify him' if 'they correct and enlighten' him?

Translation from Latin

Bayle supposed that he had no need to translate into the vernacular many of his Latin quotations. No such assumption can be made today. Where a long passage is involved we have supplied the first few words of the Latin to indicate the language of the original, followed by the English rendering in brackets. All Latin quotations, excepting one, have been especially translated for this compilation. The exception, a passage from Augustine, occurs in the article 'Juno', Remark (AA), n. 12=168. In this case the translation, by R. W. Dyson, is reproduced from Augustine, *The City of God against the Pagans* (Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 258–9).

Abbreviations

For further details, see the Note on the Translation, the Biblio-
graphy and the headnotes to the selections in this compilation.

Dic I–XVI	Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (Paris, 1820–4, based on original edns of 1697 and 1702), 16 vols.
Proj	Bayle, *Project for a Critical Dictionary dedicated to M. du Rondel, professor of* belles lettres *at Maestricht* (1692)

Articles from Bayle's Dictionary in this compilation:

Ald	'Sainte-Aldegonde'
Bod	'Bodin'
Brut	'Brutus'
Clar	'Clarifications'
Clar I	'First Clarification: On Atheists'
Clar IV	'Fourth Clarification: On Obscenities'
David	'David'
Eliz	'Elizabeth'
Greg	'Gregory I'
Hob	'Hobbes'
Hôp	'de l'Hôpital'
Hot	'Hotman'
Jap	'Japan'
Juno	'Juno'
Loy	'Loyola'
Mach	'Machiavelli'
Mâcon	'Mâcon'

List of abbreviations

Mar	'Mariana'
Nav	'Navarre, Marguerite, reine de'
Nic	'Nicole'
Ovid	'Ovid'
Sainc	'Sainctes'
Soc	'Socinus' (*F*, 'Faustus'; *M*, 'Marianus')
Syn	'Synergistes'
Xen	'Xenophanes'

Other works by Bayle:

OD I–V	Bayle, *Œuvres diverses*, ed. Labrousse (1964–82) [1727–31], 5 vols.
APD	*Additions aux Pensées diverses sur les comètes* (*OD* III, pp. 161–86)
Avis	*Avis important aux réfugiez* (1690) (*OD* II, pp. 578–633)
Com Phil	*Commentaire philosophique* (1686) (*OD* II, pp. 357–496)
CPD	*Continuation des Pensées diverses sur la comète* (1704) (*OD* III, pp. 187–417)
Cr Gén	*Critique générale de l'Histoire du Calvinisme de M. Maimbourg* (1682) (*OD* II, pp. 1–160)
FTC	*Ce que c'est que la France Toute Catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand* (1686) (*OD* II, pp. 336–54)
NLHC	*Nouvelles lettres de l'auteur de la Critique générale de l'histoire du Calvinisme* (1685) (*OD* II, pp. 161–335)
NRL	*Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (1684–7) (*OD* I, pp. 1–760)
PD	*Pensées diverses sur la comète* (1681) (*OD* III, pp. 1–160)
RNC	*Réponse d'un nouveau converti* (1688) (*OD* II, pp. 561–75)
Sys Abr	*Système abrégé de philosophie* (*c.* 1679) (*OD* IV, pp. 200–520)

Introduction: a defence of justice and freedom

> Diversity in religion has its inconveniences . . . but, on the
> other hand, it prevents the development of corruption and
> obliges religions to treat one another with respect.
>
> 'Juno', Remark (AA)

What is the reputation of Pierre Bayle, and why should his ideas be
restored to the canon of political thought? For his *Dictionnaire histo-
rique et critique*, first published in 1697, was for nearly two centuries
rarely out of print. As one man's encyclopaedia of error the Diction-
ary, even at first glance, seemed remarkable. Its most celebrated
feature, however, was the extended footnote where the author elab-
orated his criticisms of current scholarship. Bayle's admirers in the
age of the Enlightenment were apt to distil the essence of these
comments into just two words: tolerance and scepticism. They were
notions with which Bayle's name became synonymous, even though
his concerns went deeper than his posthumous admirers supposed.
For in addition to tolerance and scepticism Bayle's Dictionary pro-
moted justice as the end of government, and critical freedom as its
prerequisite.

