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Michael W. Hickson & Thomas M. Lennon

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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BAYLE'S AUTHORSHIP OF THE *AVIS*

Michael W. Hickson and Thomas M. Lennon

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Did Bayle write the *Avis aux réfugiés*? Although the long debate over this question might not be over, we are convinced that strong probability supports Gianluca Mori's position that Bayle was indeed its sole author. We are also convinced, however, that the significance that Mori assigns to Bayle's authorship gets it exactly the wrong way around, for while Mori is right that the *Avis* is not only consistent but also representative of the views espoused by Bayle in his subsequent work (indeed, as we see it, throughout all his work), those views are not, as Mori claims, intended to be subversive of Christianity, indeed, of all religion, but supportive of it. The interpretation of Bayle on this vexed question is extremely difficult, and will be managed here by restricting it to the evidence offered in Mori's new edition of the *Avis*.[1]

THE CONTENTS OF MORI'S VOLUME

By assembling into a single volume the *Réponse d'un nouveau converti à la lettre d'un réfugié* (1689) and the *Avis important aux réfugiés sur leur prochain retour en France* (1690), Mori has attempted to end, once and for all, three centuries of debate over the authorship of the latter. Mori's conclusion is that 'one must blind oneself not to see the face of [Pierre] Bayle on every page of the *Avis*' (61). After reading Mori's lengthy Introduction (sixty-one condensed pages of much impressive research), it is difficult not to agree. In the first two sections of this review, we outline the contents of Mori's volume and comment on his convincing attribution of the *Avis* to Bayle. However, as we will see in the third and fourth sections of this review, while Mori has likely decided the question of who wrote the *Avis*, he has nevertheless misrepresented Bayle's intention behind that work.

[1]Bayle, P. *Avis aux réfugiés. Réponse d'un nouveau converti*, edited by G. Mori (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007).

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Mori's Introduction summarizes the main lines of the debate over the authorship of the *Avis* from the time of its publication in 1690 to the present. He does not claim to treat definitively every aspect of the debate, but rather 'to propose new positive arguments for the exclusive paternity of Bayle' (7) – a humbler pronouncement than the bold conclusion cited above.

The Introduction is followed by a list and description of every edition of the *Avis* and the *Réponse* ever published. Mori's volume is based on the original editions of both. For scholars interested in the question of the authorship of the *Avis*, Mori's Introduction and Appendices will justify the purchase of this volume. In Appendix I, all the variations of the 1692 Paris edition of the *Avis* from the original are listed. This later edition of the *Avis* includes additions allegedly made by the author, but since Bayle was not in Paris at the time in order to make those additions, some have argued he was not the author. Mori demonstrates that the variations in the 1692 edition are so minor that anybody could have made them on behalf of Bayle. In Appendix II, Mori follows the *Avis* page-by-page and lists all of that work's 184 citations. He then lists Bayle's other writings that mention the same text cited in the *Avis* or that even cite the very same passage. Mori uses the large overlap of citations to argue that the extensive and curious library of the author of the *Avis* was in fact Bayle's library. Finally, in Appendix III, Mori includes a letter of Bayle to Jean Guillebert, in which Bayle supposedly drafts a refutation of the *Avis*. Some have argued that this letter constitutes proof that Bayle was not the author of, and even that he intended to attack, the *Avis*. Mori argues, however, that this letter has been misinterpreted, and that it rather shows Bayle's harmony with the author of the *Avis*.

Of course, between Mori's Introduction and the Appendices appear the *Réponse* and the *Avis* themselves. Mori has placed these works together because of their similarity in tone and topic.[2] On the face of it, the *Réponse* is, as the title suggests, the response of a recent convert to Catholicism living in Paris, to his friend, a French Protestant refugee in Amsterdam. The alleged Catholic author seeks to convince his friend of two things: first, that Protestants have traditionally held the right to punish 'heretics' (as the torture and execution of Michael Servetus showed), which prevents Protestants from criticizing Catholics for *their* claim to do so; and second, that the politics of Protestant countries shows that in these places, people recognize a right to take up arms against their Sovereign in order to defend their religion. The themes of the *Réponse* are harmonious with those of the

[2]Elisabeth Labrousse already noticed this striking similarity in 1963. Despite holding Larroque accountable for a first edition of the *Avis*, Labrousse was nevertheless unwavering in attributing the spirit of the *Avis* to Bayle, calling the *Avis* 'the exact prolongation of a little anonymous work ... entitled *Réponse d'un nouveau converti*, whose paternity belongs to Bayle without question'. See E. Labrousse, *Pierre Bayle: Du Pays de Foix à la Cité D'Erasme* (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1963) 221. We might summarize Labrousse's nuanced position on the paternity of the *Avis* in the following manner: the *Avis* was undoubtedly a *Baylian* work, even if it was not written by Bayle.

