

## UTILITARIANISM IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

This is the first book-length study of one of the most influential traditions in eighteenth-century Anglophone moral and political thought, 'theological utilitarianism'. Niall O'Flaherty charts its development from its formulation by Anglican disciples of Locke in the 1730s to its culmination in William Paley's work. Few works of moral and political thought had such a profound impact on political discourse as Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* (1785). His arguments were at the forefront of debates about the constitution, the judicial system, slavery and poverty. By placing Paley's moral thought in the context of theological debate, this book establishes his genuine commitment to a worldly theology and to a programme of human advancement. It thus raises serious doubts about histories which treat the Enlightenment as an entirely secular enterprise, as well as those which see English thought as being markedly out of step with wider European intellectual developments.

NIALL O'FLAHERTY is a Lecturer in the History of European Political Thought at King's College London. His research focuses on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century moral, political and religious thought in Britain. He has published articles on William Paley and Thomas Robert Malthus, and is currently writing a book entitled *Malthus and the Discovery of Poverty*.

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UTILITARIANISM IN THE  
AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

*The Moral and Political Thought of William Paley*

NIALL O'FLAHERTY

*King's College London*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-47447-4 — Utilitarianism in the Age of Enlightenment  
Niall O'Flaherty  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia  
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108474474](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108474474)  
DOI: 10.1017/9781108662048

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First published 2019

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

ISBN 978-1-108-47447-4 Hardback

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## *Acknowledgements*

The hallmark of Enlightenment for the theological utilitarians was active kindness, something shown to me in spades by friends and colleagues while writing this book. My greatest debt is to Richard Bourke, who, having ignited my passion for the subject as an MA student, has been a constant source of support, advice and intellectual stimulation ever since. I owe a great debt of gratitude to Boyd Hilton for his unstinting encouragement and constructive criticism, as well as the example of a highly holistic approach to the history of ideas. Like so many scholars in the field, I have benefited from Quentin Skinner's generous support and inspirational scholarship. I am hugely grateful, also, to Brian Young for shrewd advice at pivotal moments in the development of the book. It was an immense source of pride to me that Donald Winch took an interest in the project; his instruction and advice were indispensable to its development. I am very thankful, furthermore, to the anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press, whose input helped me to improve the book immeasurably.

Thank you to Michael Lobban, Robin Mills and Patrick O'Connell for their judicious suggestions on earlier drafts of chapters. Isabel Rivers made extremely helpful reading suggestions, while Gareth Stedman Jones has been steadfast in his encouragement. Neil Hitchin gave me some crucial pointers and generously shared transcriptions of archival material. Thank you, also, to my wonderful students, from whom I have learned a great deal over the past decade. Special mention must go to Victoria Friend and Khanna Mariya Geftar, however, for unearthing a number of primary sources hitherto unknown to me that proved important to the argument of the book.

For her courtesy, patience and exemplary professionalism throughout the whole project, I will always be grateful to Elizabeth Friend-Smith at Cambridge University Press. Thank you, also, to Mathivathini Mareesan and Ruth Boyes for your efficiency, cooperativeness and understanding in

helping me get from manuscript to book. I must express my gratitude, furthermore, to David Armitage and Richard Fisher for their encouragement in the early stages.

My colleagues at King's College London have provided an extremely convivial environment in which to research and write. I owe a special debt, however, to Paul Readman. Were it not for his evangelical commitment to nurturing historical scholarship, I never would have got this project off the ground. Marie Berry has been a beacon of kindness and wisdom: I could not ask for a better friend and colleague. Ian McBride's boundless curiosity about all areas of historical scholarship and prodigious learning – transmitted to me over the course of many long lunches on the Strand – made him an excellent scholarly role model. Arthur Burns has been an invaluable interlocutor and a rock of support. Thanks are due, also, to my comrade in arms on the History of Political Thought teaching team, Hannah Dawson, for invigorating the intellectual life of the Department and for unfailingly lifting my spirits. Jim Bjork, Martha Vandrei and Ludmilla Jordanova have been endlessly kind and supportive. Furthermore, a number of colleagues have provided helpful references and reading suggestions including David Todd and Laura Gowing.

For crucial support at various stages, I am indebted to Cornelia Cook, Jon Smele, Daniel Pick, Padraig Lane and Peter Brady. Among the many who have helped me by making the non-research aspects of my job so much easier are Anne Goldgar, Christele Machut, Florence Cowan, Christina Ripley, Sarah Stockwell, Olivia Thompson, David Todd and Claudia Mazzoncini.

To all the librarians and archivists who have helped me, I extend my appreciation. I am especially grateful to Stephen White at Carlisle Library and Sarah Wood at the Cumbria Archive Service for going the extra mile on my behalf.

On a personal note, finally, I am eternally grateful to my family for everything they have done to sustain me throughout the project. I particularly want to thank my parents, Eugene and May, for their tireless encouragement and generosity. For their love and understanding throughout the long journey, I would like to express my appreciation to Mami and Lucy. Though it hardly recompenses for the many Saturdays and Bank Holidays when we were parted by it, I dedicate this book to you.