The texts in this collection have been selected to highlight the
Dictionary's political ideas. Recent scholarship has in any case
begun to redraw the links between Bayle's historical criticism and
his convictions as a Huguenot who opposed persecution. Bayle's
biographer, Elisabeth Labrousse, uncovers in his *œuvre* as a whole
an engagement with a range of specifically political themes: for

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Introduction

example, *raison d'état*, absolutism, the philosophy of history, toler-
ance both ecclesiastical and civil, and liberty of conscience
(Labrousse (1963–4), vol. II, pp. 449–591). Bayle sought also,
through natural psychology, to explain political behaviour and
especially the causes of intolerance. Reasoned argument, he
believed, was among humanity's achievements, but it is noteworthy
that, on the eve of the Enlightenment, Bayle warned persistently of
reason's limitations. For though humanity has the capacity to make
improvements, it has equally the capacity to abuse them.[1] The way
is open, then, to re-interpret Bayle as analyst of both political
thought and conduct – who responded to the great thinkers of early
modernity such as Machiavelli, Bodin, and Hobbes – and as protag-
onist, before his time, of a political theory of diversity.

Bayle's Dictionary was far from eclipsed by the rivals it inspired.
During the next two centuries it saw many re-impressions in
French as well as translations into English and German and new
editions.[2] It was read throughout Europe by successive generations
alongside both the great *Encyclopédie* (1751–72) of Diderot and
D'Alembert, and Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764), and
Bayle became, posthumously, an honorary figure of the Enlighten-
ment. If great thinkers – for example Hume, Voltaire, or John
Stuart Mill – reveal evident debts to Bayle's ideas, there were many
others, for example Rousseau, Jefferson, Paine, Kant, Bentham,
Hegel, Feuerbach or Marx, who absorbed his ideas selectively, or
who turned to the Dictionary's sources.[3]

So what in fact did posterity value in Bayle's Dictionary? Scepti-
cism and toleration undoubtedly, but also rigour in criticism,
sources of new and recovered learning, and careful bibliographic
notation. Educators could recommend the Dictionary because it
exemplified these skills, and because it introduced useful ways of
distinguishing between what was true, false or speculative. In
addition, the Dictionary extended to the middle classes the idea of
openness about questions which occur naturally to the young: about
God, creation, Satan, atheism, generation, sex, violence, tyranny
or insurrection. Bayle himself was convinced that free discussion

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[1] See *Loy* (T); *Soc F* (A), (I), (L); *Xen* (E); *Brut*.
[2] For the Dictionary's reception see Rétat (1971); Labrousse (1983), p. 90; Popkin
(ed.) (1991), pp. viii–x.
[3] *Ibid.*

provided a better antidote than censorship to every sort of problem whether factual or moral. In short, the *Dictionnaire* reassured an age eager for self-improvement that no topic need be thought too sacred, or too embarrassing, for serious discussion.

Today's historians of scepticism recognise that Bayle's Dictionary includes important articles on Pyrrhonism, and the philosophy of antiquity called 'sceptical'.[4] However, the present collection adds to that picture by showing that Bayle's approach to history, politics, and human conduct relies on a method of factual refutation. His critique of intolerance, these pieces show, was based not only upon 'sceptical' objections to dogmatic teaching, but also upon a public rhetoric in which empirical evidence plays a part. For Bayle maintains (*Proj*:§IX) that if some types of conjecture are too obscure for certainty, others are quite precise enough to be tested for their truth. A student of scientific method can see resemblances between this approach and that of Karl Popper.[5] From these texts we can ascertain that Bayle indeed held, as do today's theorists of conjecture and refutation, that a scientist of the natural world can get nearer to the truth by testing received ideas, and by discarding as fallacies those that are negated by sound evidence. Using this approach, Bayle rejected the *politique's* limits upon toleration, showing that freedom might safely be extended. His alternative was the plural society, committed to a diversity of schools and sects and, as in modern democracy, to imposing no religious tests upon citizens (*Greg* (G); *Com Phil*, p. 364). Bayle of course supported the existing practice of limited toleration for that was always better than the cruelty of persecution (see *Sainc* (F); *Soc* (A), (F)), but his long-term preference was for complete freedom. For Bayle questioned whether a case could ever be made, in logic, or in justice, or from Christ's example, for rewarding or penalising a citizen for refusing to believe in one metaphysical tenet rather than another (*Greg* (E); *Soc F* (L)).

Education, life and times

Bayle was born in 1647, the second son of Jean Bayle, a Calvinist minister who, in the era of Toleration, served the rural community of Le

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[4] Pyrrho (*c.* 365–270 BC). The Pyrrhonian was one associated with the philosophic position that no indubitably true knowledge was possible. See 'Pyrrho' in Popkin (ed.) (1991), pp. 149–209. Cf. *Xen* (L).