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Avis, which is likewise written by a self-described Catholic to his Protestant friend. The 'advice' of the title is directed at Protestant refugees living in diverse parts of Europe, and recommends that before they return to France, they 'quarantine' themselves (137) in order to shed two vices gained during their time away: first, the practice of writing *satire* (a term used generically by Bayle to mean the verbal abuse of one's enemies); and second, the republican mind-set that defends the people's right to take up arms against their king.

MORI'S ATTRIBUTION OF THE *AVIS* TO BAYLE

Mori's Introduction offers a fascinating account of the debate over the authorship of the *Avis*, only the barest details of which can be given here. From the time of the publication of the *Avis* in spring 1690, its authorship has been debated. Three names were forwarded from the outset – Paul Pellisson-Fontanier, Daniel de Larroque and Pierre Bayle – the latter two of which were, and continue to be, the main candidates (and so we will ignore Pellison here). Larroque's name was first mentioned (probably as a red herring) in a letter by Bayle to David Constant in autumn 1690. Bayle writes of a 'public voice' that attributes the *Avis* to Larroque, who had just converted to Catholicism and returned to France (12). Bayle's own name, on the other hand, was first insisted upon by Pierre Jurieu in spring 1691 in a work intended to refute the *Avis* (12). There was no surprise in this insistence on Bayle's authorship by Jurieu, a former patron and friend of Bayle's who became a bitter enemy upon viewing him as a traitor to the Protestant cause. By 1730, public opinion had largely settled on Bayle, thanks in large part to Jurieu's early, persistent efforts in accusing Bayle (19). Nevertheless, the debate was reopened in the twentieth century by several careful studies (19–21), the most recent of which (before Mori) were two articles by Éric Briggs, who makes a compelling case for Larroque.[3] Mori devotes an entire section of his Introduction to treating Briggs's arguments before turning his attention to new, positive arguments for the sole authorship of Bayle.

Mori collects what he considers to be the main arguments for the Larroque hypothesis and refutes each in turn. His refutations are largely convincing. To take one example, Briggs had written that 'in my opinion, Bayle himself could not have been able ... to assemble so many passages drawn from foreign books, which is another reason to offer the paternity of the *Avis* to Larroque, who had studied at Oxford' (32, n117). In response,

[3]Briggs, E. 'Bayle ou Larroque: de qui est l'*Avis important aux réfugiés* de 1690 et de 1692?', in *De l'humanisme aux Lumières. Bayle et le protestantisme. Mélanges en l'honneur d'É. Labrousse*, edited by M. Magdelaine, M.-C. Pitassi, R. Whelan, A. McKenna (Paris-Oxford: Universitas-Voltaire Foundation, 1996) 509–24. Idem, 'Daniel de Larroque (1660–1731), author of the *Avis important aux réfugiés* of 1690 ...', in *La Vie intellectuelle aux Refuges protestants*, edited by J. Häseler, A. McKenna (Paris: Champion, 1999) 203–26.

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Mori remarks that there are no English books referenced in the *Avis*, despite Larroque's fluency in that language. Since there are many references in the *Avis* to British history and politics, and because Larroque had studied at Oxford, it would have been surprising for Larroque (if he was the author) not to cite a single work in English, and moreover, to refer in some cases to French translations of English texts (as did the author of the *Avis* in the case of the *Voyage d'Italie* of Burnet, the original English edition of which Larroque reviewed in the *Nouvelles de la république des lettres* of March 1687). On the other hand, Bayle did not understand a word of English, but he could read French, Italian, Latin and Greek – precisely the languages of the books cited by the author of the *Avis*. The bibliography of the *Avis* consequently makes more sense if Bayle was the author rather than Larroque.

Another investigation of the texts cited by the *Avis* constitutes one of Mori's strongest positive arguments for the sole authorship of Bayle. However, this further investigation requires us to pay close attention. Mori addresses the following question: 'could Bayle have had access to the works used in the *Avis*?' (33). Mori's answer is that 'despite Briggs's reservations, the response to the ... question is undoubtedly positive' (33). Mori believes that he can show that Bayle had access to the vast library required to write the *Avis*. He reasons as follows. In Appendix II, as explained above, Mori painstakingly lists every book cited and every passage quoted by the *Avis*, and then lists all the acknowledged works of Bayle which cite the same book or passage. What he discovers is that of the 121 different texts cited by the *Avis*, Bayle cites 112 in his other acknowledged works (33). The argument is meant to establish that the library of the author of the *Avis* was just Bayle's library – very compelling evidence for Bayle's authorship on the face of it. However, Mori fails to mention that among the 112 citations common to Bayle's acknowledged writings and the *Avis*, Mori includes citations in works published by Bayle *after* the *Avis*. If Mori wants to show that Bayle definitely had access to the works cited by the *Avis* in time to write that work, he should restrict his attention to works cited by Bayle *before* the publication of the *Avis* – these are the works that Bayle undoubtedly had in his library before 1690. Referring to Mori's Appendix II, we can see that only 42 of the 121 works cited in the *Avis* were also cited by Bayle before 1690. This is the number – 42, not 112 – upon which Mori should base his argument. Moreover, of these 42 works, the majority would have been the common property of any scholar in the seventeenth century: works by Ovid, Cicero, Juvenal, Terence, Horace, Tertullian, Tacitus, Aquinas, Jansen, Nicole, the Paris *Gazette*, James I Stuart, Arnauld, Grotius, Jurieu, Maimbourg, Claude. Every educated person could have had access to these works, which rules them out as evidence of the sort Mori needs – evidence of the common ownership of, or access to, a *peculiar* library. Removing works by the above authors, we find that only 14 books remain

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which are cited by Bayle prior to 1690 and cited by the *Avis* – a far less impressive figure than 112.

Briggs's worry was that Bayle could not have amassed the impressive collection of books needed to write the *Avis*. Mori's response does not sufficiently address this concern. Of the 121 books cited by the *Avis*, Bayle never cited 79 of them prior to the publication of the *Avis*, so Briggs's challenge still stands: how did Bayle acquire 79 foreign, and in some cases very rare, books while living in Rotterdam? Mori's argument *does* establish that Bayle had access to the sources of the *Avis* after 1690 (which is still probable evidence that Bayle was the author of the work); but Mori's argument *does not* rule out a possible collaboration with Larroque (or somebody else) in the acquisition of those books in time for the writing of the *Avis*, and if somebody else was involved in procuring the sources required for the *Avis*, might they not have been involved in other ways in the preparation of that work?

Withal, the strongest argument for Bayle's sole authorship of the *Avis* is the content of that work and its coherence with Bayle's other projects. This brings us to a consideration of the last section of Mori's Introduction – 'The Place of the *Avis* in Bayle's Oeuvre.' While Mori is correct in saying that the *Avis* coheres perfectly with Bayle's works before and after the publication of the *Avis*, as we will see, Mori's argument must again be read with care, for his suggestion is that the unifying link is Bayle's atheism, evidence for which is nowhere apparent in the *Avis*, or in Bayle's other works cited by Mori to be considered below.

THE PLACE OF THE *AVIS* IN BAYLE'S OEUVRE

Mori ends his lengthy Introduction by arguing that the *Avis* enjoys a privileged place in the Baylian corpus since it 'marks a turning-point in the biography and in the thought of its author' (50). In Mori's view, Bayle abandoned his role as '*controversiste protestant*' (49) in 1690 in order to take up a more radical position. Attacking the Catholic Church will no longer suffice; now Bayle's target 'can only be the whole ensemble of Christianity, in its historical and theoretical foundations, but above all, its inevitable political repercussions' (54). Prima facie, the thesis is not implausible. The mid-1680s, around the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were also years of personal crisis for Bayle: the loss of his father, the loss of both his brothers (the elder in a French prison because of Bayle's anti-Catholic publications), overwork in composing the *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres*, all of which resulted in a breakdown. As Labrousse notes, these events entirely undermined Bayle's faith in divine Providence.[4] Mori suggests that by 1687, 'Protestantism is no longer, in the eyes of Bayle, the locus of tolerance, the

[4]Labrousse, E. *Bayle*, translated by Denys Potts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 31.

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home of the persecuted oppressed by the unjust power ...' (50). Bayle realizes by the time of the *Avis* that 'the persecuted has become the persecutor' (50).

The turning-point of the *Avis* is understood by Mori as a change of focus for Bayle. Thereafter, Bayle would no longer target merely the Catholic Church in his polemical writings, but Protestantism as well, and indeed, all religion, the 'essence' of which is intolerance (50–1). Understanding the *Avis* as a turning-point in this way implies that before the period 1687–1690, Bayle's target was *not* the whole of Christianity or its essence, while after the *Avis* Bayle remained steadfast in undermining the foundation of that religion. This crucial thesis of Mori will first seem *surprising* to careful readers of *Mori*, and second, it will seem *false* to attentive readers of those of *Bayle's* texts cited by Mori.