[5] See Karl R. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963).

Education, life and times

Carla in southern France. Though poor, Jean Bayle was able to marry and to raise his three children in secure, even idyllic, surroundings. Jacob, his eldest son, was destined for the Calvinist ministry, and Pierre was expected to follow the same path (Labrousse (1963–4), vol. I, p. 30). Yet Bayle, like his contemporary John Locke (Cranston (1957), p. 97), side-stepped such a career. At home, he read, along with the Bible, the classics of humanism and scepticism he found in his father's small library (Labrousse (1963–4), vol. I, pp. 19, 43). Since the family could afford to send away only one son at a time, his adolescent education was probably neglected. At last, in 1666, Bayle attended the Huguenot college at Puylaurens, and then, in 1669, the Catholic Academy at Toulouse as an external student (*ibid.*, pp. 50–74). For a brief period between 1669 and 1670 he was a convert to Catholicism, but he returned to Calvinism and was dispatched by his family to the Protestant Academy of Geneva. Had he remained in France he would have incurred penalties as a Huguenot convert who had rescinded his conversion. In Geneva, Bayle continued to study philosophy and theology, and after various engagements as a tutor in Protestant households he completed his thesis and obtained a post in 1675 as Professor of Philosophy at the Huguenot Academy of Sedan where he remained until 1681 (*ibid.*, pp. 131–67).

Anticipating the suppression of the Sedan Academy, Bayle, like his colleagues, looked for employment outside France. He accepted an invitation from the city fathers of Rotterdam to assume the Chair of History and Philosophy at their new Ecole Illustre. Then, poised to take advantage of Dutch literary freedom, he quickly made a reputation in the 1680s as a critic of ideas, who had a rare additional gift for prolific journalism (*ibid.*, pp. 168–200). The trauma of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was compounded for Bayle by the death of his brother. For Jacob Bayle, who by then had taken over his father's role as pastor at Le Carla, stayed with his flock as long as he might legally do so. He was, however, arbitrarily imprisoned by the authorities in consequence of Pierre's writings and died soon after in the foul prison conditions (*ibid.*, pp. 198–200). In the context of this tragedy and family involvement with the troubles of the nation Bayle used his talent to become, in addition to the teacher of science, a pamphleteer in exile, and distinguished author of works of criticism.

Whether Bayle intended his Dictionary from the beginning to be a vehicle for his political ideas, or whether it merely became so as he

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worked on it, is uncertain (see *Proj*). The themes of his writing career
before the Dictionary, however, in both natural philosophy and in
critical history, indicate the depth of his commitment to intellectual
freedom.[6] Why, otherwise, after an intense decade between 1680 and
1690 of writing essays, reviews and pamphlets against Louis XIV's
suppression of toleration for the Huguenots, would he have taken on
so demanding a project? His first major publication, *Pensées diverses
sur la comète* (1681), was followed in 1682 by a critique of Louis
Maimbourg's hostile history of Calvinism. Next, Bayle founded and
edited the review of books, the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*
(1684–7). His third major work was the *Commentaire philosophique*
(1686), which was translated into English in 1708, and reissued
posthumously in French with the subtitle: *Traité de la tolérance uni-
verselle* (1713). In 1693, a prolonged quarrel with the Protestant theo-
logian Pierre Jurieu, who had formerly been his patron, led to the loss
of his post (but not his right to teach) at Rotterdam's Ecole Illustre.
But by then, in 1692, Bayle had completed his proposal to undertake
the *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* for the publisher Leers. By
devoting all his time to it he was able to complete two volumes by
November 1696 (Labrousse (1963–4), vol. I, p. 183), which became
the first edition of 1697 leading to a substantially augmented second
edition in four volumes in 1702.

Bayle confessed to many hesitations before embarking on the Dic-
tionary, for when he defended the project, he insisted that it was not
'out of inclination' but 'from choice' that he dealt 'in quibbles', and
that he 'ought to be thanked for it, since it is a way of sacrificing one-
self to the good of one's neighbour' (*Proj*:§ VII). And was not his depar-
ture from 'the path to glory' in order to bring others 'to a factual exac-
titude' to be thought of as 'a great sacrifice' (*ibid.*)? It turned out that
by restating in a more popular medium certain themes presented in
earlier essays and reviews, he attracted a wider audience and ensured
a more prolonged influence, especially for his advocacy of intellectual
freedom, and rigour in historical criticism.[7]

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[6] An early work by Bayle (*c.* 1679) was *Dissertation . . . sur l'essence du corps*, a
defence of Cartesian philosophy on the nature of substance, against the tradition-
alists who accused the Cartesians of heresy (*OD* IV, pp. 109–32).