This turning-point thesis will surprise any reader of Mori's 1999 *Bayle philosophe*. After an elaborate exposition of Bayle's 1682 *Pensées Diverses sur la Comète*, Mori concluded there that

> [t]he major opposition throughout [the *Pensées Diverses*] – and the moral thought of Bayle in its entirety – is not between Catholicism and the Reform ... It is more radical. It places face to face a corrupted Christianity, source of superstitions and of violence in all its sects, and an aristocratic, philosophical, assuredly idealized atheism ... the most trustworthy source of morality.[5]

Mori's claim is that the early *Pensées Diverses* is not to be understood (as it usually is) as the work of a Protestant directed solely at Catholics, but as the deliberate attack of an atheist upon all of Christianity. If Mori is right about this, then in what way is the later *Avis* a turning-point for Bayle? On Mori's picture in *Bayle philosophe*, Bayle was from the outset an atheistic critic of Christianity in its entirety.

Mori's turning-point thesis will also surprise readers of Mori's Introduction to the *Avis*. At the end of a paragraph in which Mori states that 'intolerance is no longer for Bayle a trait exclusive to Popery: from now on it belongs to the essence of every religion, and in particular, to the Christian religion in all of its expressions', Mori cites a passage from the 1684 *Commentaire Philosophique* in order to lend support to this claim (51, n188). We will return to Mori's interpretation of this passage immediately below, but for now, let us merely ask again: if Bayle is already a critic of *all of Christianity* by 1684, then in what sense is the 1690 *Avis* a turning-point according to Mori?

Whether Mori believes that Bayle was always an ardent critic of the whole of Christianity, or whether he believes that Bayle only became such a critic around 1690 is of little importance: both claims are false, as a careful

[5]Mori, G. *Bayle philosophe* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999) 205.

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reading of Bayle himself will discover. In support of the first thesis – that Bayle was always a critic of the whole of Christianity – we have just noted that Mori employs a passage from the *Commentaire Philosophique*. But if we consider that passage, we will find that its meaning is the direct opposite of Mori's interpretation. Given the load it must bear, the text should be quoted in full.[6]

> For my part, if this be the case, I can't see why the Christian Religion mayn't justly be liken'd to one who raises himself step by step to the highest Dignitys, like the *Tartuffe* in *Moliere*, by a Contempt of Injurys, by an Austerity of Life, by his Submission, by the most popular Civility; but when he has gain'd his point, throws off the mask all at once, and becomes the Scourge of Mankind by his Cruelty and tyrannical Insolence. If the historian might liken the *Roman* Empire to Man in the several stages of Life, who can hinder our carrying the comparison forward to the several States of Christianity? Its Infancy and early Youth were exercis'd in forcing its way thro all the Obstacles of Fortune; it acted the meek and modest, the humble and the dutiful Subject, the charitable and officious: and by these Virtues it struggled up from the lowest Cusp of Misery, ay marry, and rais'd it self to a pretty fair pitch: but having once fully compass'd its ends, it quitted its Hypocrisy, authoriz'd all the ways of Violence, and ravag'd all those who presum'd to oppose it; carrying Desolation far and wide by its Crusades, drenching the new World in Crueltys which give astonishment, and now at last endeavoured to act 'em over in that remnant of the Earth which it has not yet stain'd with Blood, *China*, *Japan*, *Tartary,* etc.[7]

This text is taken from the fifth chapter, in which Bayle gives his fourth argument against the literal reading of Luke 14: 23, 'Compel them to enter', the text cited at least since Augustine to justify forced conversion. When Mori cites the above passage, he omits the opening – 'For my part, if this be the case.' As Mori cites it, the text suggests that Bayle cannot see why the essence of Christianity is anything other than 'hypocrisy' and 'violence' – the sentiments of an atheist indeed. Those initial words – '*Pour moi, si cela est*' – change the entire meaning of the passage. What Bayle is *actually* saying is that *if* the literal interpretation of Luke 14: 23 is the correct interpretation, then Christianity is as the text describes it (for then Christians would have Scriptural justification for the violent coercion of the 'heterodox' to convert to Christianity). The point of the *Commentaire Philosophique*, indeed the *main* point of that work, is that the literal interpretation is *mistaken* – Christians have *no* justification for forcing conversions, whether violently or

[6]See Mori, 51, n188; P. Bayle, *Oeuvres Diverses* [*OD*] (La Haye: Husson/Johnson, 1727; reprinted, with an introduction by E. Labrousse, Hildesheim/New York: G. Olms, 1964–1982), vol. II, p. 380a.

[7]Bayle P. *A Philosophical Commentary on These Words of the Gospel, Luke 14:23,* '*Compel Them to Come In, That My House May Be Full*' (London: J. Darby, 1708; reprinted and edited by John Kilcullen and Chandran Kukathas, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2005) 101–2.