[7] See Rétat (1971), pp. 475–7; there were ten posthumous editions in French,
including those of Rotterdam (1740), Leipzig (1801–4) and Paris (1820–4).
English translations were published in 1710, 1734–8, 1734–40, and 1826.

Education, life and times

The Renaissance and Reformation do not, on their own, account for Bayle's defence of a politics of 'conciliation and decency' (*Syn* (C)). As a Huguenot and a layman, he was a direct heir to the *politiques* and moderate minds of the sixteenth century who worked for peace and supported the Edict of Nantes. For, as Bayle notes in his article 'Mâcon', the reign of 'tolerance' under 'the Edicts' had proved that it was possible for 'the people of France of different religions' to live in 'fraternity' (Remark (C)). Though Calvinism is often associated with puritan rigidity, or with the rise of the commercial spirit, it was not at all the case in France. (See Labrousse (1996c), p. 71.) Official toleration reflected and reinforced the common culture existing among France's professional classes of both religions: among for example the moderate jurists, the *literati*, and the members of the Third Estate. The education of a Calvinist in such a climate could be cultivated and egalitarian without falling into puritanism (Labrousse (1963–4), vol. 1, pp. 14–17). Renaissance and Reformation had blended the study of the Scriptures with the study of the classics: the culture reflected the works of Cicero, Tacitus, and their modern disciple, Montaigne (*ibid.*, p. 55). Calvinists in France, therefore, not unlike certain Jansenist Catholics, could empathise readily with the Christians of the first three centuries and with the Stoics of the same era. The Christianity of those times had been a 'benign, gentle and patient religion', Bayle observed, and this contrasted sharply with the aberrant doctrine 'which was preached . . . in the sixteenth century' and which had been a 'bloody and murderous religion' (*Jap* (E)). It was likely that 'some men without religion' were more motivated 'to lead a decent, moral life by their constitution, in conjunction with the love of praise and the fear of disgrace' than were 'some others by the instinct of conscience' (*Clar* I:§III). In his Fourth Clarification, 'On Obscenities', Bayle remarked that 'whatever one's sex', one would need to have lived 'only four or five years' to know by hearsay 'countless rude things'; for 'in countries where jealousy is not tyrannical' there is an innocent freedom, and for children 'games, conversations, amusing parties, festivals and country outings are almost daily fare' (*Clar* IV, p. 338 below).

It seems that the regime of official toleration, though limited, permitted Bayle to draw insight from a scientific education through the two religious cultures of his community (Labrousse (1963–4),

vol. 1, p. 62). For it was through a Jesuit at Toulouse (*ibid.*, pp. 74, 95–6) that Bayle first encountered a critical account of the heliocentric cosmology of Copernicus and Galileo. The approach was to regard the new teaching less as new certainty that must replace a fallacious dogma, and more as a better tested replacement for the now refuted theory of the Scholastics. When in 1675 Bayle himself came to lecture on natural philosophy,[8] he indicated in his courses that new discoveries in science, like the ideas they replaced, were not necessarily indubitably true but must always remain theories that better explained 'the apparent facts' (*Syn* (C), n. 10=23).

If intellectuals in France disagreed passionately with their colleagues on matters of science, psychology and theology, through criticism and through sceptical epistemology they found an important way of discussing their disagreements.[9] Descartes's method in particular attracted critical minds from both confessions and in all disciplines, and Bayle thought he could use Descartes's well-known account of the interplay between feelings, body and brain to explain the prejudices of certain historians.[10] Why, for example, do scholars sometimes feel convinced of the truth of false propositions without further evidence, when at other times they dismiss true propositions without a second thought? Education, he surmised, might be a factor. For how far did intellectuals in fields other than physics deliberately foster critical learning by entertaining a proposition as a conjecture, or withhold judgement as to its truth, falsity or indeterminacy, until the evidence has been assessed (*Nic* (C))? Forbearance from judgement, though appropriate in the sphere of philosophic investigation, was unsuitable for everyday decision-making which is, quite properly, 'inclined to yield to the evidence of inward feeling' (*Soc F* (I)). It was appropriate 'in matters of morals', Bayle believed, whatever one's confession, to 'be satisfied with good sense' (*Loy* (T)).