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otherwise. The history of Christianity includes violence, in Bayle's view, only because men are little accustomed to following their principles, including Christians, who are enjoined by their principles (when properly understood) to toleration.

> If we can't save Christianity from this Infamy, at least let us save the Honor of its Founder, and of his Laws; and not say, that all this was the consequence of his express Command to compel the World: Let's rather say, that Mankind very rarely acting according to its Principles, Christians have happen'd not to act by theirs ... Thus we shall acquit our Religion at the expence of its Professors.[8]

Bayle does not accuse the essence of Christianity, or its principles or laws, for its violent history, but rather the self-serving interpretation of those laws by merely nominal Christians. Certainly, Bayle is concerned with the essence of Christianity; but his claim is that intolerance follows not from it, but from its corruption.

On the other hand, in support of the turning-point thesis – that Bayle became a determined critic of the essence of Christianity around 1690 – Mori cites three texts: (i) the *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial* (*RQP*); (ii) the *Addition aux Pensées Diverses* (*APD*); and (iii) the article 'Loyola' from the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (see 50). Mori's claim is that in these works, all of which appeared after the *Avis*, Bayle remains devoted to his new project of impugning the very essence of Christianity; but once again, Mori employs these texts in a way that distorts their meaning, as the following analyses demonstrate.

1. Mori cites the following text from the *RQP*:

> the doctrine of tolerance produces nothing; if some sect professes that doctrine, it is only because they need it, and we have every reason to believe that, if that sect became dominant, they would abandon the doctrine of tolerance immediately.[9]
>
> (51, n186)

Taken out of context in this way, the text suggests that every Christian sect is inherently intolerant, and that Christians only profess tolerance when their position in society is weak. However, placed in context, the passage has the very opposite meaning.

In this text, Bayle draws attention to the intolerance of Catholics against Protestants in France, but also, as he had done in the *Avis*, to the willingness of Protestants in Holland and England to persecute minorities when they

[8]Bayle, *A Philosophical Commentary*, 102.
[9]Bayle P. *Réponse aux Questions d'un Provincial* IV, ch. 1. OD III, 1011a.

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themselves were no longer in need of toleration. As the passage cited by Mori suggests, Bayle treats this mutual intolerance of diverse sects as a disease [*mal*] without remedy. But if we read just above that passage, Bayle writes, 'whether a disease is without remedy, or whether it may only be cured by a remedy that the sick person is unwilling to take, amounts to the same thing; which explains why the diversity of religions will be a disease to society, as real and terrible as if it were irremediable, as long as tolerance, the sole remedy of these troubles, is rejected.' Mori would have us believe that, for Bayle, tolerance is rejected by Christians because of the essence of that religion, but this is not Bayle's view if we read further on in the *RQP*.

The reason Bayle ultimately gives for why the *dogma* (sic) of tolerance is rejected is not the essence of Christianity, but the interference of *theologians* who hold the dual, incompatible and equally false views that, on the one hand, the sovereign should repress heresy, and on the other hand, that the sovereign who represses a minority view should be resisted. With both of these principles operative, the Republic is thrown into upheaval, which can be ended only if the majority adopts the view of the schismatic minority, a conversion that can occur, but that does so only infrequently. Now, the two principles were in fact held by Pierre Jurieu, the 'theologian of Rotterdam,' and bitter opponent of Bayle. So Bayle is distinguishing between Christianity and the theological interpretation of it by the likes of Jurieu.

> Judge whether upheavals that humanly speaking are inevitable in civil society when the Christian religion is divided in two are not related to the principles of the theologians, and whether these principles must be viewed as contrary to the recommendation of a wise toleration for the settling of these upheavals.[10]

The principles and laws of *true* Christianity recommend toleration, just as Bayle had argued at great length in the principal argument of the *Commentaire philosophique*.

2. A similar distinction, between the true principles of Christianity and the false principles of the theologians, Jurieu in particular, helps to understand the second text cited by Mori, from the *APD* (Mori, 51, n186). Again Mori suppresses a phrase that reverses the meaning he assigns to it. As Mori cites it, the text reads:

> the dogma of intolerance is ... universally supported by all Christian sects, aside from those who happen to need [*qui ont partout besoin de*] toleration; I say those who happen to need it, for as their lot differs so does their dogma; they preach toleration in countries where they have need of it, and intolerance in countries where they dominate.[11]

[10]OD III, 1012b.
[11]OD III, 179a.

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Again, on the face of it, this is a text expressing a budding atheistic sentiment – that all Christians are intolerant whenever possible; but if we consider the text as Bayle actually wrote it, the meaning is the direct opposite.

The context for this passage is the objection that, in the *Pensées Diverses*, Bayle's validation of atheism against (Catholic) idolatry weakens the state, and that the fear of divine wrath based on religion is required to maintain civil order. Bayle's principal response is that rulers are inclined to intolerance because they believe that diversity of religion is bad for their rule: change of the dominant religion often leads to change in government, and diversity of religion is the most frequent cause of civil war and revolution. Consequently, the rulers try to repress the minority religions, a regrettable maneuver in Bayle's view, that '*follows from the favourite dogma of my accuser* [Jurieu]*, I mean* the dogma of intolerance *which* is universally supported by all Christian sects . . .' (the words in italics are the text suppressed by Mori in his above citation). The supposedly universal dogma of Christianity and the favourite dogma of Jurieu, are one and the same. Intolerance cannot be of the essence of Christianity, unless Bayle thinks that Jurieu has that essence right (which is more than unlikely). In other words, it is not the essence of Christianity that determines a stand on toleration one way or other, but venal self-interest (why all Christians should be liable to venal interest of intolerance as formulated in the false principles of the theologians is an altogether different question.)

3. The third text comes from the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, article Loyola, remark S.[12] No specific text is quoted, and there is no comment from Mori beyond the reference. In any case, the text makes no claim whatsoever about the essence of Christianity. The point of the remark is to explain how it is that the Jesuits have carried to an extreme degree two received views: (a) monarchs rule, and may be deposed, by the will of the people, and (b) monarchs are empowered to punish heretics (again, these were views held by Jurieu, as noted above in our treatment of the *RQP*). Bayle claims not to enter into the logic of the Jesuits' position, but he does focus on its consequence, which is to 'expose kings to continual revolution, Protestants to butchery, and Christian morality to the most deplorable relaxation that can be imagined' (*in corpore*). The closest Bayle comes to a pronouncement about Christianity as a whole is the empirical generalization that the second received view is more universal than the first and 'has been reduced to practice from the days of Constantine to ours, in all Christian communities that have power in their hands'. What this means is that there is a sense in which Jurieu is, in Bayle's estimation, correct; but that sense

[12]Bayle, P. *The Dictionary Historical and Critical,* translated by P. Desmaizeaux (2nd edn, London: 1736; reprinted New York: Garland, 1984) vol. 3, pp. 793–4.

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concerns not the essence of Christianity, but the way in which it has been practised, not from its inception, but from its accession to power. So, Jurieu is guilty of the same reasoning according to which the Protestants have been persecuted, which seems, in fact, to be the point of the Remark. In other words, Jurieu's intolerance is Jesuitical. (Jurieu soon commented that Bayle's theory of toleration was based on the Jesuit concept of philosophic sin, acquired during his Jesuit schooling).[13] Personal polemics apart, if Bayle had been intent on subverting, or even just criticizing, essential Christianity, then unless irony is carried beyond credulity, he should have been supporting Jurieu, enlisting his aid, and joining his cause.

THE AIM OF THE *AVIS*

The text itself of the *Avis* corroborates the interpretation of Bayle given above to the four passages cited by Mori, for it expresses the view held by Bayle throughout his work. That view is not the view attributed to him by Mori, that persecution is of the essence of Christianity, but the opposite of this, namely, that the essence of Christianity entails toleration. Ironically, in his extensive annotation of the text Mori helps to make this case. His notes show a linguistic connection between the *Avis* and other works by Bayle, the point being that Bayle is the author of the text. The annotation also indicates a conceptual connection as well; that is, Bayle says what he believes (no dissimulation here) and what he says is what he understands genuine Christianity to be. Moreover, Bayle is arguably right about his understanding. (Indeed, a good reason for saying that he believes what he says is that what he says is true, or at least plausible, and that he was in a position to know this).

According to Mori, the *Avis* must be read in light of an interpretive key, which in his Introduction he identifies as the strategy of 'recrimination' (53). In general, this is a rhetorical device used by Bayle in many of his writings that involves returning the accusations of one's adversaries against themselves. In his earlier writings (such as the *Pensées Diverses*), Bayle levelled charges of intolerance against French Catholics. Now, in the *Avis*, Bayle reverses the charge and makes the same accusation against Protestants. Mori writes, 'nothing remains standing after his attacks ... everybody is right, so everybody is wrong' (54). In other words, by showing that both Catholics and Protestants are susceptible to the same charges of intolerance, Mori believes Bayle attacks 'Christianity in its entirety, in its historical and theoretical foundations, but above all in its inevitable political repercussions' (54).

[13]Lennon, T. M. *Reading Bayle* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999) 101.