In social life, Bayle observed, individuals are disposed to praise virtue and condemn vice even though few are able to live wholly by their own standards (*Juno* (Z), (BB); *Xen* (H), (K)). By analogy,

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[8] See *Sys Abr*.
[9] On Cartesian thought, see Popkin (1979), pp. 110, 129; in the context of political theory see Keohane (1980); Tuck (1993).
[10] As e.g. in Descartes's *Discours de la méthode* (1637); and *Les Passions de l'âme* (1649).

Education, life and times

a mature civil society would realise that the courts of conscience (*tribunaux de la conscience*) might condemn matters which, for reasons of prudent government (*sage gouvernement*),[11] should not, in courts of law, be punished with the same rigour.[12] Excessive zeal for making others virtuous contributed to public harm, whereas a civil regime which created the conditions of orderly diversity could further the general good (*Hôp txt*, (D), (E), (S)). Man seemed in nature to be a paradox, for though he was well intentioned, he seemed unwittingly to be 'so injurious and so destructive that if all other animals did as much in proportion, the earth would not be able to furnish them with sufficient sustenance' (*Ovid* (G)). Yet a remedy of a sort was available. For human kind, disposed to be troubled by its own conduct, seeks to ameliorate its passions and so mitigate their worst consequences.

Since human beings pursue both perfection and destructiveness to escape their disquiet, they can hardly avoid, Bayle supposes, inflicting their pathologies upon the world and upon one another (*Juno txt*, (Z), (BB); *Xen* (H)). Erudition provides little protection against objectionable behaviour, and biography teaches that scholars and theologians prove no more immune to dangerous passions than certain princes.[13] Even learned miscreants may well incite violence to alleviate their interior discomfort: hence their sermons of hatred, their vindictive essays, their biased histories, their justifications of religiously motivated assassination, and support for cruel revenge in word and deed.[14]

It is possible, Bayle concedes, to conclude that the world is in the grip of Lucifer and irredeemable without supernatural assistance (*Xen* (E)). Yet a metaphysics of conjecture permits scholars to be aware that there are many other beliefs and theories about creation, and about the nature of mind, morals and society, which are equally consonant with the same facts (*Syn* (C)). One pre-Christian theory of creation, which Bayle brings before a general public through the

[11] These expressions are from *Dic*, article 'Ermite', Remark (I), para. 1 (not in this compilation). On the natural passions in general, see *David*, *Jap*, *Juno*, *Ovid*, *Xen*, *Ath*.

[12] On political prudence and *raison d'état* in general, see *Bod* (Q); *Brut* (C); *Eliz* (F), (H), (I); *Hôp txt*, (D); *Mach*.

[13] See *David txt*, (E), (G), (H), (I), (M); *Greg txt*, (E).

[14] See *David txt*, (D), (E), (H), (I); *Greg txt*, (E):§2; *Sainc txt*, (D), (E), (F); *Syn* (B), (C); *Xen* (E), (F).

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Dictionary, is the notion of Chaos (*Ovid* (G):§III). For Ovid's famous poem had mythologised the a-theism of the Epicureans. Their school had taught that the cosmos was a self-created wilderness, but perhaps susceptible to being shaped by humanity. Bayle's method is to describe these theories without endorsing them. It seemed evident, as he asserts in the article 'Xenophanes', that man 'by his nature' (*Xen* (E)), is 'prone to do harm (*au mal*)'. Yet when he encounters the theologian's picture of a humankind motivated by sin (which the age attributed to Augustine), or the cynical historian's picture of self-interest (which the age attributed to Guicciardini and Hobbes), Bayle counters with Montaigne's more amiable view that 'the greatest number of men' were on balance only 'moderately reprehensible' (*Hob* (E)), and therefore able and willing to limit the worst abuses.

The political ideas which Bayle opposed

To understand any political writer, it is important to place their thought in its context. In Bayle's case this is to show how he criticised the ideas and institutions of early modernity which had replaced those of the Middle Ages. Though a supporter of a Europe of sovereign states, Bayle went further in his support of tolerance and diversity within these states than did contemporaries, such as Locke, whose political thought is better known to posterity. Despite supporting the post-Reformation alternative to former Catholic Christendom, Bayle objected to that part of the doctrine which required each sovereign authority to uphold an official religion. For the age which followed the era of the Wars of Religion did not renounce this institution. Even the century's most enlightened laymen – Bodin, Grotius, Justus Lipsius, Hobbes or Leibniz for example – thought the issue to be not whether there should be an official church to which all citizens should belong, but which articles of faith to adopt, which sects to tolerate, and what methods to use to enforce conformity. On these subjects, intellectual debate in Louis XIV's France differed little from that which smouldered throughout Europe as a whole. After the devastation of civil war it was reluctantly agreed that there could be a majority and a minority church. In direct consequence four distinct political tendencies had emerged, which we call here Ultramontanism, Gallicanism, Hu-

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guenotism, and *politique* realism. The following paragraphs will say something about the ideas of each tendency in order to show where Bayle stood, and why he sought to transcend them all.