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Mori is right that Bayle uses recrimination to attack both Catholics and Protestants; but in the concrete instances of recrimination found in the *Avis*, Bayle's target is not religion at all, but politics. To take an example that Mori himself mentions (53), Bayle cites the Protestant minister and theologian, Jean Claude, who had written that the French 'make religion depend on the will of a mortal and corruptible king, and treat perseverance in the [Protestant] faith a rebellion and a state crime; which is to make of man a God ...' (232). In light of this remark, Bayle notes that the gazettes of England in those days reported cases where reuniting with the Catholic Church was treated as a state crime. He also points to the 1689 Bill of Rights that prohibited the King or Queen of England from being, or marrying, a Catholic. Bayle's point is clear: what Claude said of Catholic France could equally be said of Protestant England. What is even clearer, however, is that Bayle was directing his attack, not against religion in its essence as Mori would have it, but against the political uses of religion, both by Protestants and Catholics.

The target of the work, therefore, is not Protestantism *per se,* but the perceived hypocrisy of Jurieu and others, in whose conduct lies the real disappointment that Bayle came to experience in these years. Only these hypocritical Protestants need be offended by the work. Otherwise, Bayle, in the voice of a Catholic, expresses views that are shared by all genuine Christians. Thus is he enabled to express such a candid thought as this: 'I do not deny that you Protestants have been unworthily treated; I am ashamed of this both for the Catholic religion in general and for France in particular; but this does not justify [your behaviour]' (157). That Jurieu is principally implicated is clear from the outset, despite the disclaimer of any personal recrimination. For while the text identifies numerology, superstition, and fanaticism generally as the support for satire and sedition, Bayle draws particular attention to the failed prophecy for 1689 as the Apocalyptic year of the reversal of Catholicism and the return of Protestants to France. The prophet, of course, was Jurieu. The genuinely Christian response to persecution, meanwhile, is to suffer it, according to what for Bayle is the plain, evident, and constantly repeated teaching of the New Testament. It is not to heap abuse on one's enemies. Indeed, the injunction to love might be understood as applying not just especially but uniquely to enemies in the sense that there is no recompense for loving one's friends (see esp. 150–2).

If there is any irony, or misdirection, to be found in the *Avis* treatment of abusive Protestant literature, it is to be found, not in the representation of Bayle's view, but of the Catholic position. That is, he insinuates criticism of the latter that would cause embarrassment to any Catholic author. The argument toward the end of part one is that the excesses of the *Refuge* in Holland contrast with the restraint found among the *Refuge* in England and even among French Catholics. Authorial circumspection was the French response to the political machinations of Innocent XI, for example, or to the

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Spanish support for Jansenius, Cromwell, and other heretics as political need dictated. Even here, Bayle's position is consistent: religion should not be tied to politics. The irony is restricted to the depiction of Catholic hypocrisy, which is Bayle's consistently held view.

What, then, was Bayle trying to achieve with this work? One explanation suggested by the *Avertissement* to the *Avis* (which nobody denies was Bayle's) is that Bayle was trying to provoke a refutation of the charges.[14] In one sense, this provocation thesis cannot be correct, for Bayle believed that Jurieu was guilty as charged. In another sense, it seems exactly right. Bayle might have been hoping that the charges would be refuted by the Protestant Synods in Holland in so far as they condemned Jurieu. An alternative would have been a direct attack, *in propria persona*. That course would run the risk, borne out by subsequent events, of degenerating into a perceived personal *ad hominem*, and thus obscuring the issues of real concern to him. Instead, the *Avis* shows that Jurieu contravenes Christian charity even by the standards of a Catholic. The attack, or rather the argument for it, is both immunized and strengthened by Bayle's literary device.

What, then, is to be made of the refutation of the *Avis* sought by the *Avertissement*? Mori's view is predictably clear: 'if it were possible, the hoax [*supercherie*] in this case is even more obvious [than that of the authorship]' (17). For the planned refutation, as Mori points out, is described in Bayle's letter to the minister Guillebert as *acknowledging* the criticisms of the *Avis*. The refutation is a hoax, however, only if the *Avis* criticisms do not represent Bayle's view. However, they do represent his view, since, as Mori also points out, they are to be found elsewhere in Bayle's works, notably in the *Cabale chimerique*: either the criticism is true, says Bayle, or it is false; 'if false, a two-word disavowal brings the matter to an end, and if true, the threat to us comes not from the book, but from our own doctrine'.[15] Mori thinks that the problem for Bayle lies with the Protestant doctrine; but that is not what Bayle says in the letter to Guillebert.[16] There he says that the republican doctrine is taught, not by Protestant ministers generally, but by 'some individual' [*quelque particulier*], who, of course, can only be Jurieu. Bayle passes between the horns of the dilemma: the genuine doctrine rejects the call to republicanism (or more

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[14]This is the Des Maizeaux, Labrousse, Bost thesis. See P. Des Maizeaux, 'The Life of Mr Bayle', in *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr Peter Bayle* (2nd edn, London: J. J. and P. Knapton, 1734–1738; reprinted with an introduction by Burton Feldman, New York/London: Garland, 1984), vol. I, pp. xliii–lxxiii; Labrousse, 1963, 222; Bost, H. *Pierre Bayle* (Paris: Fayard, 2006) 322.