Apologists in the 1680s, despite a changing social reality, based their respective positions on their perceptions of the purpose of the toleration forged in the previous century (see Skinner (1978), vol. II, pp. 239–84). The facts were that after some forty years of turbulence lasting from 1559 to 1598, Henry IV had come to preside over a regime supported by certain moderate Catholics on the one hand and the Huguenot party on the other (see *Hot txt*). Together these politicians – or *politiques* – sustained the Edict of Nantes of 1598: the constitutional settlement intended to consolidate 'justice and reason' (*Hôp txt*), and provide protection for the Calvinist minority (Labrousse (1990), p.138). In the 1680s, therefore, in the face of the Revocation of that Edict, supporters and opponents of this policy turned to the past to guide them through the new uncertainties. In favour of the reactionary policy was a zealous Catholic party led by the regime's administrators and its Catholic ecclesiastics. Opposing it were the Huguenots, now isolated and led mainly by their pastors (*ibid.*, pp. 77–80). For since 1629 these Huguenot communities had been deprived of their armed nobility, and after 1660 they had been depleted, through emigration or conversion, of their adherents in the civil professions. Despite toleration, none of the four tendencies asked whether religious unity or religious diversity was the more desirable end. Seemingly, the lesson of the Wars of Religion was that a nation divided in religion was a prey to disorder. Fearing a return of bloodshed, *politiques* everywhere, therefore, lent their support to the doctrine of *cuius regio eius religio* which said that prince and people should adopt an official religion and conform to it. Yet the doctrine recognised too that there could be exemption from conformity to official worship, and in particular for Christians who belonged to the confessions of Catholicism, Lutheranism, or Calvinism. Accordingly as early as the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 and the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, Europe recognised limited toleration for approved minorities if their devotions were conducted in private. Compassionate minds recognised too that sectarians from whom toleration was withdrawn should always be permitted to emigrate peacefully with their possessions. A facet of political life, therefore, which Bayle alone seems to have regarded as a paradox,

was that the diplomats, *politiques*, and *esprits forts* of the age could approve of toleration for a minority, while imposing civil disqualification, accompanied by financial inducements, to encourage the intransigent to unite with the majority.

We can return now to the four great tendencies in France in order to show why Bayle contested them all, and where, in these texts, to find the detail of his argument.

Ultramontanism: Ultramontane theologians continued to teach their seminarians the traditional theory of a former Catholic Christendom although the elites of the post-Reformation state were strongly opposed to it. Before the Reformation, Christian divines had asserted that there were two balanced authorities in Christendom, that of the *regnum*, which kept order, and that of the *sacerdotium* or priesthood, whose final authority was the Pope, which made supposedly inspired decisions for all Christendom, civil rulers included, concerning faith and morals (*Loy* (R); *Mar* (G)). During the Wars of Religion in France, the Catholic League, led by the ambitious House of Guise and its armed aristocratic supporters, rose to support the Ultramontane ecclesiastics. They pledged themselves to extirpate, in the name of the Pope, all Reformed opinion, and in particular that of Calvin, which the centrist monarchy was inclined to tolerate but which the church declared to be heresy. However, the House of Guise was finally subjugated militarily, and after the Edict of Nantes of 1598 the Catholic League pursued its policies more covertly. That is, ecclesiastics of the traditional religion solicited legislation that would bring all religious worship within the single official church (*Hôp* (D), (E), (F)).

Bayle seems to have judged that Ultramontane Catholicism by the turn of the century was no longer the main threat to his community. For an equally sinister force, namely Catholic sovereign extremism – allegedly popular, and a reverse image of Protestant popular sovereignty – posed the real danger to the tradition of the Edict of Nantes (see *Loy*, *Mar*). Power-seekers, he believed, were likely in every age to abuse religion to suppress their rivals and to further their ambitions. Yet, just as Catholic propaganda incited fear of unconverted Huguenots, so Protestant propaganda, in particular in the gazettes of Amsterdam (*Loy* (R)), incited public fear of Popery and Catholic tyranny (*Mar* (H)). History affords examples everywhere, Bayle noted, 'of kings deposed at the instigation, or

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with the approbation, of the clergy' (*Loy* (S)). Injustice to the inno-
cent was the likely result, he concluded, both from religious fanati-
cism and whenever a Christian community with 'power over others'
(*ibid.*) sought to use that power to further their ambitions.