[15]OD II, 672b.

[16]On the face of it, this letter is a plea for advice about the feasibility of publishing a response (*sic:* not 'refuting') the *Avis*. See Mori, Appendix III.

precisely, sedition of any sort) and thus the criticism is (or at least *should be*) false.[17]

In his *Bayle philosophe*, Mori forswears any discovery of Bayle's *actual* religious belief, restricting himself to what he takes to be the atheistic *logic* of Bayle's position. Here, with claims about Bayle's 'targets,' actual intentions are in question. Although there is a bit of waffling at the end (the use of quotation marks to discuss the 'real' Bayle, the question whether there even is a real Bayle), the Bayle supposedly revealed by the *Avis* is the essentially hidden author in the mask, with his 'ruses, his hypocrisy, his little games' (60). Literary ploys, perhaps; but hypocrisy? Mori is clear, insisting upon Bayle's 'astonishing capacity to ''lie with complete effrontery''' (60), and citing Bayle's own (early) correspondence as evidence that Bayle had a rule to lie in such fashion.[18] Now, the hypocritic reading of Bayle is a long story – it began with Jurieu, after all. But the most illustrative part of it concerns Bayle's explanation to the Protestant authorities of his use of skepticism in the *Dictionnaire*, where cheek to jowl he cites both St. Paul and the notorious libertine Saint-Evremond. It has been pointed out to Mori, who takes the text to be subversive of Christianity, that his citation of the text omits Bayle's qualification that only if Saint-Evremond's view is stripped of its irony, thus reversing its meaning, can it be taken as an expression of his own. In reply to this criticism Mori still did not acknowledge Bayle's qualification.[19] Nor does he acknowledge it here, again simply referring to the text and implicating Bayle as a subversive (60).

[17]Thus the letter to Guillebert can be read at face value as expressing a genuine dilemma about *whether to publish a reply* to the *Avis*. Mori, of course, reads the expression of the dilemma as evidence of Bayle's disingenuousness in the letter (337, n6); but even disingenuousness does not show a way out of *this* dilemma.

[18]Once again, a crucial ellipsis in the text and suppression of its context give it the exact opposite meaning. Mori indicates that Bayle's statement is a propos newspapers (60, n234), but what he fails to convey is that Bayle *complains* of the practice. Bayle begins his paragraph by describing himself and his correspondent as 'reporters' (*nouvelistes*), the term he uses to describe those who faithfully tell it as they see it, by contrast to the 'lawyers', who always plead a cause, without regard to truth (*Dictionnaire*, art. Chrysippus, rem. G). Bayle's concern is the newspaper account of the battle of Seneffe, which was essentially a (bloody) draw. Both sides, however, claimed outright victory, reported as such by their respected newspapers, whose typical practice was such that the least indication of anything less than total victory was interpreted as actual defeat. (These should-be journalists were in fact lawyers). Generalizing, Bayle says that 'not to assert things with complete confidence and in great detail would make you suspected of obvious falsehood. It is here more than anywhere else that the rule is followed, lie with total effrontery or do not get involved at all'. Mori only quotes the rule, as if it were Bayle's own rule. But Bayle is only describing the circumstances in which the rule is followed, and certainly not recommending it or adopting it as his own. His distance from the rule is clear as he continues with a citation from Juvenal's *Satires* (xiii, 109–10): 'For when in a bad cause boldness prevails, it is credited by the crowds as trustworthiness' (*Correspondence de Pierre Bayle*, edited by E. Labrousse *et al.* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1999) vol. 1, p. 305).

[19]See T. M. Lennon, 'Did Bayle Read Saint-Evremond?' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Apr., 2002), pp. 225–37; G. Mori, 'Bayle, Saint-Evremond, and Fideism: A

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In the end, Mori thinks that the 'real' Bayle, if he exists, 'is identical to the sum of his texts' – including, of course the *Avis* (61). We agree, but we also think that this means, here and throughout, not just all of the texts, but also all of what is written in them.

University of Western Ontario

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Reply to Thomas M. Lennon', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65 (April, 2004), No. 2: 323–34; and T. M. Lennon, 'A Rejoinder to Mori', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65 (April, 2004) No. 2: 335–41.