Gallicanism: France had not broken with Rome at the Refor-
mation but the civil authority had more or less brought the Gallican
church under its control. Its success depended, in part, on allowing
Catholic ecclesiastics to hope that in time it would re-integrate the
Calvinists into the one official religion. Laymen, on the other hand,
remained wary of ecclesiastical power. The Third Estate argued,
like Hobbes, that though unity in religion was best politically for
the nation, the unified church must be firmly in the hands of the
civil sovereign (*Hôp* (H)). Bayle, as a layman, adroitly uses his arti-
cle on the founder of the Jesuits, Loyola, to make the significant
point that when the French Third Estate had proposed in 1615 that
the sovereign's authority was derived from neither aristocracy, nor
clergy, nor people, but from God (*Loy* (R)), they postulated no
theory of the king's divine right – although Ultramontane apologists
interpreted it in that way to discredit them (cf. *Sainc* (E)). Rather,
they implied defiantly that no allegiance to Pope or priest was owed
by any citizen of the French sovereign nation (*Loy* (R)).

The **Huguenots**, continuing to suppose that their liberty of
worship would always be protected, supported the crown. Further-
more, Huguenots no less than Catholics supposed that forced con-
version, in the manner of the Spanish Inquisition, was alien to the
French idea of a civilised nation. Nevertheless, from 1660, the year
in which Louis XIV began his period of personal rule, they were
increasingly made to choose between service to their country and
loyalty to their religion. By the 1680s there existed many former
Calvinists – known as *nouveaux convertis* – who had joined the
official religion to avoid losing a livelihood, but who hoped that the
new compulsory conformity would, under Louis XIV's successor,
be reversed.

Politiques: Onto this web of religious and civil argument was
grafted the pragmatic realism of the *politiques*. The word had orig-
inally described the movement of the moderates, both Catholic and
Huguenot, loyal to the intentions of Michel de l'Hôpital, Chancellor
of France from 1560 to 1568. Their school promoted the new idea
of government that endorsed civil tolerance, and thereby prepared

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the ground for Henry IV's Edict of Nantes and its reign of eighty-seven years. In Bayle's judgement, the better aspects of this movement, which had once united sovereign impartiality with religious toleration, deserved to be reinstated, since de l'Hôpital, Henry IV and their supporters among moderates and *politiques* had not only brought peace with justice, but had created a *corps* of civil jurists to implement the new arrangements (*Hôp* (L), (P), (S)). Legitimate authority for de l'Hôpital's *politiques* resided therefore neither in Pope, nor church, nor nobility nor even people. It lay rather in the will of a nation's public spirited leaders and in their commitment to a polity, secured against civil war, that could deliver a system of justice. For these statesmen, God, the sovereign, or the public good, were equally apt metaphors for a just society pioneering an experiment in governing a divided society. Yet after Henry IV's assassination in 1610, the word *politique* increasingly came to evoke the statecraft of Richelieu and Mazarin, for whom all instruments were valid – civil religion, toleration, or ecumenical negotiation – if they ensured the safety of the state as they perceived it (*Eliz* (H), (I); *Mach* (E)).

When he tried to explain the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Bayle concluded that it was motivated as much by a recovery of the supposed prudential case for religious unity, as by absolutism or religious zeal (see *FTC*). Many intellectuals, as their writings showed, were religiously indifferent, but believed – like the humanist Justus Lipsius – that diversity in religion was always prejudicial to security (see *CPD*, pp. 189–90). In consequence, with the end of the Dutch War in 1679, and convinced that there was a political case for eliminating the Huguenot communities, they debated only about methods and timing. It followed – so Bayle judged – that when his co-religionists protested only about what they called the theocracy and the absolutism of Louis XIV, they did so without having grasped the true cause of their persecution. The suppression of Calvinism in France was celebrated by the Gallican regime as a commendable consolidation of the nation's political unity, even though it was seen as a catastrophe in the eyes of Protestant Europe.

Was Bayle correct to suspect that the persecution of the Huguenots was driven by the *politique* conception of the general good supported by a Gallican majority church? The facts suggest that for the lay administrator, at least, the policy was intended not to extir-

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pate a heresy, but to integrate a minority. Long before the Revo-cation, the regime had passed legislation to reward those who con-formed (Labrousse (1990), pp. 153–63). Later, it suppressed Huguenot academies and schools including the academy where Bayle gained a livelihood. After the Revocation it was able legally to demolish temples, harass householders with dragoons, invalidate marriages, expel pastors, and remove children from parents. Undoubtedly the Huguenots had been betrayed, for, by the terms of the Peace of Alès in 1629, they had given up their right to bear arms in return for the civil authority's protection of their liberty of worship (Labrousse (1983), p. 9). Yet most Protestants opposed the proliferation of sects (*Sainc* (F)), feeling at heart that unity of religion was the ideal to be sought. They supposed that the best arrangement would be to live in a Calvinist France which upheld the true religion (as they understood it) even if a second-best arrangement was to live under a Gallican regime which accorded them toleration. Calvinists valued in particular the simplicity and egalitarianism of their reformed religion. They prized its absence of hierarchy, its voluntarism, and its commitment to private judge-ment, as well as its network of self-governing congregations and synods; and they resisted those who attempted to lead or lure them into union with the Gallican church. Moreover, given that they no longer bore arms, Huguenots supposed that no opponent would dishonestly portray them as a fifth column. Memories of resistance and heroic self-defence against massacre during the sixteenth cen-tury were indeed a part of Huguenot mythology[15] but they had no reality at the end of the seventeenth century. Huguenots lived in dispersed communities loyal to the crown supposing, but wrongly, that their protection was assured (Labrousse (1990), p. 96).

Despite Huguenot commitment to non-violence, Gallican apolo-gists always emphasised that their sect, historically, had a tradition of armed resistance (*Hôp* (F)). Maimbourg in particular, drawing selectively on documents from the French Civil Wars, sought to show that the mere presence in France of self-governing, self-supporting, communities was a threat to civil order. Accordingly Bayle, in his *Critique générale* (1682) of Maimbourg's *Histoire du*

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[15] For resistance theory, Catholic and Protestant, see *Loy*; *Mar*; *Bod* (Q); *Hôp* (F); *Hot txt*, (E); *Mâcon txt*, (C). Cf. Salmon (1991); Skinner (1978), vol. II, ch.7, ch.8.

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Calvinisme, explored the historiography of this polemic to show the falsity of the accusation (see *Cr Gén* and *NLHC*). He even praised King James II of England, seeing a Catholic prince on the throne of a Protestant country as a mirror image of Henry IV's earlier role as a Huguenot prince in a Catholic country (*NRL*, pp. 293–4). As events turned out, the English Protestants did reject their Catholic king (*Eliz* (I)). Moreover, after the replacement of James II by William and Mary in 1688, certain Huguenots in exile – including Bayle's colleague Pierre Jurieu – began to 'prophesy' that Huguenots in France would rise in revolt and that William's Protestant army would march to Paris in their support.[16] Bayle, appalled by such imprudence (given the possibility of reprisals), wrote harsh declamations against such incitements to violence, especially those that posed as religious prophecy. To end the hostilities of the 1690s between William III and Louis XIV Bayle and his circle of moderates supported a negotiated peace between their adopted and their native countries (see *RNC* and *Avis*) and showed, in their private correspondence, that they were encouraged by England's revolution and Protestantism's triumph, hoping that a 'prompt restoration of the Edict of Nantes' (*OD* IV, p. 633) would be a consequence. Bayle's admiration for republican heroism in more auspicious circumstances may be inferred from his historical writings.[17] The Huguenot Francis Hotman had written his *Franco-Gallia*, Bayle noted, 'to show that the French monarchy' was not what it was thought to be, and that 'of right, the people are its true sovereigns' (*Hot* (H)). In the same vein he praised the Dutch nobleman and patriot who, in 1581, had dedicated both pen and diplomacy to 'the cause of liberty' to be free from 'the Spanish tyranny' and 'the yoke of the Inquisition' (*Ald txt*).

Bayle's modern reputation, as an astute interpreter of Machiavellian realism (*Mach* (E)) who was fascinated with the moral paradox of *raison d'état* (Labrousse (1963–4), vol. II, pp. 497–519), should be enhanced by today's revival of interest in the connection between *politique* ideas and Atlantic republicanism. For the movement which so engaged Bayle has been reassessed in recent years also, and for

[16] See Jurieu (*c.* 1689); cf. Labrousse (1983), pp. 36–9.
[17] See *Brut txt*; *Mach txt*, (E); *Hot txt*.